Bachelor of Science in Psychology (392)

Division: Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development

Department: Psychology

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Northwestern Mission: 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.

Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development Mission. 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 and region.

Purpose: The purpose of the undergraduate degrees is to prepare students for entry level positions in the helping professions, conducting research, working in the private and public sector, and for graduate school.

Methodology: The assessment process for the BS program is as follows:

(1) Data from assessment tools and measures 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 Department of Psychology faculty;

(4) Individual meetings will be held with Psychology course stewards of core courses if required (show cause);

(5) The program coordinator, in consultation with the student learning outcome subcommittee, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

COVID-19 and the Fall 2020-Spring 2021 Psychology Department Assessment Cycle

During Assessment Cycle 2020-2021, the COVID-19 virus forced Northwestern State University to reevaluate how to execute its mission. Through deliberate planning, the Department of Psychology substantially modified courses, programs, facilities, services, and resources to enhance learning while protecting the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff.

Assignments and student learning assessments were modified to maximize the principles of equitable evaluation and assure the highest quality in-person classes, online delivery of courses, and hybrid face-to-face and virtual studies. Technological equipment and resources were updated and expanded to provide high academic quality and flexibility while using lower bandwidth.

Student learning outcomes guide the design and delivery of instruction to ensure student learning. While the assessment process continues, it would be naïve to assume this academic program assessment has not been affected – the degree of which is based on individual courses and student. However, because of the tireless efforts of the faculty and staff, we continue to strive to provide extraordinary academic and experiential student learning opportunities despite these trying times.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. Knowledge Base.

Students will describe key concepts, principles, content domains, applications, and overarching themes in psychology. This outcome aligns with the first outcome of the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major version 2.0 (2013).

Course Map:

Tied to course syllabus objectives.

- PSYC 1010: Introduction to Psychology
- PSYC 2050: Developmental Psychology
- PSYC 3010: Physiological Psychology
- PSYC 3020: Psychology of Learning
- PSYC 3060: Social Psychology
- PSYC 4440: History of Psychology
- PSYC 4450: Abnormal Psychology
- PSYC 4470: Theories of Personality
- PSYC 4830: Advance General (capstone course)

Measure 1.1. (Direct; Knowledge)

At the end of every semester, students enrolled I n the department's capstone course, PSYC 4830 Advance General, complete a post-test version of the Department of Psychology exit exam. Specifically, the sections of the exam that will be a measure of SLO1 are: Introduction to Psychology; Physiological Psychology; Learning; Cognitive Abilities; Human Development; Personality; Psychological Disorders; and Treatment of Psychological Disorders. At least 85% of students were expected to demonstrate advanced understanding of psychology related concepts by achieving a grade of 75% or higher on these sections.

Findings: Target was not met.

AC	Percentage scoring at 75% or higher	Number of students testing	Notes
2020-2021	81.25%	N=80	During pandemic
2019-2020	69.49%	N= 118	During pandemic
2018-2019	78.95%	N= NA	Pre-COVID

Analysis: In 2019-2020, the target was not met. 69.49% (n = 118) of students achieved a grade of 75% or higher on the specified sections. This was a significant drop from the AC 2018-2019 academic year where 78.95% of scored 75% or better. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the online exit exam was analyzed for specific areas of weaknesses and once those are identified, notes, support materials and assessments were changed to address those weaknesses. The department also planned to add more individual instruction for online students, but a move to hybrid course delivery (COVID19) limited individualized instruction.

Despite the changes, the target was not met in AC 2020-2021. Based on the analysis of the 2020-2021 results, students struggle with content in the following areas: Physiological Psychology; Cognitive Abilities and to a lesser degree, Psychological

Disorders and their treatments. Strengths were evident in History of Psychology, Personality, Cognitive Abilities, Introductory, and Learning.

In 2020-2021, of the 80 students who completed the exit examination, 81.25% (n = 65) achieved a grade of 75%. While this did not meet the target goal, it was a marked increase from the previous two years.

Additional analyses were conducted on the data to identify how the results were distributed. There was a difference between the Fall 20 (n = 37, 72.97%) and Spring 21 (n=43, 86.04%) semesters. Additionally, there was a significant difference between the face-to-face and online course results. Only 74.00% of the Fall 20/Spring 21 online students (n = 50) passed those sections at the 75% level, while 90.00% of the Fall 20/Spring 21 face-to-face students (n = 30) passed at that level.

In the past, the discrepancy between face-to-face and online students was marked. Based on the Spring 2021 semester, (88.88% vs. 84.00%) that difference seems to be diminishing.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021, the target was not met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

1. The undergraduate coordinator and course steward for PSYC 4830: Advanced General analyzed the data from the exit exam to identify specific areas of strength and weaknesses. This information was shared with the relevant course stewards.

2. Starting in the Fall 2021 semester, the PSYC 4830 course steward will implement a new policy for all sections of the course. As student performance tends to be consistent through the semester, if students fail the first test (or do not take it), then they will be required to participate in a certain number of online tutoring sessions designed to improve their knowledge on the topics covered by this assessment.

3. As we expect diminishing enrollments over the next two years for PSYC 4830: Advanced General, the undergraduate coordinator requested that the Department Chair place an item on the agenda for first Fall 2021 faculty meeting. This item will involve forming a committee to find new ways to assess Measure 1.1: Direct Knowledge.

It should be noted that this capstone course, PSYC 4830: Advanced General, and the exit examination, is being phased out and replaced with a new set of capstone courses within 2 years. Resources are being shifted towards these new capstone measures.

Measure 1.2. (Indirect; Attitudes)

At the end of every semester, students enrolled in PSYC 4830 Advance General, the department's capstone course, were administered a survey. In the survey, the students were asked to rate their agreement with the statement "During my undergraduate career in Psychology, I developed a strong knowledge base of the key concepts and theories relating to psychology" on a Likert scale where 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 4 – agree, and 5 – strongly agree. At least 85% of the respondents were expected to reply with a rating of 4 or 5 to indicate agreement with this statement.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis:

In 2019-2020, the target was met. Of the sample assessed, 96.15% responded with either agree or strongly agree. Improvement is needed in our ability to collect this data from our online courses. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, the undergraduate coordinator worked with Electronic Learning to determine if we can conduct a confidential assessment through Moodle in AC 2020-2021:

As a result of these changes, the 2020-2021 target was met. Based on the analysis of the Fall 2020 results, students were confident in their knowledge base of concepts and theories related to psychology and demonstrated self-reflection of learning. 100% of students (n = 18; M = 4.67) replied with a rating of 4 or 5. Only students enrolled in a face-to-face section completed the assessment. Data was collected in the Spring 2021 semester only. Due to the hybrid classes caused by Covid-19, the Fall 2020 final exams were administered through Moodle, and it was not possible to collect this data anonymously.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

1. The undergraduate coordinator and the course steward for PSYC 4830: Advanced General are exploring the use of non-NSU resources, such as Survey Monkey, to assess the online sections of this course.

2. As with Measure 1.1, the capstone course (PSYC 4830: Advanced General) is experiencing diminished enrollments. The Department Chair and the Undergraduate coordinator are meeting in the Fall 2021 semester to decide which required senior course will be used to administer Measure 1.2.

Measure 1.3. (Direct; Knowledge)

At the end of each Fall semester, majors enrolled in PSYC 1010 Introduction to Psychology are administered a pre-test version of the Department of Psychology exit exam. Specifically, the sections of the exam measured with SLO1 are: Introduction to Psychology; Physiological Psychology; Learning; Cognitive Abilities; Human Development; Personality; Psychological Disorders; and Treatment of Psychological Disorders. At least 70% of students demonstrate basic understanding of psychology related concepts by achieving a grade of 60% or higher.

Findings: Measure was not assessed.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was not met. 9.3% of freshman majors earned a grade of 60% or higher on this assessment. Based on analysis of data, in AC 2020-202, the undergraduate coordinator and the course instructor for the course were to discuss changing both the SLO and the methodology to measure it.

However, the Spring 2020 University closure, followed by the Fall 2020 COVID-19 virtual office hours, caused a delay in the development of a workable measurement.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

Since this measure was not assessed in AC 2020-2021, the recommendation made for AC 2020-2021 stands. The undergraduate coordinator and the FIGS course instructor began discussions in the Spring 2021 semester and these discussions are ongoing. We have a first draft assessment model and after refinements, this assessment instrument will be submitted to the Department Chair for review and discussion during summer 2021.

SLO 2. Scientific and Critical Thinking.

Students applied scientific tools and understanding to psychological research. This outcome aligns with the second outcome of the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major version 2.0 (2013).

Course Map:

Tied to course syllabus objectives.

- PSYC 2430: Introduction into Experimental Methods
- PSYC 4400: Statistics
- PSYC 4410: Test and Measurement

Measure 2.1. (Direct; Knowledge)

Psychology students in PSYC 4400 Statistics completed an assignment where they were required to read a research article and answer questions regarding the purpose, methodology, results, and conclusions of the paper (refer to appendix A for the PSYC

4400 paper rubric). At least 85% of students were expected to earn a grade of 80% or higher on this paper.

Findings: In 2020-2021, the target was not met.

Analysis:

In 2019-2020, the target was not met. Only 78,65% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher. Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, the course steward emphasized the assignment to the various instructors (adjunct and full-time) teaching this multi-section class. A goal was added to the course syllabi to apply the statistical techniques to real world situations and that students would be assessed on that ability.

However, in 2019-2020, PSYC 4400 was assigned a new course steward. While that course steward continued to use the current grading rubric and followed the above recommendations, they changed the research articles in the assignment.

Despite the changes in 2020-2021, the target was not met. Students approached the target goal with 76.88% (n = 121) of psychology majors earned a grade of 80% or higher. Students did well at recognizing the statistical techniques used in the papers but had problems with interpreting the results of those techniques.

Further analysis showed there was little difference between semesters with the Fall 2020 students passing at a rate of 77.42% (n = 62) while the Spring 2021 students passed at a rate of 74.57% (n = 59). Results for online vs. face-to-face were similar with the online students pass rate at 78.26% (n = 69) while the face-to-face students were at 73.07% (n = 52).

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021 the target was not met

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

1. This course is taught by multiple instructors online as well as at 3 satellite campuses. After discussing these results with the undergraduate coordinator, the course steward agreed to again emphasize the importance of this assignment at the start of the semester to the various instructors and adjuncts.

2. The course steward also stated that they will find and use more straightforward research articles for this assignment, starting in the Fall 2021 semester.

Measure 2.2. (Direct; Knowledge)

At the end of each semester, students enrolled in PSYC 4830 Advance General were administered a post-test version of the Department of Psychology exit exam. Specifically, the sections of the exam that were a measure of SLO2 were: Experimental

Psychology; and Statistics for Psychology. At least 85% of students were expected to earn a grade of 75% or higher on these sections.

Findings: Target was not met.

Analysis:

In AC 2019-2020, the target was not met. The results showed 58.47% earned a grade of 75% or higher on these sections. The online students specifically struggled with these sections (38.98%), versus the face-to-face students (77.97%).

Based on the analysis of the 2019-2020 results, the undergraduate coordinator met separately with the course stewards for PSYC 2430 and PSYC 4400. Findings and the notes/assessments for the online PSYC 4830 sections for those two courses were reviewed to determine how to coordinate those materials better to course outcomes. The course steward for PSYC 4400, added additional resources (instructional videos, tutoring, real world applications) to the online Statistics courses. For Experimental Psychology online courses, the course steward added lab workbook assignments, written assignments, and additional student support.

Despite these changes, the target was not met in AC 2020-2021. 63.75 % of the sample (n = 80) earned a grade of 75% or higher on these sections. As in previous years, there was a difference between face-to-face and online scores with 93.33% of face-to-face (n = 30) and 46.00% of online students (n = 50) achieving 75% or higher. Unlike previously reported measures, the difference between the face-to-face and online students on this measurement seems to be growing. In 2019-2020 (COVID-19 year), face-to-face scores were 77.97% and online were 38.98%. Unlike the sections of the Exit Examination reported in Measure 1.1, there was no appreciable difference in the Fall 2020 online results (44.00%) and the Spring 2021 online results (48.00%).

In general, the sample did better at tasks that required crystallized intelligence. They needed improvement in applying constructs, tasks that required fluid intellectual abilities.

After the undergraduate coordinator shared these differences with the relevant course stewards, they agreed that there are two possible reasons for the marked differences in the face-to-face and online scores on the Experimental Psychology and Statistics for Psychology sections of the exit exam.

The first of these has to do with the COVID-related reduction in face-to-face seating in both the Fall 2020 and Spring 21 semesters. Only students who registered very early in the process were able to get seats in the face-to-face classes, which may have resulted in a self-selected sample of students who were qualitatively different than past classes. Worth noting that not a single face-to-face student failed the Spring 2021 exit exam, which has not happened in over ten years.

The second reason is that our region experienced severe weather incidents (multiple hurricanes, ice storms, snow, and flooding) during both semesters. These events impacted our online students more than our face-to-face students. There were lengthy power outages and extensive internet interruptions. While the Psychology Department faculty worked to provide accommodations, these events disproportionally effected our online students.

In accordance with the plan of action from 2019-2020, we have already added additional resources (instructional videos, tutoring, real world applications) to the online Statistics courses. For Experimental Psychology online courses, we were able to add lab workbook assignments, written assignments, and additional student support.

However, Experimental Psychology is generally taken by first semester sophomores while Statistics is usually taken by first semester juniors. The changes initiated in these courses in the 2019-2020 academic year will not begin to impact graduating senior assessment results for at least another year.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021, the target was not met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

1. The undergraduate coordinator has already met separately with the course stewards for PSYC 2430 and PSYC 4400. We reviewed these findings and the notes/assessments for the PSYC 4830 sections for those two courses and discussed how to coordinate these materials better to effect course outcomes.

2. The course stewards for both PSYC 2430 and PSYC 4400 were particularly concerned about the differences between the online and face-to-face student scores. However, both stewards stated that they believed the changes they made this academic year had just not had a chance to show up yet in this senior assessment. They have agreed to continue these additional resources in the online classes.

3. The course stewards for both PSYC 2430 and PSYC 4400 have also agreed to review the PSYC 4830 instructor's relevant online notes and assessment to ensure that they line up with the online content of PSYC 2430 and PSYC 4400.

4. Starting in the Fall 2021 semester, the PSYC 4830 course steward will implement a new policy for all sections of the course. Both statistics and experimental methodology are covered on the first test. If students fail the first test (or do not take it), then they will be required to participate in a certain number of online tutoring sessions designed by the course stewards for those two

subjects. This will help those students improve their knowledge on these two topics before being reexamined on them for this assessment.

5. See measure 1.1 for additional issues around PSYC 4830 assessments.

SLO 3. Ethical and Social Responsibility.

Students applied ethical standards to psychological science and practices and adopt values that build communities. This outcome aligns with the third outcome of the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major version 2.0 (2013).

Course Map:

Tied to course syllabus objectives.

- PSYC 3050: Diversity Issues in Psychology
- PSYC 3060: Social Psychology
- PSYC 4470: Theories of Personality
- PSYC 4510: Ethics in Psychology

Measure 3.1. (Direct; Knowledge)

Students in PSYC 3050: Diversity Issues in Psychology completed an assignment whereby they identified their own biases, reflected on where those biases originated from, and described how they planned to overcome those biases (refer to appendix B for the PSYC 3050 paper rubric). At least 85% of students will earn a grade of 80% or higher on this paper.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis:

In 2019-2020, the target was met, 85.00% (N = 80) earned a grade of 80% of higher. The course steward continued to encourage self-reflection and planning of ethical responsibility through assignments that fostered that self-reflection. The course steward continued to encourage the instructors of PSYC 3050 to emphasize values and reflection.

As a result of these changes, the AC 2020-2021 target was met with an 80% pass rate of 88.60% (n = 79) for those psychology majors who completed the assignment. There was a slight difference in semesters, with the Fall 2020 semester showing an 86.67% (n = 45) rate while the Spring 2021 semester rate was 91.17% (n = 34). Note that all sections of the course were completely online both semesters and were taught by the same instructor.

Students seemed to do well on the self-reflections assignments but had more trouble identifying their own biases. One issue was the number of psychology majors enrolled in the course who did not complete the assignment. There were 96 psychology majors enrolled in the course and only 79 of them (82.29%) submitted the assignment.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

> 1. The course steward will encourage the instructors of PSYC 3050 to continue to emphasize values and reflection to help students recognize and overcome their biases.

> 2. The course steward will be asked to check the data to see if students who do not complete the assignment are 'stopping out' during the semester or if they are simply not choosing to do this assignment.

> 3. If data show the students who are not participating are 'stopping out', then The Department Chair, undergraduate coordinator and the course steward will explore best practices on increasing student retention.

> 4. If the data shows the discrepancy between enrollment and completion of this assignment is due to students not choosing to do this assignment, then the undergraduate coordinator and the course steward will discuss incentives to increase student participation in this task.

Measure 3.2. (Direct; Knowledge)

Students in PSYC 4510: Ethics in Psychology wrote a paper analyzing a case study concerning an ethical dilemma (refer to appendix C for PSYC 4510 paper rubric). At least 85% of students were expected to receive a grade of 80% or higher.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was not met. 71.86% of students received a grade of 80% or higher. There was a marked difference between the pass rates in Fall 2019 (65.95%) and Spring 20 students (91.67%). Based on the analysis of AC 2019-2020, the course steward updated the rubric used for the case study assignment. The Department Chair and undergraduate coordinator shared the results with the course steward of PSYC 4510 and discussed ways of both improving the results and improving course participation.

As a result of changes, in AC 2020-2021, the target was met. 93.65% (n = 126) of psychology majors taking PSYC 4510 received a grade of 80% or higher. The Fall 2020 results (93.44% n = 61) were almost identical to the Spring 2021 results (93.85%, n = 65). All sections of PSYC 4510 were taught online during AC 2020-2021.

Students recognized ethical standards that applied to the dilemma but struggled with the appropriate response when the dilemma was ambiguous or dealt with contradictory standards.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021, target was met.

The updated rubric resulted in a higher 80% pass rate for this assessment year.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

1. As the updated rubric is working, the Department Chair and Undergraduate coordinator will share the results of these analysis with the course steward and the individual instructors of PSYC 4510.
2. Discussion will focus on ways to continue to improve course participation. The Department Chair, the undergraduate coordinator and the course steward will research best practices on re-engaging those students who have stopped participating in the course.

Measure 3.3. (Indirect; Knowledge)

Students in PSYC 4510 Ethics in Psychology completed the National Institute of Health 'Protecting Human Research Participants' training course. At least 90% of students were expected to complete the training and submit their certificate.

Findings: Target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was not met. 89% (84 of 93) students completed the training and submitted the completion certificate.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the undergraduate coordinator and the course steward discussed requiring the assignment and grading, so to increase participation in the activity.

Despite this change, the target in AC 2020-2021 was not met.

In 2020-2021, 89.88% (80 of 89) of those sampled completed the training and submitted the completion certificate. There are two constraining factors in this measure. First, all sections of this course were taught online, so there is no comparison between teaching modalities. Second, two sections of the course in Spring 2021 did not require the completion of this assignment. This renders an incomplete analysis of measure 3.3.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021, the target was not met.

Based on analysis of AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

1. Increase the point value of the assignment as this will increase student participation.

2. Discuss ways to improve course engagement and participation. The Department Chair, the undergraduate coordinator and the course steward will research best practices on re-engaging those students who have stopped participating in the course.

3. Require course stewards to disseminate the assessment requirements to all course instructors immediately following the first faculty meeting of each semester. Additionally, the course steward will check the Moodle shells for each instructor to ensure that all required assignments are included.

SLO 4. Communication.

Students wrote using field appropriate writing style (i.e., APA style) and orally communicated psychological research. This outcome aligns with the fourth outcome of the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major version 2.0 (2013).

Course Map:

Tied to course syllabus objectives.

- PSYC 2430: Introduction to Experimental Methods
- PSYC 3060: Social Psychology

Measure 4.1. (Direct; Skills)

Students in PSYC 2430 Introduction to Experimental Methods wrote a research paper whereby the entire grade was based on appropriate APA style (refer to appendix D for PSYC 2430 paper rubric). At least 85% of students will receive a grade of 80% or higher.

Findings: Target was not met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was not met. 45.00% of PSYC 2430 students received a grade of 80% or better on their APA style paper. Based on the analysis of AC 2019-2020, instructors were encouraged to continue providing support and instruction on APA style and referring students to campus resources. The Psychology Department requested additional faculty so we could open more sections of PSYC 2430, allowing more individual instruction and feedback to students on their writing.

Despite these changes, in AC 2020-2021, the target was not met. 46.62% (n = 148) of psychology majors enrolled in PSYC 2430 received a grade of 80% or better on their APA style paper. While not close to the target, it is an improvement over the AC 2019-2020 results (45.00%), indicating that the changes implemented last year are moving the results in the right direction. While only marginally better, given that all the PSYC 2430 courses in the AC 2020-2021 were either Hy-flex or totally online, even this marginal improvement is encouraging. As per our action plan, in AC 2020-2021 the course steward provided more support and instruction on APA style and encouraged students to utilize other resources on campus such as the writing center. However, given the COVID-19 situation, those campus resources were limited during this academic assessment period.

Many students struggled with APA style writing. This is anecdotally confirmed by instructors in her courses requiring an APA style paper. Several students seem to choose MLM style, ignoring APA instructions and training. It is possible that since this course is often taken during our students second semester of their freshman year, many are also taking ENGL 1020 or one of their intensive writing English literature courses during this same semester and may be struggling trying to write in two distinctly different writing styles at the same time.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021, the target was not met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

1. The course steward will ensure the grading rubric for this assignment is prominently featured and emphasized in the Moodle shell for each course.

2. The instructors will provide additional support and instruction on APA style and to recommence referring students to campus resources (as they become more available).

3. A survey will be administered in PSYC 2430 to determine concurrent registration in an English course. These results will be used to determine if PSYC 2430 needs to move within the program of study to improve student performance.

Measure 4.2. (Direct; Knowledge and Skills)

Students in PSYC 2430 Introduction to Experimental Methods orally presented their research paper from Measure 4.1 (refer to appendix E for PSYC 2430 presentation rubric). At least 85% of students were expected to receive a grade of 80% or higher.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. 90.70% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher. This measure was only collected from face-to-face sections as the oral presentation was not required in online course sections during AC 2019-2020.

Based on AC 2019-2020 results, all students enrolled in PSYC 2430, regardless of modality, will be required to give an oral presentation.

As a result of these changes, the target was met in AC 2020-2021. 88.15% (n = 76) of Psychology majors received a grade of 80% or higher.

Given that our majors scored > 80% on their oral report at a rate almost twice as high as their rate on their written report, it can be inferred that their oral reporting skills were better than their writing skills. Note that 76 students completed this assignment versus 148 who completed the written assignment (see Measure 4.1) from the same courses.

While departmental faculty now have access to Webex technology, this is not true for all adjunct instructors. During the 2020-2021 assessment periods, four online classes taught by adjuncts did not require the oral report assignment.

The sample did well on presenting the mechanics of their papers (hypotheses and data analyses) but struggled with drawing conclusions about those hypotheses using the data analysis.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:
In AC 2020-2021, target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

1. All sections of PSYC 2430 require the oral presentation.

2. The course steward will emphasize to the various instructors the importance of this assignment as part of the department's annual assessment.

3. The course steward will (as with previous measure) feature the grading rubric for this assignment prominently in the Moodle shell.

Measure 4.3. (Direct; Knowledge and Skills)

Students in PSYC 3060 Social Psychology wrote a research paper whereby half the grade was based on appropriate APA style and the other half was based on the content as it refers to material from the field of Social Psychology (refer to appendix F for PSYC 3060 paper rubric). At least 85% of students will receive a grade of 80% or higher.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met with 92.06% of students receiving a grade of 80% or higher. Results were consistent across semesters and modalities of delivery. In AC 2019-2020, the course steward incorporated a process to increase course content by adding resources and instructions related to APA style and guidelines.

Based on AC 2019-2020 analysis, additional APA resources were provided to students and the course steward met with other departmental faculty to share ideas and resources about APA style requirements within course assignments.

As a result of these changes, the target was met in AC 2020-2021 with 95.60% (n = 91) of the sample scoring a grade of 80% or higher. Results were consistent across semesters and course delivery. Fall 2020 pass rates were 97.82% (n = 46) while Spring 2021 pass rates equaled 93.33% (n = 45). Face-to-face pass rates for 2020-2021 were 94.40% (n = 18). Online pass rates for 2020-2021 were 95.94% (n = 74).

Three separate faculty (two adjunct and one full time) taught four sections of the course and grades were all relatively consistent between them: Instructor A = 94.44% (n = 18); Instructor B = 92.00% (n = 38); Instructor C: = 100% (n = 35).

While the target was met, the sample still had some issues with APA style.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2020 – 2021, target was met.
Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

As with past assessment periods, the APA paper grades in PSYC 3060 are appreciably better than the APA paper grades in other psychology courses. Two years ago, the recommendation was for the course steward to incorporate a process to increase course content by adding resources and instructions related to APA style and guidelines. This recommendation resulted in improvements in APA paper grades. The current recommendations are:

1. The course steward will continue to make these resources available to students, while reviewing updates in APA technological resources.

2. The course steward for PSYC 3060: Social Psychology will be asked to meet with the stewards of other courses requiring APA papers to share resources and rubrics.

3. The course steward will review the grading policies of adjuncts to confirm grading is consistent across all sections (i.e., no inflation).

SLO 5. Professional Development.

Students apply psychological content and skills to career targets and exhibit preparedness and meaningful professional direction for life after graduation. This outcome aligns with the fifth outcome of the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major version 2.0 (2013).

Course Map:

Tied to course syllabus objectives.

- PSYC 2040: Psychology as a Profession
- PSYC 4600: Field Experience – elective
- PSYC 4830: Advance General

Measure 5.1. (Direct; Knowledge)

Students in PSYC 2040: Psychology as a Profession wrote an action plan detailing what the students planned to do after graduation (job or graduate school), including a timeline of everything they needed to do to achieve that target (refer to appendix G for PSYC 2040 paper rubric). At least 85% of students were expected to receive a grade of 80% or higher.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. 94.08% (N = 169) of students received a grade of 80% or higher. This was an improvement over the AC 2018-2019 pass rate of 79.60%.

Based on AC 2019-2020 results, changes were made in the communication between departmental leadership and course steward. In addition, Updated resources reflecting the current employment environment in the various subfields of Psychology were added to the course.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-2021, the target was met with 90.11% (N = 182) of students received a grade of 80% or higher. Results were consistent across semesters and learning modalities.

Students did well on conceptualizing their long-term career goals but had more trouble with delineating the specific steps to achieve those goals.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021, target was met. Students were encouraged to seek information and preparation for a career path as well as provide information on opportunities for learning about careers and guidance outside of the classroom. Also, following last year's recommendations, the instructor presented the students with updated resources reflecting the changing employment situations in the various subfields of psychology.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

1. The course steward will continue to find and incorporate updated resources that reflect the continuously changing employment situations in the various subfields of Psychology.

2. The course steward will ensure that the grading rubric is featured prominently in each Moodle shell.

Measure 5.2. (Direct; Knowledge)

Students in PSYC 2040: Psychology as a Profession wrote a personal reflection essay where they specified how the course had influenced their career targets (refer to appendix H for PSYC 2040 paper rubric). At least 85% of students were expected to receive a grade of 80% or higher.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met with 99.40% (N = 169) of students receiving a grade of 80% or higher. This was an increase over the previous year's pass rates (84.01%). In AC 2019-2020, the course steward provided specific and individualized feedback to students about their reflection papers. While this may have had a positive impact on the paper grades, such a dramatic increase can indicate a possible confound that may be affecting the data. In this case, the course steward examined the papers, and the data was found to be accurate.

Based on AC 2019-2020 results, the Department Chair and undergraduate coordinator asked the course steward to review the submitted data. The data was found to be accurate, so course steward was asked to identify and correct any possible confounds.

As a result of these changes, the AC 2020-2021 target was met. 100% (n = 182) of students received a grade of 80% or higher. This is almost identical to last year's rates (99.40%). Results were consistent across all semesters and learning modalities.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021, target was met.

Starting in the 2019-2020 academic year, the course steward began providing detailed individualized feedback to students about their reflection papers. This led to an increase from the previous assessment period (84.01%) and there was concern about possible confounds effecting the data. However, discussions with the course steward and individual course instructors supported the 2019-2020 findings as being correct. This year's results offer additional support for those findings being correct.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

1. The Department Chair, the undergraduate coordinator and the course steward will review this instrument as an appropriate device for assessing this measurement.

Measure 5.3. (Indirect; Skills)

At the end of the academic year, surveys were distributed to the Department of Psychology's Academic Advisory Council which consisted of stakeholders and employers in the community who worked with our students through internships or externships, or who hired graduates from our department (refer to Appendix I for the survey). Five questions on the survey asked the respondent to rate our students on the 5 student learning outcomes on a Likert scale whereby 1 = lowest and 5 = highest.

At least 80% of the respondents were expected to rate our students an average of 4 or more on those 5 measures.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was not met. In March 2020, the survey was emailed to the 13 agencies that supervised the field experience students. A follow up email was sent the next week. COVID-19 caused the University to transition to all faculty/staff teleworking and all classes online in March 2020. NSU wasn't the only agency effected and only one agency returned the survey. Therefore, we were not able to obtain a valid sample.

Based on the lack of AC 2019-2020 data, the department used the AC 2018-2019 survey, noting the lowest scores in Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking. To increase the score, a critical thinking assignment was added to PSYC 4600-Field Experience. The recommendation to distribute the survey twice a year was also implemented.

As a result, the target was met in AC 2020-2021. Ten surveys were distributed and 5 returned with a response rate of 50%. Surveys were sent out to the Academic Advisory Council (February 26, 2021, and March 17, 2021) in advance of data collection to ensure timely feedback. As a result, in AC 2020-2021, the results were as follows:
- Knowledge Base in Psychology M = 4.5 Above Average
- Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking M = 4.7 Above Average
- Ethical and Social Responsibility in a Diverse World M = 4.5 Above Average
- Communication Skills M = 4.25 Above Average
- Professional Development M = 4.19 Above Average

The highest score occurred in Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking and lowest score occurred in Professional Development.

In AC 2020-2021, the target was met as 100% of survey respondents rated our students an average of 4 or more on the learning outcomes.

Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2020-2021, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement.

1. In AC 2021-2022, faculty will administer the survey in both the fall semester and spring semester, thereby ensuring that all agencies will have the opportunity to complete the survey.
2. The Academic Advisory Council will meet via WebEx a minimum of once a semester.

These changes should improve the department's ability to assess our student's abilities to apply psychological content and skills to career goals and exhibit preparedness and meaningful professional direction for life after graduation, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

Program faculty made several decisions after examining results of AC 2019-2020 data analysis which resulted in mixed results in improvements in student learning and program improvement in AC 2020-2021. However, data collection and course changes were impacted by both ongoing COVID 19 issues and several major weather events.

*   SLO 1: Faculty offered additional educational resources for the specific sections of the exit exam identified as weak areas for students (Statistics and Research Methods). The course steward/undergraduate coordinator shared the results with relevant faculty, added additional resources for students and explored options for confidential survey data gathering so that online students could be included in this measure. Outside circumstances prevented assessment for Measure 1.3. but gave us time to develop a new assessment device.

*   SLO 2: Faculty used the current grading rubric but updated the research articles used in the assignment as an effective measure for this specific learning objective. However, these updated articles may have been too complex. The course steward offered additional educational resources for the specific sections of the exit exam in which students struggled. Faculty added additional resources for the online courses for topics identified as weak areas for students (Statistics and Research Methods).

- SLO 3: Faculty encouraged self-reflections and planning of ethical responsibility through assignments that fostered students to examine biases and ethics base. Faculty used the current case study and updated grading rubrics and surveys to students understanding of the task, and to provide a clear guideline for how to achieve the desired assignment results. Couse stewards reviewed the scores between classes to determine if there was a confounding variable. Faculty made the certification a graded course requirement to ensure consistency in meeting the stated goal.

- SLO 4: Faculty provided more support and instruction on APA style and encouraged students to utilize non-campus resources as campus resources such as The Writing Center had limited availability. Faculty increased the incorporation of oral presentations in the online sections. Faculty incorporated a process to increase course content by adding resources and instructions related to APA style and guidelines.

- SLO 5: Faculty encouraged students to seek information and preparation for career path as well as provided updated information on opportunities for learning about careers and guidance outside of the classroom. Also, faculty made sure to clarify exactly what was required for the assignment to encourage full completion and submission for all students. Faculty provided specific and individualized feedback to students about their reflection papers. Faculty added a critical thinking component to Psyc 4600-Field Experience.

Plan of Action Moving Forward:

Throughout the 2020-2021 assessment period, our data collection procedures were almost all negatively impacted by both the Covid-19 pandemic and multiple severe weather events. Assessments and data collection were placed on the agenda for the first (virtual) faculty meeting in the Fall 2020 semester, and again for the first (virtual) faculty meeting of the Spring 2021 semester. During these meetings, the various course stewards discussed ways to move forward. That we were able to continue to collect and analyze assessment data under those difficult circumstances speaks to the ingenuity and dedication of the Psychology Department faculty.

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2020-2021 and will take steps to continuously improve student learning in AC 2020-2021 in a systematic and comprehensive fashion:

- SLO 1: Faculty will continue to analyze the online exit exam for specific areas of weaknesses and once those are identified, faculty will revise course notes, support materials, and assessments to address those weaknesses. The course steward will require online tutoring sessions for every student who fails the first test in PSYC 4830. Department Chair, Undergraduate coordinator and the Course steward will begin developing measurements for the new capstone courses, PSYC 4420/4490. The course stewards will identify discrepancies in

online and face-to-face courses and will ensure that there is consistency in point allocation, rubrics used, and content. Faculty will try to use a non-NSU resource (Survey Monkey) as a method to collect confidential assessments for the online students. The undergraduate coordinator and Course steward will finalize the new assessment instrument for Measure 1.3.

- SLO 2: Faculty will emphasize assignments at the start of the semester to the various instructors and adjuncts who teach the relevant course map classes. Faculty will emphasize the line in the syllabi stating that one of the goals of the course is to be able to apply the statistical techniques to real world situations and that students will be assessed on that ability. PSYC 4400 and PSC 2430 faculty have been shown the discrepancies in performance between online and face-to-face students and a dialogue is ongoing on how to minimize these differences. The Department Chair, undergraduate coordinator and course stewards will review 'best practices' on re-engaging non-participating students.

- SLO 3: The Department Chair and course steward will direct the instructors of PSYC 3050 to foster values and reflection of ethical responsibility by using assignments that encourage students to examine biases and ethics. Faculty will share the results of these analyses with the course steward of PSYC 4510 and will identify, describe, and implement instructional design and strategies for improving these results and improving course participation. The Department Chair, undergraduate coordinator and course stewards will review 'best practices' on re-engaging non-participating students. It will be recommended that the PSYC 4510 course steward change the weighting of the self-reflection and outside training assignments to count for a greater percentage of the overall final course grade, thereby encouraging all students to submit this work as a demonstration of their mastery of the student learning outcomes.

- SLO 4: The Department Chair and Undergraduate coordinator will share these findings with the course steward for PSYC 2430. Instructors will be encouraged to provide more instructional support and direction on APA style and to refer students to more online writing resources and to campus resources as these become more available. All instructors will now require the oral report assignments in online classes. The grading rubric for the written assignment will be featured prominently in all Moodle shells. In addition, faculty in courses requiring APA papers will collaborate on ideas and resources.

- SLO 5: The Department Chair and Undergraduate coordinator will share these results with the course stewards and will direct the course stewards to extend the changes made in the course to all sections. The course steward will use updated external resources that reflect the changing employment situations in the various subfields of Psychology. The Department Chair will replace the traditional survey administration with using zoom/WebEx to administer the Survey to the Advisory Council.

Additional Plan of Action:

Given that the last three department Assessment Coordinators resigned from that job (and/or NSU) within a year after being given that responsibility, and the current one is planning a retirement date within the next two years, the department will begin requiring each course steward to increase their share of the responsibility in collecting assessment data and writing this report. This will be done to continue to achieve accurate assessments and to ensure continuity in action plans being implemented and utilized. Moving forward, this will help the program to continually improve assignments and assessments so as to provide a more diverse and robust academic program for our students.