

2010-11 Program Assessment Update

Department & Program: Psychology – BA -Psychology

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1. Student Learning Outcome	2. Strategy or method of measurement	3. Observations gathered from data	4. Actions recommended based on observations	5. Plan and timetable for taking action	6. Overall evaluation of progress on objective
<p>Engage in critical thinking about human behavior and experience, think carefully about issues before coming to conclusions and recognize that many problems have more than one solution</p>	<p>Rubric-based review of student papers submitted as student-identified examples of good/representative writing in PSYC 490 portfolio (papers reviewed were term papers as opposed to research projects based on the students' own experimental studies)</p> <p><u>Note:</u> the papers were randomly selected from the PSYC 490 portfolios and, since they were self-selected by the students for inclusion in the portfolio, were vastly different from each other. This large disparity in paper focus and probable difference in the assignment task contributed to difficulty in a uniform across-the-board assessment strategy.</p>	<p><u>Findings:</u> All reviewed papers demonstrated that students used multiple previous studies they had obtained from legitimate journal and/or on-line sources. Reviews of these articles within the papers highlighted specific and relevant issues pertaining to the primary focus of the paper. Many (but not all) of the students provided critiques of the literature they included. Approximately 66% of the papers included a detailed conclusion section that addressed the strengths and weaknesses of the literature in the paper and offered thoughtful consideration of how deficits in the literature affected their research topic.</p> <p><u>Analysis:</u> Approximately 2/3 of the reviewed papers demonstrate that students could provide a strong conclusion based on the literature they had selected and critiqued. Others either had no conclusion or appeared to “run out of steam” at the end of the paper (i.e., provided a weak set of conclusion statements.)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review course/SLO matrix to identify courses that critical thinking as expressed in writing exercises. 2. Review current SLO literature on inclusion of critical thinking writing into course term papers with faculty who include writing 3. Broaden assessment of critical thinking into other in-class activities 4. Consider developing a set of departmental expectations for critical thinking in writing exercises. 	<p><u>Plan:</u> Present the “recommended actions” to the department’s Curriculum and Assessment committee and then later to the department faculty</p> <p><u>Timetable:</u> Within the next two academic years, department will clarify its methodology for assessing critical thinking goals</p>	<p>This SLO is still central to our goals for students in the BA major.</p>