

EWU Programmatic SLO Assessment
AY 2015-16 and “Closing the Loop” for AY 2014-15

Degree/Certificate: BA in Psychology

Major/Option: Psychology

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Part I – Program SLO Assessment Report for 2015-16

Part I – for the 2015-16 academic year:

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** The student performance or learning outcome as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.
 - **design and conduct studies to address psychological questions using appropriate research methods.**
2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** Indicate whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.
 - _____ SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;
 - ___x___ SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;
 - _____ SLO is met without change required
3. **Strategies and methods:** Description of assessment method and choices, why they were used and how they were implemented.

The assessment of this SLO was conducted using data from two sections of PSYC 313: Research Methods (both taught by the same instructor). Group-level data were collected from the course in Spring 2016 and individual-level data was collected from the course in Summer 2016. The rationale for shifting from group-level data to individual-level data was that the group data was masking the actual learning of individual students and was reflecting (potentially) the learning abilities of only some students in the groups.

In these two sections of PSYC 313, students are required to engage in the development and administration of an actual research study, which culminates in the writing of an APA-style research paper. The data for this assessment came from a review of an in-class assignment that required students to (1) identify an appropriate research design for their proposed study, and (2) articulate at least one hypothesis that will be tested in their study.

The assessment rubric included three areas of assessment:

- a. The selection of an appropriate research design justified by the nature of the proposed research (scored as either “correct” or “incorrect”).
 - b. Given the selection of an appropriate design, the student(s) developed a hypothesis that was worded in such a way that it fit with the chosen design (scored as “had the correct design and the hypothesis was appropriate for the design”, “had to correct their design statement but the hypothesis was appropriate for the eventual design”, or “had an incorrect design and hypothesis wasn’t connected to what the study was investigating”. For example, group/student correctly identified that correlations would be looking at relationships, independent group study for differences, etc.
 - c. Level of specificity of the hypothesis (scored as “specific in wording per APA examples”, “general hypothesis that identified trends but wasn’t specific in wording per APA examples”, or “hypothesis unclear and not per APA examples”. For example, if the group/student was using a factorial design, their hypothesis was worded using predictions for main effects and/or interactions.
4. **Observations gathered from data:** Include findings and analyses based on the strategies and methods identified in item #3.
- a. **Findings:**
 - i. **Spring 2016 class (analysis of groups):**
 1. Design – 4 of 7 groups selected appropriate design
 2. Hypothesis/design fit – 4 out of 7 groups worded hypothesis in a manner consistent with the design they had selected
 3. Hypothesis specificity – 3 out of 7 groups worded their hypotheses according to the APA examples presented in class whereas 4 groups gave overly general hypotheses
 - ii. **Summer 2016 class (analysis of individuals):**
 1. Design – 3 out of 4 individuals selected appropriate design
 2. Hypothesis/design fit – 3 out of 4 individuals worded hypothesis in a manner consistent with the design they had selected
 3. Hypothesis specificity – None of the individuals worded their hypotheses according to the APA examples presented in class. Three gave overly general hypotheses and one student provided unclear hypotheses not well connected to the study.

- b. **Analysis of findings:**
 - i. In general students appear to be able to select an appropriate research design for their study.
 - ii. More attention needs to be paid to the in-class discussions/lectures regarding the connections between hypothesis development and design selection AND the specific wording of hypotheses to capture accurately what students are predicting in their study.
5. **What program changes will be made based on the assessment results?**
- a. Describe plans to improve student learning based on assessment findings (e.g., course content, course sequencing, curriculum revision, learning environment or student advising).
 - i. An additional in-class activity and more lecture material will be included on writing of hypotheses.
6. Provide a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year.
- a. Assessment of this SLO will occur during Winter 2017 and Spring 2017 terms using the same assignment in PSYC 313: Research Methods sections.
7. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed and an evaluation of the assessment plan/process itself.
- a. No revisions to the process or the SLO are needed at this time.

NEW: PART II – CLOSING THE LOOP

FOLLOW-UP FROM THE 2014-15 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Department did not have someone supervising assessment activities (i.e., no Associate Chair) last year so the need to demonstrate a follow-up to last year's report wasn't communicated throughout the department. The follow-up from the 2014-2015 report will be conducted during the 2016-2017 academic year and reported as part of next year's assessment cycle along with the follow-up for this year's report.