UNIT REPORT

Psychology BS
Assessment Plan Summary

Psychology BS

Core Concepts In Psychology

Goal Description:

The Bachelor of Science Program in Psychology will provided students with a broad base of essential knowledge in the various subfields of psychology.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Students Demonstrate Broad Knowledge Base

Learning Objective Description:

Students who complete the Bachelor of Science Program in Psychology will demonstrate knowledge of core concepts in the various sub-disciplines of Psychology.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

PSY 1301 Exit Examination

Indicator Description:

Students' knowledge of the diverse areas within the field of psychology will be assessed using a common comprehensive final exam in PSY 1301 - Introduction to Psychology

Attached Files

1301ExitExam

Criterion Description:

Criterion for success is to have 70% of the students respond successfully to questions in the following areas: Science of Psychology; Research Design; Physiological; Learning; Sensation/Perception; Developmental; Abnormal; Memory/Cognition; Personality; and Social Psychology. Our operational definition of "successfully" is a minimum of 70% correct on each of the subfields.
A copy of the instrument is attached to this indicator.

Findings Description:

In the fall 2016 semester, 657 students took the common Introductory Psychology exit exam. The overall percentage of correct scores was 67%. In the spring 2017 semester we had a sample of 662 students taking the common final with an overall percentage of correct scores of 64.0. Data from the Exit Exam for Introductory Psychology broken down between semesters showed that the following percentage of correct answers for specific areas in psychology. Note that the scores for fall 2015 and spring 2016 are listed in parentheses. Asterisks (*) signify positive changes in our data while negatives (-) indicate negative changes in the data.

	Fall 2016	Spring 2017
Psychology as a science	71% (78)-	67% (70)-
Research Design	73% (73)	65% (67)-
Physiological Psychology	60% (70)-	59% (70)-
Learning	76% (76)	73% (72)*
Sensation/Perception	65% (72)-	64% (65)-
Cognition/Memory	65% (73)-	73% (66)*
Personality	63% (69)-	58% (71)-
Social	62% (65)-	63% (64)-
Developmental	58% (63)-	55% (63)-
Abnormal	62% (69)-	61% (65)-

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Psychology 1301 Exit Exam

Action Description:

We were not pleased with the results from this cycle's exit exam. Most scores in specific areas decreased and even though the declines perhaps were not statistically significant, they still were declines.

To counteract this, specific actions will include having all of our TAs attend the Teaching Conference in August 2017. In addition, we have continued to review individual questions in each section and, in some cases, change the wording or replace the questions to make them more understandable. This, perhaps, had a slight effect in raising performance and we will continue to do this this upcoming year to see if this strategy can have a lasting impact. Another factor is that the students seemed to do well with the sub-tests during the semester and didn't do as well during the exit exam. Therefore, one of the issues may be of retention of materials over the course of the semester. The TAs will be instructed to review all of the areas on the exit exam during the final week of class and the students will be given a list of terms from which to re-familiarize themselves for the exit exam.

As always, the department chair will meet with the TAs and stress to them the need to present the material in ways that are germane to the students and are linked with experiences that a typical young person may have encountered, e.g., rather than using "nonsense" syllables in the mnemonic section of memory, using the learning and retention of grocery lists or names of others in the class or even materials from which to be tested.

In addition, the coordinator will:
1. send out very specific guidelines for what their students should take away from the course for both the unit tests and for the exit exam;
2. examine the performances for all areas on each exam during the course of the semester and compare them with the performance on the exit exam;
4. will encourage the instructors to utilize more on-line materials that the students can access.
5. instruct the TAs to periodically review the materials during the during the course of the semester, prior to the exit exam, to foster re-familiarization of the materials for the students.

In addition, it is the goal that the 70% criterion that is striven for on the final exam be in place for all the areas on the area exams. This should allow us to identify problems as the semester goes along.—This seems to have worked but needs to be viewed more consistently.

Generate, Apply And Communicate Scientific Findings

Goal Description:

The Bachelor of Science program in Psychology will provide students with opportunities to apply and communicate the scientific findings of their discipline.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Generate, Design, Apply And Communicate Scientific Knowledge

Learning Objective Description:

Students who complete the Bachelor of Science Program in Psychology will be able to generate, design and apply the results of scientific investigations and communicate their implications.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

PSYC 3101 (Statistics Lab) Assignments

Indicator Description:

The ability of students to conduct and understand research as well as apply and communicate results is assessed by means of a series of faculty-developed assignments for Psychology 3101 (Statistics Lab). The instruments requires students to: 1) choose research designs, compute statistics, and interpret outcomes. (Objectives 1 and 2); and interpreting results of scientific data, making decisions using the results based upon statistical probabilities, and making recommendations for follow-up work, either in the scientific or social environment. (Objectives 3 and 4). We're basically asking what do these data mean and why are they important?
Copies of the Assignments are attached.

Criterion Description:

Criterion for Objectives 1 and 2, 80% of psychology majors will receive a score that is deemed "acceptable" score (70% or higher) according to faculty-developed departmental rubric.

Findings Description:

In the fall 2016 semester, 84.24% of the students attained the aforementioned acceptable score on Objectives 1 and 2 and 71.20% scored at the 80% and above level. In the spring 2017 semester, 84.34% attained an acceptable score on Objectives 1 and 2 while 69.70% scored at least an 80% on Objectives 1 and 2.
Thus, students' performances this past academic year exceeded the previous years and we reached our goal, as described above.

With respect to communicating scientific outcomes: in the fall 2016 semester 71.30% reached the criterion of 70% while in the spring 2017 semester 71.90% reached criterion. 39.13% and 36.56% reached the 80% mark.

Again, our goal was reached with respect to communicating scientific outcomes.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Broad-based knowledge: **From the previous cycle:** We are very pleased with the performance of students taking the Exit Examination in Psychology 1301. Compared to the previous cycle our students performed at a higher level: in the fall the students performed better on 9 of 10 assessment factors; in the spring semester students performed better on five of 10 assessment factors. In the fall they dropped on one assessment factor and in the spring, two assessment factors. Although we did not meet the 70% criterion on all factors, we are happy that our instruction, based upon the Exit Exam, is progressing nicely.

In the upcoming academic year, the coordinator for the Introductory sections will: 1. send out very specific guidelines for what their students should take away from the course for both the unit tests and for the exit exam; 2. examine the performances for all areas on each exam during the course of the semester and compare them with the performance on the exit exam; 4. the instructors will be encouraged to utilize more on-line materials that the students can access. 5. TAs will be instructed to periodically review the materials during the during the course of the semester, prior to the exit exam, to foster re-familiarization of the materials for the students. In addition, it is the goal that the 70% criterion that is striven for on the final exam be in place for all the areas on the area exams. This should allow us to identify problems as the semester goes along.—This seems to have worked but needs to be viewed more consistently. *For the 2016/2017 academic year the results are less than impressive. There were decreases in scores in the majority of content areas and students appeared to do worse, overall, on the exit exam. We are not happy with these results and will strive to rectify any lapses that occurred over the past year.*

Generating and Communicating Scientific Knowledge: The chair will meet with the new instructor for the statistics course and lab and impress upon him the need to make the material more understandable to the students. He also will review the current types of embedded questions that are asked and attempt to update those with specific, real-life examples. Specific points will be to consistently, throughout the semester, assess how students generate and communicate scientific knowledge. In the fall 2015 semester 80% of the students attained acceptable scores for Objectives 1 and 2, generating scientific knowledge; in the spring 82% met criterion on each of these objectives. Concerning communication of scientific outcomes, 72% reached criterion and 74% reached criterion in the spring 2016 semester. While we did not meet criterion for Communication of scientific outcomes, we are still very encouraged by our results and by the progress our students are making.

In the upcoming academic year, we are keeping in place the strategies that we adopted this past year and will continue to "tweak" the assessment tools when it is deemed necessary. For both areas: 1. questions will be embedded in each exam, and addressed on each laboratory exercise, to assess the students' abilities to determine and explain statistical findings and effects; 2. the 80% of students successfully mastering the materials criterion will continue to be used--Overall, the criterion was met on one indicator and almost met on the other. What would be better, though, would be to have met criteria for both indicators for each semester and not just over the entire year. 3. if criteria is not met at each level of assessment further remedial tasks will be given--it appears that students did better as the semester progressed, indicating a positive learning curve and that earlier assignments had a positive effect on later assignments. Also, it may be presumed that later assignments reinforced the earlier assignments. 4. assignments including design selection (between vs. within, single factor vs. factorial, etc.) will be required of the Psychology 3101 class with an 80% of successful mastery of the materials criterion being used to determine effectiveness--this appears to have worked and we are considering raising our definition of mastery to 75%; 5. assignments with hands-on SPSS/Excel based calculations will be required of the Psychology 3101 class with an 80% criterion being used to determine effectiveness--this also seems to have worked; 6. hypothesis formation, testing, and interpretation will be required of the Psychology 3101 class with an 80% of students mastering the material being used to determine effectiveness--the laboratory assignments required these factors and we shall continue to use them; 7. students will be tasked on three separate research papers to analyze mock data and report decisions in APA-style results and Discussion sections. An 80% criterion will be used to determine effectiveness of the course to instill the ability to generate and communicate scientific data--we used two APA-formatted papers during the course of the semester and student scored between 74% and 82% on Objectives 1 and 2 and between 69% and 80% on Objectives 3 and 4. Again, they were much better in the spring than in the fall and this may be a result of the instructor being more comfortable with our students. I think we will probably keep him. *The chair, once again was pleased with the results of the Psychology 3101 exit exams as the students appear to be well-grounded in generating and communicating scientific knowledge.*

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

Broad-based knowledge: For the 2016-2017 academic year, we are not at all pleased with the performance of students taking the Exit Examination in Psychology 1301. Compared to the previous cycle our students performed at a lower level, although, it perhaps was not statistically different from the previous academic year. In both the fall and spring semesters, students performed worse on 8 of 10 assessment factors, compared with the previous cycle. Also, we only met criterion on 30% of the factors in the fall and 20% in the spring, data of which we are not proud. In the upcoming academic year, the coordinator for the Introductory sections will: 1. meet with TA and discuss specific guidelines for what their students should take away from the course for both the unit tests and for the exit exam; 2. examine the performances for all areas on each exam during the course of the

semester and compare them with the performance on the exit exam; 3. the instructors will be encouraged to utilize more on-line materials that the students can access. 4. TAs will be instructed to periodically review the materials during the during the course of the semester, prior to the exit exam, to foster re-familiarization of the materials for the students. In addition, it is the goal that the 70% criterion that is striven for on the final exam be in place for all the areas on the area exams. This should allow us to identify problems as the semester goes along.

Generating and Communicating Scientific Knowledge: The chair will meet with the instructor for the statistics course and lab and impress upon him the need to make the material more understandable to the students. He also will review the current types of embedded questions that are asked and attempt to update those with specific, real-life examples. Specific points will be to consistently, throughout the semester, assess how students generate and communicate scientific knowledge. In the fall 2016 semester 84% of the students attained acceptable scores for Objectives 1 and 2, generating scientific knowledge; in the spring 84% met criterion on each of these objectives. Concerning communication of scientific outcomes, 71% reached criterion and 71% reached criterion in the spring 2017 semester. While we did not meet the 80% criterion on "communicating scientific outcomes," we are encouraged by our results and by the progress our students are making. Thus, we are keeping in place the strategies that we adopted this past year and will continue to "tweak" the assessment tools when it is deemed necessary. For both areas: 1. questions will be embedded in each exam, and addressed on each laboratory exercise, to assess the students' abilities to determine and explain statistical findings and effects; 2. the 80% of students successfully mastering the materials criterion will continue to be used--Overall, the criterion was met on one indicator and almost met on the other. What would be better, though, would be to have met criteria for both indicators for each semester and not just over the entire year. 3. if criterion is not met at each level of assessment further remedial tasks will be given--it appears that students did better as the semester progressed, indicating a positive learning curve and that earlier assignments had a positive effect on later assignments. Also, it may be presumed that later assignments reinforced the earlier assignments. 4. assignments including design selection (between vs. within, single factor vs. factorial, etc.) will be required of the Psychology 3101 class with an 80% of successful mastery of the materials criterion being used to determine effectiveness--this appears to have worked and we are considering raising our definition of mastery to 75%; 5. assignments with hands-on SPSS/Excel based calculations will be required of the Psychology 3101 class with an 80% criterion being used to determine effectiveness--this also seems to have worked; 6. hypothesis formation, testing, and interpretation will be required of the Psychology 3101 class with an 80% of students mastering the material being used to determine effectiveness--the laboratory assignments required these factors and we shall continue to use them; 7. students will be tasked on three separate research papers to analyze mock data and report decisions in APA-style results and Discussion sections. An 80% criterion will be used to determine effectiveness of the course to instill the ability to generate and communicate scientific data--we used two APA-formatted papers during the course of the semester and student scored between 74% and 82% on Objectives 1 and 2 and between 69% and 80% on Objectives 3 and 4. Again, they were much better in the spring than in the fall and this may be a result of the instructor being more comfortable with our students. I think we will probably keep him. The chair, once again was pleased with the results of the Psychology 3101 exit exams. Students did well and appeared to be well-grounded in generating and communicating scientific knowledge.

Plan for Continuous Improvement

Closing Summary:

Broad-based knowledge:

First, we have changed the text for Psychology 1301 to a book that appears much more readable. This should engage the students more than previous texts in the course.

Specific plans for the academic year include:

1. sending out very specific guidelines for what their students should take away from the course;

2. examine the performances for those areas on each pertinent exam during the course of the semester;

3. instruct the TAs to make the materials for these areas more germane to student interest;

4. encouraged the instructors to utilize more on-line materials that the students can access.

Assessments will be ongoing and will consist of comparing performance on each area exam with performance on past and current final exams.

In addition, it is the goal that the 70% criterion that is striven for on the final exam be in place for all the areas on the area exams.
This should allow us to identify problems as the semester goes along.

Generating and Communicating Scientific Knowledge: The chair will continue to meet with the instructor for the statistics course and lab and impress upon him the need to make the material more understandable to the students. He also will review the current types of embedded questions

that are asked and attempt to update those with specific, real-life examples.
Specific points will be to consistently, throughout the semester, assess how students generate and communicate scientific knowledge.
For both areas:

1. questions will be embedded in each exam, and addressed on each laboratory exercise, to assess the students' abilities to determine and explain statistical findings and effects;

2. the 80% criterion will continue to be used;

3. if criteria is not met at each level of assessment further remedial tasks will be given;

4. assignments including design selection (between vs. within, single factor vs. factorial, etc.) will be required of the Psychology 3101/3301 class with an 80% criterion being used to determine effectiveness;

5. assignments with hands-on SPSS/Excel based calculations will be required of the Psychology 3101 class with an 80% criterion being used to determine effectiveness;

6. hypothesis formation, testing, and interpretation will be required of the Psychology 3101 class with an 80% criterion being used to determine effectiveness;

7. students will be tasked on three separate research papers to analyze mock data and report decisions in APA-style results and Discussion sections. An 80% criterion will be used to determine effectiveness of the course to instill the ability to generate and communicate scientific data.