

General Education Assessment Report for Fall 2017

Department: PSYCHOLOGY

Coordinator: Tadesse W. Giorgis, Ph.D.

Outcomes

General Education Outcomes addressed in Psychology 1100 – Introduction to Psychology

- 8) Understand the interaction among human beings, human cultures, and the natural environments within which they live.
- 9) Understand the basis of the scientific method including the formulation and testing of hypotheses using empirical observations and data collection.
- 10) Understand ways that scientific inquiry has affected human understanding of the natural world in which they live.
- 16) Understand the inter-relatedness of culture, race, class, gender and human identity and personality.

General Education Outcomes addressed in Psychology 2000 – Lifespan Development

- 8) Understand the interaction among human beings, human cultures, and the natural environments within which they live
- 9) Understand the basis of the scientific method including the formulation and testing of hypotheses using empirical observations and data collection
- 16) Understand the inter-relatedness of culture, race, class, gender and human identity and personality.

Method of Assessment

In both courses, the outcomes were assessed using a multiple-choice exam, developed by faculty in the department. The current instrument was revised in Fall 2012. A 20-item exam was used to assess outcomes in Psychology 1100, Introductory

Psychology. A 15-item exam was used to assess outcomes in Lifespan and Development, Psychology 2000. The exams were administered during the last week of the semester.

Student test data was received from 8 Gen ED classes offered in Fall of 2015, of which 5 sections of Intro to Psychology, and 3 sections of Lifespan Development.. In Intro Psych, 5 sections (from 4 different instructors) provided data for a total of 56 students. In LifeSpan, three sections provided data for a total of 69 students.

The primary criterion for success is a student correctly answering 70% of the items on the exam. For PSY 1100 70% success is met with 14 items. For PSY 2100, 70% success is met when a student successfully answers 10 items. In addition, 70% of each class should correctly answer 70% of the questions on the exam. This latter statistic is included because: 1) it is not skewed by extreme individual scores, as is the case with group means and 2) arguably, the goal of the assessment is to improve the performance of the greatest number of students rather than produce extremely high scores in a few.

ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Psychology 1100 – Introduction to Psychology

Assessment data were available for the two sections of PSY 1100 of one was on-line, and the other a face-to-face section. This could be considered a very unusual semester in terms of the low number of students completing the assessment instrument. In the face-to-face section only 58 % of the results met the set criteria each, while the second section met the set criterion with a very high performance of 82 % . Generally this should be noted that this is not a typical performance for Psyc 1100 in the last 10 semesters the assessment was conducted; after several years of meeting the standard in a

consistent manner , students scores really dropped to the lowest level . But this is not the trend for Intro to Psych which has been showing a steady progress over the years.

		Students completing end of semester assessment N = 28			
Professor	Section	Students completing Assessment	Mean Correct	Mean % Correct	(N) / % Students meeting criterion*
XXXXXX	1100.51	10	11.50	58	03/30
XXXXXX	1100.01	18	16.33	82	13/72
	Average		14.52	70	16/57

Criterion = 70% or 14 of 20 items

Table 2. Changes in Performance, Psych 1100 Spring 2009 – Fall 2017

	Spring 2010 (N=161)	Fall 2010 (N=143)	Spring 2011 (N=106)	Fall 2011 (N=154)	Spring 2012 (N=86)	Fall 2012 (N=92)	Spring 2013 (N=68)	Fall 2013 (N=143)	Spring 2014 (N =26)	Fall 2014 (N = 129)
% meeting criterion	68%	85%	83%	58%	38%	52%	60%	96%	81%	81%
	Spring 2015 (N= 49)	Fall 2015 (N = 56)	Spring 2016 (N= 26)	Fall 2016 (N=68)	Spring 2017 (N=51)	Fall 2017 (N=28)				
	80%	79%	70%	72%	72%	70%				

Psychology 2000/2040 – Lifespan Psychology

Assessment data are available for all the three Lifespan classes for Fall 2015. Two sections did very well 100% of the students meeting the criterion. But the third section did not do very well with only 52 % of the students meeting the criterion. The Lifespan class has been doing very well over the last four semesters. It will be interesting to know why a significant number of students in this section still did not do particularly well.

**Table 3. Final Assessment Scores, Psychology 2000 Fall 2017
N=60**

Professor	Section	Students completing Assessment	Mean Correct*	Mean % Correct	(N) / % Students meeting criterion*
XXXXX	2000.01	23	11.30	75	18/78
XXXXX	2000.51	14	12.80	85	12/86
XXXXX	2040.51	17	10.70	71	12/71
XXXXX	2040.01	15	11.30	75	13/75
		Overall Average	11.00	73	

Criterion = 70% or 10 of 15 items

	Spring 2010 (N=62)	Fall 2010 (N=79)	Spring 2011 (N=50)	Fall 2011 (N=154)	Spring 2012 (N=86)	Fall 2012 (N=88)	Spring 2013 (N=44)	Fall 2013 (N=81)	Spring 2014 (N=52)	Fall 2014 (N=55)
% meeting criterion	47%	76%	94%	58%	100%	82%	88%	83 %	81%	84%
	Spring 2015 (N= 69)	Fall 2015 (N= 69)	Spring 2016 (N=60)	Fall 2016 (N=48)	Spring 2017 (N=39)	Fall 2017 (N=60)				
	77%	86%	72%	100%	80%	73%				

Table 4. Changes in Performance, PSY 2000, Spring 2009 – Fall 2017

Interpretations/Conclusion

Performance in PSYC 1100 for this semester was outstanding and has gone up significantly over the last five years. In Spring 2012 only 38 % of the of students correctly answered 70% of the test items, in Fall 2012 the number increased to 52 %, in Spring 2013, the number increased 60 % , in Fall 2013, the number climbed to 96 %, and the last couple of years the number was 81 % and 84 %. This is a remarkable progress . This exceptionally high performance could be attributed to some of the actions taken by the Department's General Education Committee . Psych 1100 failed to meet the criterion of 70% of students getting at least 70% for several times in recent years. Under the leadership of the then Department Chairperson, currently the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Committee decided that the performance of this course must be looked at closely. In response to this poor performance the Departments General Education Committee held a series of meetings and discussed the possibility of developing an instructional package that will serve as a guideline for all general education course instructors to follow. The Coordinators for Psyc 100 met with the course instructors individually to discuss the importance of general education assessment. The committee is also reviewing the current assessment instruments to see if improvements could be made. In addition, the General Education Assessment Coordinator held a series of meetings with all General Education instructors individually to make sure that they understand the significance of the assessment process.

Overall , PSY 2000, Lifespan, continues to perform well these classes are taught by instructors who have taught this course for a number of years, However, the assessment instrument for the new GenED, Psyc2040 should be reexamined.

Decision Making Using Findings

For the last several semesters, the department's Gen Ed committee has spent considerable time working on re-assessing outcomes and revising the exam for these courses. The committee is making a progress, we have now developed a General Education Instructors Package to serve as a guideline how to conduct the assessment process. The credit mainly goes to Dr. Jim Davis who was instrumental in doing this enormous project. In addition, we now have a fully revised assessment instrument for both Psych 1100 and Psych 2000. But the work is still in progress. The discussion how to further improve the assessment is an ongoing process. However, the results of the assessment suggest that GenEd courses could benefit from an experienced faculty coordinator who meets regularly with faculty, and training around course objectives and how to address these issues to develop an appropriate assessment instrument.

Demonstrating Improved Student Learning

The assessment for PSY 2000/2040 indicates that students are performing at an appropriate level. The assessments for PSY 1100, suggests that though headed in the right direction we may have to reexamine how this course should be taught in the future.

Publicizing Student Learning

The results from the assessment will be shared with faculty and will be displayed on the department's assessment webpage, which shows outcomes for these classes and the assessment of the major. The assessment webpage is linked to, and accessed through, the department's homepage. A written report which shows assessment results for each section will be available in the psychology department office. All undergraduate faculty

members will receive an emailed copy of the report, and its findings will be discussed at undergraduate committee meeting.

Accomplishments and Challenges

The Department has added a new course, Psych 2040: Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence as a General Education course. The Department has to discuss some strategies for implementation Overall, student performance on the PSYCH 1100 assessment is going up with very high numbers , and this is an indication that things are starting to get better. The challenge is making sure that PSYC 1100, which is taken by many students in the college, addresses core competencies, and that students meet the criterion. This will involve looking at the assessment, but also the organization and teaching of the course and the selection and training of faculty. As repeatedly mentioned in previous General Education Reports, the next big challenge for the Department's General Education Committee is to discuss the possibilities of conducting the assessment tests online. On an experimental basis, the Department has started implementing an online administration of the assessment for Psyc 1100, and it is progressing very well. The next big challenge for the Department's General Education Committee is discuss the possibilities of conducting all the assessment tests online. This might involve the whole Department , a step that needs a thorough planning and implementation strategy.