

Keynote Speakers

Developing the Skills of Psychological Literacy and Critical Thinking in our Students: Without Data We are Just More Hot Air

Diane F. Halpern

Virtually every department lists the enhancement of critical thinking as a desired outcome from its educational program, but very few conduct meaningful assessments to determine if their students became better thinkers. More recently, the idea that students should be psychologically literate, which means that they should recognize and use the basic tenets of psychology, is also becoming a popular outcome for psychology majors. There is an old axiom that we measure what we care about. If departments are not measuring if their students are achieving those outcomes we list as desirable, then our claims are nothing more than hot air. Suggestions for assessing critical thinking and psychological literacy using commercially available products and home-grown versions will be presented.

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Opening Workshops and Sessions

Using Peer Assessment to Support the Development of Critical Thinking, Meta Cognition, and Clear Efficient Communication: Friends Don't Let Friends Think Alone!

Steve Joordens and Dwayne Pare

In our presentation we will describe the research and pedagogy underlying peerScholar (www.peerScholar.com), an internet-based program we created to bring written assignments back into a 1500 student Introductory Psychology classroom. Not only does this program allow the logistics of peer-assessment to be possible in any size class but, more importantly, it does so in a manner that represents a pedagogical enhancement over traditional written assignments. This enhancement is a direct reflection of how much, and how, students learn as they themselves perform assessments of peers. The pedagogical features of a peerScholar assignment will first be described in the context of a demonstration of the system. We will then provide the results of several studies showing, among other things, that peer-assessment can be used fairly – even as summative assessment – and that as little as one exposure to the work for their peers can enhance a student's meta-cognitive awareness of the quality of their own work. Time permitting, we will also highlight our current work focused on quantitatively assessing a student's ability to assess peers; another metric that can be used to evaluate and develop critical thought.

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Assessing Student Skills in the Undergraduate Psychology Major: A Long Road to Be Traveled (But With GPS Navigation)

R. Eric Landrum and Maureen A. McCarthy

Using the APA (2007) Guidelines for Undergraduate Education in Psychology (“Guidelines”) as an organizing framework, in the first part of this symposium will we briefly review the 10 guidelines and provide our summary of the current availability of adequate psychometric assessment tools, making best practices recommendations in areas where an evidence-based decision is possible. In the second part of this symposium, we will highlight those Guideline areas where no assessments are currently available. Furthermore, based on a comprehensive review of the literature, we will offer specific recommendations as to next steps where instruments should be developed to measure the skills emphasized in the Guidelines. We also present a preliminary framework/paradigm where skills may be possibly measured to fulfill multiple Guideline goals that do not have available measures. Audience participation will be vital for brainstorming the next steps in the development of assessment tools sophisticated enough to measure multiple skills with adequate psychometric qualities (i.e., validity and reliability). Participants should leave this symposium with concrete and better developed ideas about how skills can be measured; collaborative opportunities may also result by attending this symposium.

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A Comprehensive System for Conducting Quality Assessment

Keston H. Fulcher and Sherry L. Serdikoff

In recent years, the question of whether academic degree programs are conducting assessment has evolved to whether these programs are conducting quality assessment. By quality we mean assessment that answers important questions, produces results that are trustworthy, and leads to logical interventions to improve programs. According to Shavelson (2010), quality assessment connotes direct measurement of learning that can withstand the scrutiny of external stakeholders. If one of the primary roles for assessment is to inform program improvement, as suggested by Ewell (2002), then assessment should be evaluated based on the quality of information it provides (Erwin, 1991), the ability of this information to address important questions about the program (Pieper, Fulcher, Sundre, & Erwin, 2008), and the program’s response to this information. It is from this perspective that James Madison University developed a comprehensive assessment system comprised of three components: submission of assessment report, rating of the report, and feedback/support.

Every summer, each program’s assessment coordinator submits an assessment report for the previous academic year. The report includes six sections that are consistent with several models of assessment, including Suskie’s (2009): (a) objectives; (b) course/experiences that linked to the objectives; (c) methodology; (d) results; (e) dissemination of results; and (f) use of results. Two raters who work in the James Madison University Center for Assessment and Research Studies independently evaluate each assessment report using a 14-element rubric evaluated via a 4-point behaviorally anchored scale. After evaluating the assessment reports, the Center for Assessment Research Studies supplies a feedback document to each program that includes the rubric, the scores that program’s assessment earned for each element and comments associated with the ratings. In addition, the Center provides the program assessment coordinators additional support, which includes a *How-To* manual for assessment, an exemplar

assessment report, and contact information to a service that provides one-on-one assessment consultation for academic degree programs.

Workshop participants will be trained on this system, which is used for assessing psychology degree programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels as well as other academic programs at James Madison University. Participants will identify the six steps in the basic assessment model, evaluate examples of real assessment reports, calibrate their ratings to other attendees in the workshop, and provide feedback about the utility of this system at their institutions.

Conference Workshops and Sessions

Linking University- and Department-Level Learning Outcomes to Career-Related Skills

Drew Appleby

Assessment takes place at various levels within institutions of higher education and is often performed to determine if students have developed the skills that will make them competitive in today's challenging job market. At IUPUI, we are responsible for assessing our university's Principles of Undergraduate Learning (PULs) as well as our department's more specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). This presentation reveals a strategy to establish the linkage between these two sets of academic expectations in a way that helps our students understand that both their department's SLOs and their university's PULs form the basis of a comprehensive curriculum designed to provide them with abundant opportunities to develop the skills they will need to prepare them for the world of work.

Creating a New Model to Involve Students in All Phases of Assessment

Kenn Barron, Marjorie Levinstein, Alexandria Marston, Donna Melchione, Haley Mertins, Oksana Naumenko, Andrew Swinson, and Michael Stoloff

As faculty, we face a host of challenges when trying to develop and sustain a healthy assessment culture in our academic departments. Most notably, we often lack time and resources to accomplish what is needed for running an effective assessment program, with assessment competing with our other teaching, research, and service activities. To combat these issues, incentives can be given by providing faculty release time to coordinate departmental assessment as part of their service activities or to highlight the unique opportunities that can occur by publishing assessment results as research activities. However, this symposium will outline an alternative approach that incorporates departmental assessment into a teaching activity. Specifically, we just completed the first year of having a faculty member teach a course on assessment and program evaluation with students in that course taking on primary roles to design, collect, analyze, write up, and audit our assessment activities. Using a panel discussion format (including the faculty member teaching the class, undergraduate students from the class, and the head of our department), we will provide an overview of this new approach, share the

benefits that we experienced (including some surprising results), and open the floor for discussion between the panelists and audience.

“How Can My Grandmother’s Life Only be Worth a B?!”: Lessons in Creating and Assessing Self-Reflective Student Writing Assignments

Jennifer R. Daniels and Mignon Montpetit

Students in psychology classes are often admonished to see psychology everywhere. To that end, instructors often create assignments that ask students to find an example of psychology in their own lives. In the topics of psychology that typically call for the student to share personal and potentially sensitive information, it is important to ensure that the assignment itself properly serves student learning outcomes. This can occur in three ways. First, an instructor that will be asking for this kind of participation from the student has a responsibility to instill an atmosphere of respect and protection of students’ private information. Second, one should create an assignment that is not solely self-reflective and whose pedagogical purpose is transparent. Finally, the assessment feedback should be delivered in such a way that learning outcomes are prioritized but the content of the story is honored. In this workshop, examples of reflective assignments appropriate for different levels of experience (e.g., from introductory classes to highly specified senior seminars) will be presented. In addition, this workshop will offer concrete ways to deliver assessment feedback that encourages instructors to separate the quality from the emotional content of the assignment (e.g., using Jing to deliver audio-visual feedback).

One Hundred Sections, 40 Instructors: Assessing in a High-Enrollment Introductory Course

Diane Finley and Swazette Young

In this session we will discuss the process of creating a common assessment plan from objectives to exam for a high enrollment Introduction to Psychology course (PSY 1010). Five years ago, the College instituted a college-wide assessment program that was required for all general education courses. PSY 1010 enrolls about 4000 students per year in over 100 sections. These sections are taught by over 40 different instructors, some full-time, most adjunct. The course fulfills a general education requirement and is also a prerequisite for many majors on campus. We began with a discussion of the purpose of the course and our goals for students who complete the course. We will describe this process of analyzing our goals while considering other constituents such as the Allied Health Division. We will discuss the process of determining course objectives and outcomes and required assignments. We will share the struggle to develop a common final assessment that would be approved by the College committee. Finally we will share results from the first two years of using the assessment process as well as the tweaks we have made to the course and the exam.

Strategic Assessment on a Shoestring: Making Assessment Work at a Small University

Afshin Gharib, William Phillips, LeeAnn Bartolini, Gail Matthews, and Mathew Davis

Academic departments everywhere are faced with the challenge of performing self assessment. At smaller universities, this is complicated by limited resources. Over the past several years, our department has been engaged in the process of assessment and external review and by necessity we have been accomplishing this task on a shoestring budget. This workshop will review our process and then brainstorm on how participants could conduct assessment in their departments on a small budget without sacrificing quality. We began with a review of the department student learning objectives, rewording them to make realistic evaluation possible and aligning them with recommendations made by the American Psychological Association. To aid in assessment of these SLO's, the faculty created an exam to compare freshmen and seniors. Other assessments included developing a rubric to review senior theses and using focus groups to get feedback from students. In the workshop we will discuss these and other low cost but high quality assessment techniques as well as how to move from assessment to tangible changes in the curriculum on a limited budget. Participants will develop their own shoestring assessment methods, starting with their departmental SLO's and considering how to maximize the return on their investments.

How to Assess Outcomes in a Psychological Careers Class

Georgina S. Hammock and Deborah S. Richardson

This workshop is designed to review how a Psychological Careers course developed based on formal and informal assessments of overall curriculum needs and specific course objectives. We will discuss how the course has been modified in response to results of assessments, and we will review how the assessment tools changed as the outcomes for the course evolved. Our assessment of this course has evolved through several iterations over a period of about 7 years, from broad questions about interests in psychological content, to questions addressing specific objectives of the course, to inventories designed to assess response to specific assignments. We will also review data from exit questionnaires and interviews that consider the role of the Careers class in meeting broad curricular objectives.

In the course of our review, we will examine our mistakes as we have developed the course and the assessments. The workshop will provide participants with examples of assessment tools based on evolution of course content in the Careers class. We will conclude with an evaluation of ongoing concerns about student performance in this class that links to our objectives and assessment.

A 5-Year Follow-Up: Assessing Cognitive Outcomes

Charles M. Harris Matthew Lee, Jeanne Martino-McAllister, Dena Pastor, and Krisztina Varga

This symposium will present the strategies and results of five years of annually assessing cognitive outcomes in introductory psychology courses. The assessment model was initially presented at the Best Practices for Teaching Introduction to Psychology Conference. The

structure of the assessment model includes (a) goals and objectives for cognitive outcomes, (b) a scenario-based instrument that assesses students' research and interpretative skills, (c) a scenario-based instrument that assesses students' thought processes about diversity and multicultural issues, (d) annual assessment of entering freshmen, and (e) follow-up assessment of students during the second semester of their sophomore year. We will present data depicting student changes in cognitive outcomes. We will describe how we developed and periodically revised our cognitive-outcome goals and our scenario-based instruments. Also, we will present related data from a recent campus climate study in which students reported their perceptions of the extent to which diversity issues are addressed campus-wide and within the classroom. We will address the benefits of systematic, continuing assessment for course development, course redesign, developing core concepts for multiple-section courses, and facilitating continuity within and consistency across multiple-sections of courses taught by experienced and first-year instructors. Interactive discussion will be encouraged through the presentation.



Assessing the Impact of Multi-Methods on Achievement, Attitude, and Attendance in a Large Introductory Psychology Class

Kerry T. Hinkle, Firas J. Marenkos, and Kelly J. Dupont

In today's economic environment, universities across the United States are increasing class size in order to offset shrinking state revenue. Yet, regardless of the class size, instructors remain concerned about the same student outcomes: achievement, attitude and attendance. Toward this end, a number of studies have been conducted which examined the impact of various extra credit assignments on class performance. Specifically, chapter quizzes, student generated questions, and humor, as applied to small class settings have been found to be useful tools for encouraging reading, enhancing grades, and increasing attendance. The purpose of the present study was to measure the impact of all three methods, sequentially applied in a large introductory psychology class (N=160) on student achievement, attitude, and attendance. The implications of this study will provide critical information for instructors and institutions with burgeoning classes, necessitated by the reality of declining budgets, while remaining accountable for high quality instruction.



Teaching and Assessing Scientific Literacy in Psychology

Mark Krause, Daniel Corts, Ian Harrington, Mark Krause, Erin Stoffel, and Mark Vincent

Until recently psychological science has been conspicuously absent from mainstream discussion of scientific literacy. Psychological science has a major impact on the lives of individuals and on society, and therefore should be incorporated into measures of scientific literacy. A critical element of scientific literacy is "civic scientific literacy"—the ability understand the role of scientific knowledge in influencing personal, social, and institutional affairs. Thus, scientifically literate individuals should be versed in the terminology and concepts of psychology, and should be able to apply this knowledge in their evaluation of popular media reports of our field. Contributors to this symposium will present various ways of teaching and

assessing scientific literacy in psychology. We will present results showing the pre- and post-test improvements general psychology students make in their understanding of popular media reports of psychology [$F(3,51) = 19.3, p < 0.001$]. We will also present an assessment tool that measures student understanding of psychological terms and concepts that are most frequently used in popular media reports of psychology. Contributors have also measured students' recognition of the status of psychology as a science, with significant improvements occurring at pre- and post-test intervals [$t(55)=2.4, p<0.05$]. Similarly, students also showed significant improvements on pre- and post-tests scores on a scale of scientific literacy [$t(55)=2.3, p < 0.05$]. In this symposium we will present details on these studies and discuss future directions toward integrating psychology into broader discussions of scientific literacy.

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Using Online Evaluations to Assess Classroom-based Courses: Issues and Considerations

Accalia R. Kusto, Karen Wilson, and Janet Kuebli

Course evaluations are used for a variety of purposes in higher education, including hiring and promotion decisions (Richardson, 2005). The paper-and-pencil method of assessment has been the traditional way to obtain student feedback about a course. With the advent of technologies, such as WebCT, Blackboard, and online survey tools, new options exist for assessing course success. While the use of Internet-based course evaluations may be beneficial (Heath, Lawyer, and Rasmussen, 2007), questions remain regarding aspects of their implementation – both ethical and practical. The use of incentives and the privacy and anonymity of responses are examples of ethical concerns (McCormack, 2005). Richardson's (2005) review of the literature raises practical questions about how response rates and the mode of administering evaluations affect course ratings. Other considerations involve the content of online course evaluations: how to ensure convergent validity (with paper-and-pencil measures) and whether to use these evaluations to assess learning outcomes. In examining these types of issues, we will draw on relevant literature, as well as two of the presenters' recent experiences with departmental attempts to implement online evaluations. The presentation will end with recommendations for and discussion of the best practices for assessing classroom-based courses with online evaluations.

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Assessing Research Skills Across the Curriculum

Eva Lawrence, Karen Hayes, and Sarah Estow

Most undergraduate psychology programs expect students to learn research methods (Brewer, 2006), and this is consistent with the American Psychological Association's recommended learning outcomes (APA, 2007). Two of the learning outcomes at Guilford College state that students should be able to "to read and evaluate primary research articles" and "design, conduct, and write-up psychological research." One way that we assess these outcomes is by administering a standardized exam to senior psychology majors. Although the exam is useful for assessing content knowledge, it does not provide an in-depth assessment of students' practical skills. Moreover, this method does not assess student learning across the curriculum. During this symposium, we will explain how we assess research skills at three key points in our

curriculum – during the introductory course, research methods, and the senior capstone. Students take these courses in sequence and the skills achieved in the earlier courses set the stage for learning in the later courses. Presenters will explain assignments from each of these courses that assess our research-focused learning outcomes. We will discuss how the assignments tie into the research sequence as well as how assignments, activities, and resources have evolved based on previous evaluations.



Assessment in a Box: A Workshop to Get You Up and Running on Multimethod Program Assessment

Brian Loher

Principle 3 in the revised *Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology* (Halpern et al., 2010) calls for creation and maintenance of a coherent psychology curriculum. Obviously, a single measure is inadequate to evaluate the range of competencies to be developed by an undergraduate psychology program. The Mansfield University Psychology Department has used multimethod assessment to examine and adapt its curriculum for over 15 years. The purpose of this workshop is to provide participants with information and materials relevant to the design and application phase of a program assessment process. Updated from a continuing education workshop presented at the APA national conference (Loher, Keller, Craig, Launius, & Murray, 2007), we will cover everything from SLOs in syllabi to surveys, and presentation ratings to Senior Seminar focus groups. Participants in the workshop will receive a hyper-linked CD containing the latest version of measures in use at Mansfield. The files can serve as examples or templates. All files are in formats that can be readily adapted to local goals and conditions.



Developing a Department Assessment Plan

Maureen McCarthy, Pam Marek, Thomas Pusateri, and Dana S. Dunn

Despite an increasing emphasis on accountability and assessment, faculty members may view departmental standardization of student learning outcomes and the assignment of these outcomes to specific courses as an infringement on faculty autonomy. Consequently, faculty members may resist the adoption and assessment of such standardized outcomes (Ewell, 2008; Graff & Birkenstein, 2008). However, assessment of student learning outcomes continues to receive significant attention from regional accreditation bodies (i.e., SACS, WACS, North Central, Middle States), institutional research offices, and in some cases, departments of psychology. Yet, measuring outcomes systematically and effectively remains a challenge for most departments.

This session will provide participants with general criteria for developing a comprehensive assessment plan based on learning outcomes in the *APA (2007) Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major* and recommendations for assessment of student learning outcomes (Dunn, McCarthy, Baker, Halonen, & Hill, 2007; Dunn, McCarthy, Baker, & Halonen, in press). In addition to providing criteria, we will discuss recommendations for rubric development and implementation, potential sources of data available through campus

institutional research offices, and collection of supplementary information relevant to assessment via syllabus audits and faculty surveys.

Using AAC&U Rubrics to Assess Introductory Psychology's Contribution to General Education

Richard L. Miller, B. Jean Mandernach, and Jeanne Butler

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) embarked on an initiative in 2007 to develop an alternative to the prevailing push for a single score purported to represent student learning. Through its Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) project, AAC&U suggests that what faculty and students do through teaching and learning constitutes a complex set of processes and that learning produces a broader set of outcomes than current standardized tests measure. To capture this complex set of processes, rubrics were developed (Rhodes, 2010) that can be used to determine the extent to which an introductory psychology course contributes to a set of essential learning outcomes inherent in a good general education program. This set of rubrics addresses the following learning outcomes: inquiry and analysis, critical thinking, creative thinking, written communication, oral communication, reading, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork, problem solving, civic engagement, intercultural knowledge and competencies, ethical reasoning, foundational skills for lifelong learning and integrative learning. In this symposium, we will describe the VALUE rubrics for each of the learning outcomes and discuss how they can be used to evaluate student learning in an introductory psychology course.

Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Create an Active Assessment Model for Courses

Randall E. Osborne and Paul Kriese

This workshop will assist faculty in developing active, assessable objectives for courses. Using Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, and a five-part model, we will illustrate how to move beyond grades and affective objectives for assessment. We will discuss ways to assess the degree to which students are achieving the competencies faculty value from their courses. Guided questions and an objective assessment form, will assist faculty in developing an assessment plan for psychology courses. We will have an interactive discussion on the development of formative and summative assessments, that is assessments that indicate progress toward, and achievement of, expected outcomes.

Designing and Evaluating Creative Writing Assignments in Psychology Courses

Jennifer L. Pemberton and Paige Rogers

While many Psychology instructors recognize the importance of including writing as a tool for learning in their courses, they may shy away from giving writing assignments due to the

time commitment they anticipate grading such assignments requires. Further, as non-Composition instructors, they question how to grade written work beyond an evaluation of course content. This workshop will guide participants through a sample creative writing assignment which asks students to implement theories and objectives learned from the course into a creative piece involving scrapbooking. Participants will also receive assistance in constructing grading rubrics to facilitate the process of grading creative written assignments both effectively and efficiently.

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Contributing Psychological Expertise to Institutional Outcomes Assessment Initiatives

Thomas Pusateri and Sue Frantz

Faculty in psychology possess skills in research design, statistical analysis, and interpersonal communication that can make the process of assessment more understandable and palatable to faculty in other disciplines. The presenters will discuss how they contributed psychological expertise to institution-wide assessment initiatives at a community college, a private liberal arts college, and two regional universities:

- Articulation of institution-wide student learning outcomes and processes for assessing those outcomes that satisfy external mandates (e.g., regional accrediting associations, state boards of education);
- Use of standardized examinations for assessing outcomes in general education (e.g., College Assessment of Academic Proficiency) and academic degree programs (e.g., Major Field Test in Psychology);
- Development and implementation of institutional rubrics for assessing (a) student writing across the curriculum, (b) student narratives that demonstrate evidence of global learning skills and attitudes, and (c) the quality of processes and outcomes articulated in assessment reports submitted by academic degree and general education programs;
- Promoting alignment of course learning outcomes with degree outcomes and institution-wide outcomes, and the development of embedded assessments for evaluating those outcomes;
- Design of surveys for assessing student attitudes towards institutional learning outcomes; and Faculty training on implementation of these initiatives.

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Assessing Community Service Learning Outcomes: Academic Content and Social Responsibility

Monica Reis-Bergan

Many educators believe that community service learning is valuable learning experience for students. The experience is believed to enhance classroom learning as well as prepare students for life after graduation. In this talk I will describe strategies for assessing knowledge of course content from service learning reflection assignments. I will also discuss scales and questions that target the impact of community service learning on social responsibility and future willingness to volunteer.

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Assessing Information Literacy in the Psychology Major: Where, When, and How? An Interactive Workshop

Loretta Rieser-Danner

Information Literacy (IL) is an APA recommended goal for all undergraduate Psychology programs (APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major) and is defined by the Association of College and Research Libraries (1989) as “the array of knowledge and skills necessary to identify the information needed for a task and then to locate, understand, evaluate, and use that information efficiently and effectively within appropriate ethical and legal limits”. IL is a skill that we assume our Psychology majors develop, as they are routinely required to complete literature reviews, research proposals, and other written products that require the identification, evaluation, and effective use of information available through a variety of sources. As faculty, we routinely grade those papers looking for evidence that students have chosen appropriate and reliable information sources, that they have summarized that information appropriately, and that they have evaluated it accurately, among other things. But, do we routinely measure their level of “information literacy” in this grading practice?

The proposed workshop will lead participants through a series of exercises designed to allow them to:

1. identify where, within their own programs, IL is demonstrated by students
2. discuss and develop specific student learning outcomes related to IL
3. familiarize themselves with multiple strategies for assessing components of IL within courses and across undergraduate programs
4. learn about resources available to assist them in the development of additional IL measures

Participants will leave this workshop with materials and resources they can use to immediately begin assessing IL within their own programs.

Program Assessment: Measuring the Mission

Tracey Ryan and Dave Porter

Why do so many faculty members find program review and assessment demanding, time consuming and even threatening? Most of us realize that some type of “accountability” is necessary, given the rising costs of a college education. We understand the need to clearly define and articulate our program goals and develop strategies to measure these outcomes. Furthermore, as psychologists, we are accustomed to managing and analyzing data. Why then, does this assessment process create such a stir?

Problems often surface when groups of faculty don’t take the time (or have the opportunity) to work together in collaboration with their administration to clearly define their program mission. Developing a sense of mutual trust and authentic commitment to the program mission is essential. Ensuring that this mission is aligned with the university mission is the most important first step in the assessment process. Once this is accomplished, program goals and objectives are likely to emerge from our mutual shared understanding of the mission. Program assessment then becomes both meaningful and collegial.

In this workshop, Tracey Ryan and Dave Porter will describe several innovative activities to help faculty visualize and articulate the mission of their respective psychology programs. Strategies to involve resistant faculty and to build trust between colleagues will be described. Participants will also have the opportunity to share some of their toughest program assessment challenges and get feedback from the presenters and other participants.

Extreme Makeover: Redesigning the Major to Support Student Success

Sandra A. Segó, Anne E. Stuart, and Valerie T. Smith

Successful assessment depends on the foundational structure of the department and institution. As more campuses move to measure accurately both course and institutional objectives, some are discovering that the foundation is in need of repair. By completing a course map, we discovered that upper-level students were expected to show mastery of skills that had never been introduced or reinforced at the lower levels. In keeping with our campus initiatives to enact a curriculum plan that affords students a skill-based trajectory, we have begun to revise the structure and content of existing courses to lay the groundwork for a developmental integration of the skills required to master the APA learning outcomes. Changes are being implemented at each classification level to scaffold Generation Y students in the relevant skills needed for success. For example, freshman courses reinforce basic communication skills through the review of undergraduate research articles. A new course at the sophomore level addresses the requirements of APA style and information fluency. A lab was added to our advanced statistics course to introduce students to SPSS and deepen their understanding of statistics in research. These changes afford students the opportunity to develop the abilities necessary for upper-division courses, such as experimental methods.

Working With Assessment-Impaired Faculty

Randolph Smith

Because psychology is one of the leading disciplines in the assessment movement, it is not unusual for psychology faculty to find themselves in assessment leadership positions on their campuses. In such positions, psychologists often find themselves working with nonpsychology faculty who may be ignorant or afraid of, disinterested in, or antagonistic toward assessment. In such cases, the psychologist faces a major challenge in trying to help foster a culture of assessment. This presentation will focus on a case study of just such a situation.

I was chosen/drafted to serve as the Interim Director for Lamar University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), a requirement for Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) reaccreditation. The QEP Planning Committee, of which I was a part, had developed the ACES Program (Active and Collaborative Engagement of Students) as the school's QEP. The program is focused on increasing student involvement in core and developmental courses through increased active and collaborative learning. In the second (and subsequent) years of ACES, faculty members who are interested in using such learning techniques apply to participate in the program and to be designated as ACES Fellows.

In the first year of the program, however, because of a late campus visit by the SACS onsite committee, it was not possible to issue a call for participants. Thus, an already-formed group of English faculty working on ENGL1302 (the second first-year composition course) were

asked to participate in the ACES program. All were full-time instructors (nontenure track); not surprisingly, they agreed to participate. Also not surprisingly, these English instructors had little knowledge or experience in assessment other than the typical grading that takes place in a class.

During the Fall 2009 semester, Lamar's SACS Liaison (an English faculty member) and I met with these seven instructors several times to provide training in active/collaborative techniques and assessment approaches. Assessment of the QEP is essential because SACS mandates that the QEP is designed to affect student learning. The symposium/workshop will focus on the training that I provided to the faculty to help them become more assessment-aware and prepared to assess student learning in new ways. (Ideally, I will have outcome data to present by the time the Best Practices Conference convenes—our semester is just ending, so I have no concrete data at the time of writing this proposal.) In addition, I will solicit audience participation and input based on my assumption that other psychology faculty have found themselves in similar situations.



Best Practices for a Successful Psychology Major

Michael Stoloff, Nicholas Curtis, JoAnne Brewster, M. Elyse Ramsey, Krista Vetrano, and Maureen McCarthy

Best practices for the undergraduate psychology major have been based upon discussions among learned scholars (APA, 2007; APA, 2008; Dunn, McCarthy, Baker, Halonen, & Hill, 2007; Halpern, 2009 ; McGovern, 1993). Through a course-catalog review and a survey of 110 psychology department heads, we evaluated the achievement of recommended curricular and extra-curricular practices and correlated these with four measures of success: (1) students' knowledge of psychology as measured by MFAT or ACAT scores, (2) percentage of majors entering graduate school, (3) percent of students completing the major, and (4) perceived student satisfaction. Among other variables, we focused on course offerings, requirements, and sequencing; opportunities to interact with faculty outside of the classroom; research and practicum experiences; and perceived resource adequacy. There is no one ideal psychology program, and there are many ways to achieve success. Several curricular and non-curricular practices correlate with our measures of student success and satisfaction. Interestingly, some logical practices that intuitively seem like they should correlate with success were not significantly correlated in our sample. During our symposium we will present our findings, answer questions and lead a discussion. Our methodology is far from perfect, and many of our findings need to be replicated to establish their validity. However, we feel our approach represents a new way to evaluate best practices recommendations, and suggests a new direction for program assessment practice.



Developing and Assessing Learning Outcomes in Research Methods and Experimental Psychology

Adrienne L. Williamson, Pam Marek, Beth R. Kirsner, and Jennifer Willard

Faculty teaching research methods/experimental psychology have collaborated to identify learning outcomes, share assignments, and create assessments. Consistent with APA (2007) guidelines, student learning outcomes encompass three broad skill areas: research design,

quantitative literacy, and communication. In this symposium, we will discuss our process for developing and refining assessment tools aligned with our outcomes, such as a multiple-choice pretest and posttest to examine specific aspects of the three skill areas.

Regarding communication skills, we require methods students to prepare a literature review and experimental students to prepare a proposal. Although we do not have a standard rubric across courses, we recorded and combined percentage grades for each section of students' written work. We also developed several pretest-posttest exercises for evaluating mastery of APA style. One exercise involves proofreading and correcting APA errors (see also Freimuth, 2008). Another exercise incorporates a jigsaw classroom activity that allows students to learn from each other.

We will review the results of these assessments, including their strengths and limitations. We will also note the challenges involved in standardizing assessment procedures. Finally, we will comment on our ongoing discussions of actions we might take to bolster student achievement.

Undergraduate Psychology Assessment: Current Practice and a Future with Embedded Assessment

Josie Wilson, Joseph A. Mayo, John Harrell, Meg Milligan, and Lani Fujitsubo

In the face of accreditation pressures that drive assessment-based accountability in higher education, outcome assessment is often misunderstood, presenting challenges that can hinder effective assessment strategies. In this symposium, we discuss assessment approaches at two diverse public institutions and the implementation of embedded assessment within undergraduate psychology education.

Along with a psychology curriculum committee that oversees assessment, Troy University has a multi-campus, international, online and on-ground psychology department with interspersed faculty clusters and department chairs. We present assessment strategies implemented in various locations and struggles to standardize processes.

Southern Oregon University's Psychology Department has designed an outcome exam to measure knowledge in core subject areas before and after course completion. However, data analysis has not informed curricular decisions. We discuss efforts to shift to embedded outcome assessment.

The APA Task Force on Strengthening the Teaching and Learning of Undergraduate Psychological Science recommends a curriculum model that logically flows toward embedded outcome assessment. This framework of knowledge, skills, and values traces a developmental progression at varying levels of student proficiency, which affords flexibility across institutions and is not limited by course-anchored assessment paradigms. In the context of this model, we present examples of embedded outcome assessment in authentic learning assignments.
