PRAC ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011
ON ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

IUPUC PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

Introduction

In an effort to more effectively define, measure, and improve attainment of student learning, the IUPUC Psychology Program undertook in 2010-2011 to redefine student learning outcomes (SLOs) and to map those onto the principles of undergraduate learning (PULS). This recently accomplished effort produced the product shown following our report of 2010-2011 findings. At this time we are reevaluating how we help students achieve learning objectives, how we measure student learning, how we report our findings, and how we use the findings to make improvements. We will complete this review in 2011-2012 and present it in our 2011-2012 PRAC report in the suggested format.

Some of the findings for the 2010-2011 academic year are described below:

PUL #1: Core Communication and Quantitative Skills
SLO: Demonstrate effective, situation appropriate, writing and speaking skills
SLO: Understand and correctly use discipline-specific terminology in psychology

- Findings: In PSY-B105, the instructor noted student writing was, on average, improved over previous years, but also noted an increased tendency to provide homework assignment responses in the inappropriate styles of email or text messaging.
  - Improvement: Additional feedback and examples provided on situation appropriate writing
- Findings: In PSY-B311, grades on oral presentation of research ideas averaged 78%.
- Improvement: In capstone courses, added requirement of poster format (oral and graphic) presentation of research results.
  - Findings: Students earned average grade of 82%.

SLO: Use scientific research methods including design, data analysis, and interpretation to solve problems related to issues in psychology
SLO: Interpret and perform statistical analyses for basic research designs and understand distinctions between and appropriate use of correlational and experimental findings

- Findings: In past years, students in capstone research courses relied too much on instructors for help with statistical analyses, suggesting lack of mastery of basic statistical concepts and techniques.
  - Improvement: Students were students were re-taught statistical analysis and required to conduct and interpret analyses on their own. Ability to correctly analyze, report, and interpret their data accounted for nearly half their poster grade, and 40% of their final paper (worth 30% of the course grade).
    - Findings: average grade was 87%.

SLO: Perform literature searches effectively using a variety of sources and techniques
SLO: Conduct literature reviews of existing research

- Findings: Students did literature reviews in PSY-B104 (64% grade average), PSY-B311 (68% grade average), and PSY-B370 (75% grade average).
    - Improvement: More classroom guidance on literature searches and reviews will be incorporated into courses.

PUL #2: Critical Thinking
SLO: Understand, remember, apply, analyze, evaluate, create, and synthesize knowledge, procedures, processes, or products
SLO: Design, carry out, and defend research projects

- Findings: The final project in PSY-B311 is to create a proposal for research to be conducted in the capstone lab course. This requires students to review existing literature, synthesize it, and produce a new, testable research question/hypothesis. Students tend to earn in the 70-75% range on this project.
    - Improvement: Efforts to identify student weaknesses and correct them will be increased.
- Findings: The capstone course requires students to complete a supervised research project of the student's design and execution, and present the projects publicly at a poster session and in a written paper. Average grade has been 87%.

PUL #3: Integration and Application of Knowledge
SLO: Develop self-awareness by identifying personal strengths, weaknesses, values, and goals
SLO: Develop clear and realistic goals and expectations for a career in psychology or related field
SLO: Apply psychological knowledge to enhance their personal lives and the lives of others
SLO: Further the goals of society and pursue them at a local level

- Improvement: In capstone courses, instructor helped students learn how to modify/sell their resume to employers and find job openings.
    - Findings: Of 19 students, 15 graduated in May 2011. Of these:
        - 33% are employed in a career using their degree locally
        - 20% will attend graduate school this fall
        - 20% chose not to seek employment immediately in order to focus on family
        - 14% are finishing their degree this summer
        - 13% are seeking employment.

PUL #4: Intellectual Depth, Breadth, and Adaptiveness
SLO: Remember and understand the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, methodologies, and empirical findings in psychology
SLO: Be able to distinguish between approaches to knowledge in psychology and other fields

- Findings: In PSY-B370 and B374, students explore social psychology and group dynamics in great depth. In B370, students averaged 80.5% in tests of understanding these concepts. In

B374, students averaged 87% on tests of these concepts. In B370 and B374, students also discuss how it overlaps and is different from sociology and marketing.

PUL #5: Understanding Society and Culture
SLO: Recognize, understand, and respect the similarities and differences that exist between individuals, societies, and cultures on values, behaviors, and thought processes
SLO: Understand the influence of culture and society on individuals' cognition and behavior

- Findings: In B374, group dynamics was studied within historical, religious, and cultural contexts; 60% students had an exceptional grasp on this topic; 20% failed to complete any assignments on this topic; and 20% failed to demonstrate an acceptable level of competency.
    - Improvement: Approaches to identify and correct issues that led to poor performance in 40% of students are being developed.

PUL #6: Values and Ethics
SLO: Understand and abide by ethical standards of the professional organization of the chosen profession (e.g., APA for clinicians and psychologists, Belmont Report for researchers)

- Findings: In capstone course, students were required to complete CITI training on ethical use of human subjects and submit IRB forms for their projects. While 10% failed to complete the training, 90% passed this training.

Mapping Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

onto

Principles of Undergraduate Learning (PULS)

PUL #1: Core Communication and Quantitative Skills
The ability of students to write, read, speak, and listen, perform quantitative analysis, and use information resources and technology - the foundation skills necessary for all IUPUC students to succeed

PUL #1A: Language Skills

Psychology SLOs Equivalent to this Learning Outcome
- Demonstrate effective, situation appropriate, writing and speaking skills
- Comprehend, interpret, and analyze college-level sources of information and vocabulary
- Understand and correctly use discipline-specific terminology in psychology

PUL #1B: Quantitative Skills

Psychology SLOs Equivalent to this Learning Outcome
- Read, comprehend, and critique research methods in original research articles
- Use scientific research methods including design, data analysis, and interpretation to solve problems related to issues in psychology
- Identify and propose solutions for problems using quantitative tools and reasoning
- Interpret and perform statistical analyses for basic research designs and understand distinctions between and appropriate use of correlational and experimental findings

PUL #1C: Information Resources Skills

Psychology SLOs Equivalent to this Learning Outcome
- Perform literature searches effectively using a variety of sources and techniques
- Conduct literature reviews of existing research
- Utilize computers and other technologies for many purposes, including professional communication of information.

PUL #2: Critical Thinking
The ability of students to analyze carefully and logically information and ideas from multiple perspectives

Psychology SLOs Equivalent to this Learning Outcome
- Understand, remember, apply, analyze, evaluate, create, and synthesize knowledge, procedures, processes, or products
- Use these skills to solve problems, produce reasoned choices, make informed decisions, and generate new questions
- Design, carry out, and defend research projects

PUL #3: Integration and Application of Knowledge
The ability of students to use information and concepts from studies in multiple disciplines in their intellectual, professional, and community lives

Psychology SLOs Equivalent to this Learning Outcome
- Develop self-awareness by identifying personal strengths, weaknesses, values, and goals
- Develop clear and realistic goals and expectations for a career in psychology or related field
- Apply psychological knowledge to enhance their personal lives and the lives of others
- Further the goals of society and pursue them at a local level
- Understand and abide by the ethics of psychology

PUL #4: Intellectual Depth, Breadth, and Adaptiveness
The ability of students to examine and organize disciplinary ways of knowing and to apply them to specific issues and problems

Psychology SLOs Equivalent to this Learning Outcome
- Remember and understand the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, methodologies, and empirical findings in psychology
- Be able to distinguish between approaches to knowledge in psychology and other fields
- Be able to modify approaches based on context or situational demands

PUL #5: Understanding Society and Culture
The ability of students to recognize their own cultural traditions and to understand and appreciate the diversity of the human experience, both within the United States and internationally

Psychology SLOs Equivalent to this Learning Outcome
- Recognize, understand, and respect the similarities and differences that exist between individuals, societies, and cultures on values, behaviors, and thought processes
- Understand the influence of culture and society on individuals' cognition and behavior
- Analyze and understand the interconnectedness of local and global communities
- Operate with civility, especially toward those who differ from oneself
- Work effectively, respectfully, and collaboratively with others with diverse backgrounds and perspectives

PUL #6: Values and Ethics
The ability of students to make judgments with respect to individual conduct, citizenship, and aesthetics

Psychology SLO Equivalent to this Learning Outcome
- Make informed and principled choices in their personal and public lives and be aware of the consequences of these choices
- Recognize the importance of aesthetics in their personal lives and to society.
- Understand ethical principles within diverse cultural, social, environmental, and personal settings
- Understand and abide by ethical standards of the professional organization of the chosen profession (e.g., APA for clinicians and psychologists, Belmont Report for researchers)