

# Assessment Cycle 2019-2020

## Psychology-Clinical Psychology (M.S.) (552)

**Division: Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development**

**Department: Psychology**

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**Northwestern Mission.** Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

**The Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development** is committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. Through the School of Education and Departments of Health and Human Performance, Military Science, Psychology, and Social Work, the College produces knowledgeable, inspired, and innovative graduates ready for lifelong learning who contribute to the communities in which they reside and professions they serve. Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network to assist children and their families related to learning and development.

**Department of Psychology Mission.** The Department of Psychology (undergraduate degrees in Psychology and Addiction Studies and a master's degree in Clinical Psychology) is dedicated to providing high quality education by actively engaging in the discovery and dissemination of knowledge. Students develop a robust knowledge base of concepts and theories, scientific and critical thinking, ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world, communication, and professional development. As part of our educational mission, the Psychology Department provides encouragement and support for research and scholarship for both the faculty and students with opportunities for practicum and externship training experiences. These activities are designed to foster professionalism and prepare students for graduate education and/or immediate employment and service in the community.

**Clinical Psychology Program Mission Statement:** The mission of the clinical psychology graduate program is to educate students in the science and practice of clinical psychology so that they may develop into knowledgeable professionals who are

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intelligent consumers of research and competent and ethical providers of psychological services.

**Methodology:** The assessment process for the MS in Clinical Psychology program is as follows:

- (1) Data from assessment tools are collected and returned to the program coordinator;
- (2) The program coordinator will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes;
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty;
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core graduate courses if required;
- (5) The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the Clinical Psychology Graduate Council, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

### Student Learning Outcomes:

**SLO 1. Students will know and utilize the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy.**

**Course Map:** PSYC 5200: Theories of Psychotherapy  
PSYC 5260: Practicum I: Psychotherapy and Intervention

#### **Measure: 1.1. (Direct – knowledge)**

On an annual basis, students are administered a preliminary exam during orientation, before the start of the program, to establish a baseline of knowledge. The exam covers the same four areas, including theories, which are covered by the program's comprehensive exams. This allows for pre- and post-course assessments. Because this is a preliminary evaluation, no particular score was expected.

Each student enrolled in PSYC 5200, a required course for Clinical Psychology graduate students, was administered a comprehensive exam as the final evaluation of the course. The exam is composed of questions developed by a faculty member and designed to evaluate the students' foundational knowledge of the theories of psychotherapy. The goal was for 80% of students to achieve a composite score of 70%. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

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### Finding:

AC 2019-2020: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 87.6

AC 2018-2019: Target Not Met with 33% meeting goal; mean score: 65.8

AC 2017-2018: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 85.9

AC 2016-2017: Target Met with 87% meeting goal; mean score: 79.4

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was not met. For AC 2018-19, three of nine students (33%) scored 70% or better on the targeted questions from the pretest and comprehensive exam, with a range of 44 to 84% ( $M = 65.8\%$ ,  $SD = 12.18$ ). Scores on the pretest ranged from 48 to 72% ( $M = 61.33$ ,  $SD = 7.48.24$ ). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam were significantly higher than those on the pretest (two-tailed paired  $t$ -test,  $t_9 = -6.8097$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Despite the significant improvement in knowledge demonstrated on the  $t$ -test, the majority of the students' level of knowledge did not reach the objective of 70% or higher. Item analysis revealed three items that were missed by at least 70% of students on both the pre-test and comprehensive exam, identifying them as poor test items. The review also revealed that the number of items and item specificity were not equally balanced across theories.

Based on analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2019-2020 two actions occurred: 1) faculty reviewed national exams for the selection of test items that offer greater balance of assessment across theories and of content specificity across theories; and 2) faculty placed more emphasis on psychoanalytic, existential, and gestalt theories, which are more abstract theories of which the students enter the program with less knowledge.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to know and utilize the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met. For AC 2019-2020 the instructor reviewed national exams for the selection of test items that offered greater balance of assessment across theories and of content specificity across theories; and additional emphasis was placed on psychoanalytic, existential, and gestalt theories, which are more abstract theories with less empirical support. All seven students earned at least 70% on the targeted multiple choice questions. Scores on the pretest ranged from 52 to 76% ( $M = 64$ ,  $SD = .08$ ). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam ranged from 78 to 100% ( $M = 87.6$ ,  $SD = .08$ ) and were significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired  $t$ -test,  $t_6 = -5.9$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As a result, student knowledge of theories of psychotherapy clearly increased between the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam. This is evidence of improvement in the desired direction for the SLO.

Consistent with previous years, in AC 2019-2020 item analysis showed a relative weakness in the earlier, more abstract theories (psychanalysis, existential, and gestalt).

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This is not surprising given that fewer students adopt them as their theoretical orientation and therefore do not learn it as well as those they learn and apply. What is not known is if students do not select these theories because they are less confident in their understanding. The analysis of results revealed that continued emphasis is needed on existential and gestalt theories.

### **Action - Decision or Recommendation:**

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2020-2021, faculty will use the 25 items for assessment to effectively measure the students' knowledge. Faculty will modify an assessment to focus on existential and gestalt theories only. The assignment will require students to demonstrate their understanding of the theories in an applied, more concrete manner.

These changes will improve the student's ability to know and utilize the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### **Measure: 1.2. (Direct – Skill/Ability)**

At the end of the semester, students enrolled in PSYC 5270, a required course for Clinical Psychology students, were evaluated by their supervisors on their knowledge and use of theoretical and scientific approaches to psychological treatment, including evidence-based practice. The goal was for 90% of enrolled students to demonstrate a fundamental knowledge by scoring 80% or higher on the evaluation. The equivalent rating for the newly adopted (2018) evaluation form is a score of 3 (1 = Not Satisfactory, 2 = Needs Improvement, 3 = Satisfactory, and 4 = Superior).

### **Finding:**

AC 2019-2020: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 3.56

AC 2018-2019: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 3.47\* (new instrument)

AC 2017-2018: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 4.625

AC 2016-2017: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean not reported (n=3)

### **Analysis:**

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. The consistently high supervisor evaluations from AC 2016-2017 to AC 2017-2018 supported the students' demonstrated knowledge and skill of theoretical approaches and techniques and therefore meets the SLO expectations. However, the same one-item assessment is still used to assess this SLO. The plan of action for 2018-2019 was to select and implement an assessment that

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captures all areas of practicum so that more than one question is used to assess the students' knowledge *and* application of theoretical approaches *and* their appropriate use of empirically supported techniques.

As a result, in AC 2018-2019 a new Practicum Student Evaluation Form with greater range of evaluation components allowed for a more detailed assessment of student performance in meeting learning objectives. The nine students attained a mean overall rating  $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = .51$ , in the superior range of evaluation for Psychological Evaluation Skills. Students received the highest ratings in *demonstrates knowledge of theories of counseling and psychotherapy*. The *lower* rating received in this section was *takes a theoretically-based approach to work with clients* ( $M = 3.29$ ). Even though their ratings were all satisfactory to superior, it is not surprising that the lowest ratings for young clinicians were obtained with more advanced skills of applying theoretical knowledge with clients.

Based on analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2019-2020, the revised Practicum Student Evaluation Form offered greater distinction in the evaluation of various areas that make up the objective. Based on the 2018-2019 results from the new form, Practicum I in Fall 2019 required that when students presented in group supervision their planned intervention for the following session, they explained it within their theoretical orientation and supported its selection with empirical evidence.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to know and utilize the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met.

For AC 2019-2020, practicum supervisors evaluated students' demonstration knowledge of theories of counseling and psychotherapy and taking a theoretically-based approach to work with clients. There were 9 students enrolled in external practicum sites who obtained a mean overall rating of  $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = .51$ , in the superior range of performance. Surprisingly and unlike the previous year, students were rated higher on the application of a theoretically-based approach than their demonstrated knowledge of theory. The difference is not significant but demonstrated the effectiveness of planned interventions emphasizing theoretically-based approaches.

### **Action - Decision or Recommendation:**

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2020-2021, faculty in PSYC 5260 will direct students to provide theoretical support for the selection of treatment goals and interventions. Moreover, faculty will require students to articulate theoretical support when considering therapeutic interventions so

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students can demonstrate their knowledge and also improve their confidence in preparation of the external practicum.

These changes will improve the student's ability to know and utilize the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

**SLO 2. Demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology.**

**Course Map:** PSYC 5300: Intellectual Assessment  
PSYC 5320: Personality Assessment  
PSYC 5750: Psychopathology  
PSYC 5260: Practicum I: Psychotherapy and Intervention

### Measure 2.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

The previously-mentioned preliminary exam covers the same four areas, including psychopathology, which are covered by the program's comprehensive exams. Coordinating targeted items allows for pre- and post-course assessments. Because this is a preliminary evaluation, no particular score was expected.

Each student enrolled in PSYC 5750, a required course for Clinical Psychology graduate students, was administered a comprehensive exam as the final evaluation of the course. The exam is composed of questions developed by a faculty member and designed to evaluate the students' knowledge of psychopathology, including its etiology, diagnosis, and treatment. The goal was for at least 80% of students to achieve a composite score of 70% or better. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

### Finding:

AC 2019-2020: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 89.0  
AC 2018-2019: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 94.22  
AC 2017-2018: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 84.89  
AC 2016-2017: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 86.29

The goal was met in AC 2019-20; nine of nine students (100%) scored 70% or better on the comprehensive exam as a whole, and 100% scored at least 70% on the targeted questions that were on both the pretest and comprehensive exams.

### Analysis:

As a result, in AC 2018-19, students' knowledge of psychopathology clearly increased between the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam. This is evidence of improvement in

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the desired direction for the SLO. All nine students 70% or better on the targeted questions from the pretest and comprehensive exam, with a range of 88 to 100% ( $M = 94.22\%$ ,  $SD = 4.94$ ). Scores on the pretest ranged from 68 to 88% ( $M = 79.56$ ,  $SD = 7.06$ ). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam were significantly higher than those on the pretest (two-tailed paired  $t$ -test,  $t_9 = -7.07$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. The item analysis revealed no particular pattern of weakness in content knowledge. Therefore, it appears the additional assignments effectively improved students' knowledge. However, the new written assignments revealed students were limited in their ability to apply and integrate the knowledge in written reports. Consequently, additional demonstrations and interactive practice were incorporated into class discussions and one additional diagnostic report was required.

Based on analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2019-2020, faculty incorporated additional demonstrations and interactive practice into class discussions and one additional report was required with peer-review and feedback included.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met.

For AC 2019-2020 All seven students earned at least 70% on the targeted multiple choice questions. Scores on the pretest ranged from 59 to 76% ( $M = 61.1$ ,  $SD = .10$ ). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam ranged from 80 to 96% ( $M = 89\%$ ,  $SD = .06$ ), which is outstanding. Results of comprehensive exams are significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired  $t$ -test,  $t_6 = -6.55$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This is evidence of improvement in the desired direction for the SLO. While the results clearly demonstrate students' knowledge of psychopathology, data shows they continue to struggle demonstrating the knowledge in interactive, performance-based activities.

### **Action - Decision or Recommendation:**

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2020-2021, faculty will enhance skill development with demonstrating knowledge through dedicated class time activities including a performance-based assessment of symptoms to determine diagnoses through the use of multiple choice questions, which allow students to demonstrate knowledge through recognition, and interactive

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exercises, which allow students to demonstrate knowledge through gathering desired information in real time.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### Measure 2.2. (Direct – Assessment Skill / Ability)

Students will demonstrate their psychological assessment and diagnostic abilities through formal clinical interviews, mental status examinations, standardized psychological testing administration, scoring and interpretative evaluation reports they are required to submit for PSYC 5300 and 5320, required assessment courses for Clinical Psychology students. Upon completion of PSYC 5320, the students submit a comprehensive psychological assessment report to evaluate the students' proficiency in performing structured clinical interviews, mental status examinations and psychological test administration, scoring and interpretation used in professional assessment and diagnosis. The goal was for at least 70% of students to score at least 80% on the comprehensive report to demonstrate competency in psychological assessment and diagnostics.

#### Finding:

AC 2019-2020: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 92

AC 2018-2019: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 96

AC 2017-2018: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 85.67

AC 2016-2017: Not Scored

#### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. In AC 2018-2019, nine of nine students achieved over 70% on the comprehensive psychological evaluation report with grades ranging from 94 to 98 with a  $M = 96$ . These results were favorable in the anticipated direction and indicate that students demonstrated knowledge of and proficiency in administering, scoring, interpreting and writing psychological evaluations. Instructor action steps for this school year included implementation of additional class activities including classroom demonstrations, peer report reviews and provision of additional reference resources. Results indicate positive impact on student performance with an increase in comprehensive psychological report grades from AC 2017-2018 to AC 2018-2019. Detailed analysis of the comprehensive psychological report rubric indicates the weakest performance area as integration of potentially conflicting data from test results.

Based on analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2019-2020, faculty placed additional emphasis on the integration of potentially conflicting test result data. The

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instructor focused emphasis on integration of potentially conflicting test data through dedication of more class time to this task in PSYC 5320 utilizing additional report protocols and more integrated writing tasks completed as a group. Faculty increased the number of data sets for review and added additional reports to enhance opportunities to practice integration of potentially conflicting test results. Additionally, students received instructor-led peer review of their assessment data results for potential conflicts for the final comprehensive psychological evaluation prior to the completion of the final report document.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met.

Results of comprehensive psychological assessment report data for AC 2019-2020 yielded grades ranging from 83 to 98% with a mean score of  $M = 92$ . Analysis indicated student proficiency in performing structured clinical interviews, mental status examinations, test administration, scoring and interpretation techniques used in professional assessment and diagnostics. These results support the presence of above average skills development in the identified areas. However, there was a slight drop from the previous AC 2018–2019 overall comprehensive psychological assessment report grade mean score of  $M = 96$ . Through analysis of the AC 2019–2020 results the weakest performance area remains the integration of potentially conflicting test result data.

### **Action - Decision or Recommendation:**

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2020-2021, faculty will further enhance skill development with potentially conflicting assessment data through dedicated class time activities including a performance based measure at the beginning and end of the semester in addition to the comprehensive psychological assessment report.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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### Measure 2.3. (Direct – Intervention Skill / Ability)

At the end of the semester, students enrolled in PSYC 5260 and 5270, all required courses for Clinical Psychology students, were evaluated by their supervisors on their knowledge and skills of treatment planning and choosing and implementing evidence-based interventions to effect change. The goal was for at least 70% of students to score 80% and demonstrate competency in psychological intervention. The equivalent rating for the newly adopted (2018) evaluation form is a score of 3 (1 = Not Satisfactory, 2 = Needs Improvement, 3 = Satisfactory, and 4 = Superior).

#### Finding:

AC 2019-2020: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 3.47

AC 2018-2019: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 3.67\* new instrument

AC 2017-2018: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 4.57

AC 2016-2017: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 4.43

#### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. In AC 2018-2019, a new Practicum Student Evaluation Form with greater range of evaluation components allowed for a more detailed assessment of student performance in meeting learning objectives. Of the 9 students enrolled in PSYC 5270 six had external practicum sites with psychological testing/assessment components used for evaluation in the Psychological Evaluation Skills of the Practicum Student Evaluation Form. The six students attained a mean overall rating  $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = .47$ , in the superior range of evaluation for Psychological Evaluation Skills. Students received the highest ratings in this section for establishing rapport with clients  $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = .72$ . The lowest ratings received in this section occurred in two categories: verbal presentation of cases ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = .81$ ) and report writing timeliness and completeness ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = .81$ ).

Based on analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2019-2020 faculty enhanced psychological assessment courses PSYC 5300 and 5320 to emphasize report writing timeliness and completeness as a component of successful professional development. The instructor also increased case presentation activities for skill enhancement.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met.

In AC 2019-2020, the supervisor's rating form yielded a mean overall rating  $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = .51$ , in the superior range. While the differences in evaluations were minute and identified no relative strengths or weaknesses, a pattern emerged of biased responses

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(halo effect, rating items in one area the same, etc.) thereby undermining the full benefit of the survey.

### **Action - Decision or Recommendation:**

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2020-2021, faculty will be provided with feedback on survey results and request attention be given to provide detailed feedback for the students and for providing direction to the program.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### **SLO 3. Students will demonstrate and apply knowledge of experimental design and statistical analysis used to evaluate, plan, and perform psychological research.**

**Course Map:** PSYC 5100: Psychological Research: Statistics  
PSYC 5120: Psychological Research: Design  
PSYC 5950: Psychological Research

#### **Measure 3.1. (Direct – Knowledge)**

The previously-mentioned preliminary exam covers the same four areas, including statistics and research design, which are covered by the program's comprehensive exams. This allows for pre- and post-course assessments. Because this is a preliminary evaluation, no particular score was expected.

Each student enrolled in PSYC 5120, a required course for Clinical Psychology graduate students, was administered a comprehensive exam as the final evaluation of the course. The exam is composed of questions developed by a faculty member and designed to evaluate the students' knowledge of statistics and research design. The goal was for at least 80% of students to achieve a composite score of 70% or better. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

#### **Finding:**

AC 2019-2020: Target Not Met with 71% meeting goal; mean score: 78.3  
AC 2018-2019: Target Met with 89% meeting goal; mean score: 81.6  
AC 2017-2018: Target Not Met with 68% meeting goal; mean score: 78.5  
AC 2016-2017: Target Met with 80% meeting goal; mean score: 78.5

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### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. For AC 2018-19, eight of nine students (89%) scored 70% or better on the targeted questions from the pretest that were included on the comprehensive exam, with a range of 65 to 91 ( $M = 81.6$ ,  $SD = 9.36$ ). Scores on the pretest ranged from 24 to 44 ( $M = 31.1$ ,  $SD = 7.42$ ). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam were significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired  $t$ -test,  $t_8 = -17.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Item analysis on the pretest in AC 2018-2019 indicated that initially students are weakest in terms of multiple regression, MANOVA, and interpreting Levene's test in the independent samples  $t$ -test; in AC 2019-2020, performance on items related to Levene's test improved to 85.7% correct. Performance on questions regarding multiple regression are approaching the 70% benchmark, with 66.7% correct responses. ANOVA remains below expectations at 54.3% correct responses, while MANOVA continues to be the weakest area on the comprehensive exam, with on 37.1% of correct responses.

Based on analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2019-2020, faculty placed additional emphasis on Levene's test, multiple regression, ANOVA, and MANOVA, all more sophisticated topics not usually covered in undergraduate statistics. Homework assignments were modified to include additional ANOVA interpretations and to change the results in the MANOVA homework problem. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was not met.

For AC 2019-2020, the comprehensive exam was changed to 100% multiple choice format; more complex statistical analyses were converted to multiple choice questions focused on a single critical component of the analysis. All 25 questions from the pre-test were included in the comprehensive exam. Five of seven (71%) scored 70% or better on the questions from the pretest, with a range of 64 to 88% ( $M = 78.3\%$ ,  $SD = 9.5\%$ ). Scores on the pretest ranged from 28 to 48% ( $M = 39.4\%$ ,  $SD = 6.70\%$ ). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam were significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired  $t$ -test,  $t_6 = 8.95$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As a result, student knowledge of statistics and research methodology clearly increased between the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam. This is evidence of improvement in the desired direction for the SLO.

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### Action - Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2019-2020, the target was not met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2020-2021, faculty will work to further develop course content and instructional supports in the area of MANOVA. Since this test also incorporates ANOVA and post-hoc analysis, faculty will develop additional instructional resources and materials that will help in these areas as well. Since MANOVA is well suited to test for lurking nominal independent variables, this approach will be used to emphasize the usefulness of this technique.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### Measure 3.2. (Direct - Knowledge)

At the conclusion of each research project, Paper-in-lieu of thesis or Thesis, thesis advisors scored the project using a rubric that assesses critical thinking and analysis of psychology concepts and literature, development of a research question(s) and hypotheses, appropriateness of the research design and methods, presentation and interpretation of data in psychological research. The goal was for the students to earn overall rating of at least 80% to demonstrate proficiency.

### Finding:

AC 2019-2020: Target Met with 100% meeting goal

AC 2018-2019: Target Not Met. Insufficient sample size to report data.

AC 2017-2018: Target Met with 100% meeting goal

AC 2016-2017: Target Met with 100% meeting goal

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was not met. For AC 2018-2019, all second-year students presented their research (topic) at NSU Research Day. In addition, the two students who completed their research project by the end of Spring 2019 received favorable evaluations. However, it is an insufficient sample size to provide meaningful results. Instead, there is a problem with the research process and students completing their research project in a timely manner. Faculty presented several incentives to increase motivation, but they were not effective. In addition, inconsistencies in practices and applying policies were identified between major professors.

Based on analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. In response to the AC 2018-2019

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results, in AC 2019-2020, all major professors met before the Fall 2019 semester to create specific deadlines and objectives for PSYC 5950 that students and major professors were required to meet in order for students to be proposal ready at the end of the Fall semester. A handbook was created to improve consistency and communication for major professors and students. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. The intervention effectively provided structure and increased the number of completed research projects on time – six of nine students completed their PIL or thesis by May 2020 with 100% earning a rating of over 80%. Three students completed a Paper-in-lieu of thesis and received an overall rating of 97.5%. Three students completed theses and received an overall rating of 96%. All nine students were prepared to present at NSU Research Day, but it was canceled due to COVID-19. While all results are in the desired direction, the results of the ratings are superficially high and appear to be an exaggerated assessment of the students' knowledge based on performance on statistics and anecdotal data.

### **Action – Decision or Recommendation:**

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2020-2021, faculty will review the results before the start of the semester to determine if the evaluation form is sufficiently specific and represents areas of evaluation that accurately assess the programs desired goals. Faculty will emphasize attention to accuracy.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### **SLO 4. Students will demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice.**

**Course Map:** PSYC 6000: Ethics and Professional Conduct  
PSYC 5260: Practicum I: Psychotherapy and Intervention  
PSYC 5270: Practicum II: Psychological Intervention and Therapy

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### Measure 4.1. (Direct – knowledge)

On an annual basis, students are administered a preliminary exam during orientation, before the start of the program, to establish a baseline of knowledge. The exam covers the same four areas, including ethics, which are covered by the program's comprehensive exams. This allows for pre- and post-course assessments. Because this is a preliminary evaluation, no particular score was expected.

Each student enrolled in PSYC 6000, a required course for Clinical Psychology graduate students, will be administered a comprehensive exam as the final evaluation of the course. The exam is composed of questions developed by a faculty member and designed to evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of ethical principles and standards of practice and their ability to practice ethical decision-making skills when presented with an ethical dilemma. The goal was for 90% of enrolled students to achieve a composite score of 70%. These scores were also be compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

### Finding:

AC 2019-2020: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 93

AC 2018-2019: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 87

AC 2017-2018: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 80.74

AC 2016-2017: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 80.76

The goal to address weak knowledge areas identified from the pre-comprehensive exam was met with all students demonstrating a higher knowledge base for the key items on the PSYC 6000 comprehensive exam.

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. Analysis for AC 2018-2019: For the pre-comp exam, the scores ranged from 48 to 76% correct with  $M = 58$ ,  $SD = 9.57$ . The comprehensive exam scores ranged from 79 to 94% with a  $M = 87$ ,  $SD = 4.3$ . The results suggest improved students' knowledge of ethical practice in the field of psychology from the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam. Knowledge Items identified on the pre-comprehensive exam as areas of weakness guided instruction.

Based on analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2019-2020, faculty focused on Knowledge Items which were identified on the pre-comprehensive exam as areas of weakness to guide instruction for additional instruction. Faculty reviewed detailed test items from the comprehensive exam and used the analysis to to emphasize course instruction on weaker areas. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice.

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As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met.

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. In AC 2019-2020, students achieved pre-comprehensive exam score items with a range of 52 to 72% and M = 58, SD = 7.61. Analysis of the comprehensive exam score items indicated a range of 88 to 100% and M 93, SD 5.47. The scores were improved from the pre-comprehensive exam to the comprehensive exam in AC 2019-2020. The scores suggest improved student performance and an increased knowledge of key concepts. Of interest to note, the mean score on the comprehensive exam increased by 5 points from the previous year. However, an increase in the average score from year to year is not anticipated due to consistently high overall comprehensive exam scores. The increase from the preliminary assessment to the comprehensive exam was evidence of improvement in the desired direction for the SLO for PSYC 6000. The improvement resulted from analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weakness which guided instruction during course activities.

### **Action – Decision or Recommendation:**

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2020-2021, faculty will review detailed test items from the pre-comprehensive exam and will use the resulting analyses to emphasize course instruction on weaker areas as this appears to vary for each student cohort.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### **Measure 4.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability)**

At the end of the semester, students enrolled in PSYC 5260 and 5270, all required courses for Clinical Psychology students, were evaluated by their supervisors on their knowledge of ethical and professional practice, as well as their demonstration of ethical and professional practice. The goal was for 100% of enrolled students to demonstrate a fundamental knowledge by scoring 80% or higher on the evaluation.

### **Finding:**

AC 2019-2020: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 2.63

AC 2018-2019: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 2.67\* new instrument

AC 2017-2018: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 4.75

AC 2016-2017: Target Met with 100% meeting goal; mean score: 5

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### Analysis:

As a result, in AC 2018-2019, the emphasis was switched from PSYC 5260 to analyzing data from PSYC 5270 only since it is the primary practicum of 300 hours in an external setting therefore providing the most objective assessment. The newly implemented Practicum Student Evaluation Form allowed for analysis of practicum supervisor ratings for students enrolled in PSYC 5270 regarding ethical and professional conduct. Areas evaluated included knowledge of ethical issues specific to the practicum site, professional behavior consistent with ethical guidelines, respect for confidentiality, maturity and cooperation with others.

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. There were 9 students enrolled in external practicum sites who obtained a mean overall rating of  $M = 2.67$ ,  $SD = .47$ , in the superior range of performance. Though not significantly lower, the area with the lowest rating of  $M = 2.56$ ,  $SD = .45$  was for maturity. This was consistent with anecdotal experiences shared by faculty.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice.

Based on analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. In Fall 2019, PSYC 6000 instruction included greater emphasis on professional conduct in regards to maturity. In addition, all students were provided information on how to demonstrate maturity in the professional setting. This emphasis began with orientation of new students and extended to specific mentoring with second-year practicum students in supervision.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met.

For AC 2019-2020, practicum supervisors evaluated students' knowledge of ethical issues specific to the practicum site, professional behavior consistent with ethical guidelines, respect for confidentiality, maturity, and cooperation with others. There were 9 students enrolled in external practicum sites who obtained a mean overall rating of  $M = 2.63$ ,  $SD = .52$ , in the superior range of performance. Consistent with the previous year, maturity ratings yielded the lowest ratings, a mean overall rating of  $M = 2.63$ ,  $SD = .51$ .

### Action - Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2019-2020 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2020-2021, in PSYC 6000, faculty will modify instruction to include not only attention to professional conduct in regard to maturity but also a specific activity for evaluation of

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student understanding of the operational definition of maturity as it applies to ethics and professional conduct at the beginning of the semester with an end of semester evaluation to determine effectiveness of focus through more structured activities. In addition, the PSYC 5270 instructor will present a practicum orientation to review specific behaviors that differentiate professional immaturity from maturity (e.g., procrastination, critical thinking and decision making, patience, punctuality, and discipline).

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results:

- The new practicum evaluation form effectively provided detailed items to better identify relative strengths and weaknesses.
- The changes that the clinical faculty made in the research schedule and requirements successfully improved the number of completed projects for the academic year.
- Graduate faculty's modifications in instruction and course requirements significantly improved students' knowledge related

#### SLO 1

- Faculty reviewed national exams for the selection of test items that offer greater balance of assessment across theories and of content specificity across theories.
- Faculty placed more emphasis on psychoanalytic, existential, and gestalt theories, which are more abstract theories of which the students enter the program with less knowledge.
- Faculty required that when students presented in Practicum I group supervision their planned intervention for the following session, faculty required that students explained it within their theoretical orientation and supported its selection with empirical evidence.

#### SLO 2

- Faculty incorporated additional demonstrations and interactive practice into class discussions and one additional report was required with peer-review and feedback included.
- Faculty placed additional emphasis on the integration of potentially conflicting test result data. The instructor focused emphasis on integration of potentially conflicting test data through dedication of more class time to this task in PSYC 5320 utilizing additional report protocols and more integrated writing tasks completed as a group.

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- Faculty increased the number of data sets for review and added additional reports to enhance opportunities to practice integration of potentially conflicting test results.
- Faculty provided instructor-led peer review of their assessment data results for potential conflicts for the final comprehensive psychological evaluation prior to the completion of the final report document.
- Faculty enhanced psychological assessment courses PSYC 5300 and 5320 to emphasize report writing timeliness and completeness as a component of successful professional development.
- Faculty increased case presentation activities for skill enhancement.

### SLO 3

- Faculty placed additional emphasis on Levene's test, multiple regression, ANOVA, and MANOVA, all more sophisticated topics not usually covered in undergraduate statistics.
- Faculty modified homework assignments to include additional ANOVA interpretations and to change the results in the MANOVA homework problem. These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology.
- Faculty met before the Fall 2019 semester to create specific deadlines and objectives for PSYC 5950 that students and major professors were required to meet in order for students to be proposal ready at the end of the Fall semester.
- Faculty created a handbook to improve consistency and communication for major professors and students.

### SLO 4

- Faculty focused on Knowledge Items which were identified on the pre-comprehensive exam as areas of weakness to guide instruction for additional instruction.
- Faculty reviewed detailed test items from the comprehensive exam and used the analysis to emphasize course instruction on weaker areas.
- Faculty placed greater emphasis on professional conduct in regards to maturity.
- Faculty provided information on how to demonstrate maturity in the professional setting. This emphasis began with orientation of new students and extended to specific mentoring with second-year practicum students in supervision

### Plan of action moving forward:

- While specific actions have been identified for each objective, the program faculty will also collectively identify specific opportunities to include discussion and activities of the students theoretical orientation.

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- To protect against a halo effect in scoring by practicum supervisors and major professors, faculty will make all supervisors aware of potential bias and the limited information the results are providing. In addition, Faculty will request that practicum supervisors complete a survey evaluating the program's performance in preparing students in the key areas associated with the SLOs.
- Graduate faculty will host one activity per semester that brings first and second-year graduate students together to foster a culture that recognizes achievement, peer and faculty-student interactions, and healthy communication.

### SLO 1

- Faculty will modify an assessment to focuss on existential and gestalt theories theories only. Faculty will use the 25 items for assessment to effectively measure the students' knowledge. The assignment will require students to demonstrate their understanding of the theories in an applied, more concrete manner.
- Faculty will direct students to provide theoretical support for the selection of treatment goals and interventions.
- Faculty will require students to articulate theoretical support when considering therapeutic interventions so students can demonstrate their knowledge and also improve their confidence in preparation of the external practicum.

### SLO 2

- Faculty will enhance skill development with demonstrating knowledge through dedicated class time activities including a performance-based assessment of symptoms to determine diagnoses through the use of multiple choice questions, which allow students to demonstrate knowledge through recognition, and interactive exercises, which allow students to demonstrate knowledge through gathering desired information in real time.
- Faculty will be provided with feedback on survey results and request attention be given to provide detailed feedback for the students and for providing direction to the program.
- Faculty will further enhance skill development with potentially conflicting assessment data through dedicated class time activities including a performance based measure at the beginning and end of the semester in addition to the comprehensive psychological assessment report

### SLO 3

- Faculty will work to further develop course content and instructional supports in the area of MANOVA.
- Faculty will develop additional instructional resources and materials to support content knowledge related to ANOVA/MANOVA anF post hoc analyses.
- faculty will will review results before the start of the semester to determine if the evaluation form is sufficiently specific and represents areas of evaluation that accurately assess the programs desired goals.
- Faculty will emphasize attention to accuracy in course content and related student work and course assignments and activities.

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### SLO 4

- Faculty will review detailed test items from the pre-comprehensive exam and will use the resulting analyses to emphasize course instruction on weaker areas as this appears to vary for each student cohort.
- Faculty will modify instruction to include not only attention to professional conduct in regard to maturity but also a specific activity for evaluation of student understanding of the operational definition of maturity as it applies to ethics and professional conduct at the beginning of the semester with an end of semester evaluation to determine effectiveness of focus through more structured activities.
- Faculty

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- will present a practicum orientation to review specific behaviors that differentiate professional immaturity from maturity (e.g., procrastination, critical thinking and decision making, patience, punctuality, and discipline).