

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

### Psychology (BS) (392)

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

**Department: Psychology**

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**Date: July 14, 2020**

**Northwestern Mission:** Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

**Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development Mission.** 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 and region.

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

**Purpose:** The purpose of the undergraduate degrees is to prepare students for entry level positions in the helping professions, conducting research, working in the private and public sector, and for graduate school.

**Methodology:** The assessment process for the BS program is as follows:

1. Data from assessment tools and measures 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 Department of Psychology faculty.
4. Individual meetings will be held with Psychology course stewards of core courses if required (show cause).
5. The program coordinator, in consultation with the student learning outcome subcommittee, 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. Knowledge Base.

Students will be able to describe key concepts, principles, content domains, applications, and overarching themes in psychology. This outcome aligns with the first outcome of the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major version 2.0 (2013).

#### Course Map:

Tied to course syllabus objectives.

- PSYC 1010: Introduction to Psychology
- PSYC 2050: Developmental Psychology
- PSYC 3010: Physiological Psychology
- PSYC 3020: Psychology of Learning
- PSYC 3060: Social Psychology
- PSYC 4440: History of Psychology
- PSYC 4450: Abnormal Psychology
- PSYC 4470: Theories of Personality
- PSYC 4830: Advance General (capstone course)

#### Measure 1.1. (Direct; Knowledge)

At the end of every semester, students enrolled in capstone course, PSYC 4830 Advance General is administered a post-test version of the Department of Psychology exit exam. Specifically, the sections of the exam that will be a measure of SLO1 are: Introduction to Psychology; Physiological Psychology; Learning; Cognitive Abilities; Human Development; Personality; Psychological Disorders; and Treatment of

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

Psychological Disorders. At least 85% of students will be able to demonstrate advanced understanding of psychology related concepts by achieving a grade of 75% or higher on these sections.

**Findings:** Target was not met.

AC 2019-2020 69.49% of students earned a grade of 75% or higher

AC 2018-2019 78.95% of students earned a grade of 75% or higher

### **Analysis:**

In AC 2018-2019, the target was not met. In AC 2018-2019, 78.95 % (N = 57) of students achieved a grade of 75% or higher on the specified sections. Of note was the discrepancy between face to face and online scores with 96.67% (N = 30) of face to face students and online students with 59.26% (N = 27) achieving 75 % or higher.

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 course steward offered additional educational resources for the specific sections of the exit exam in which students struggled. The discrepancy between course type was hypothesized to be related to online proctored exams which reduced cheating and subsequently, the exam scores. This was addressed by adding two face to face sections and having the online classes involved in a required discussion board assignment during week one of the course. This assignment involved topics such as discrepancy in class scores, proctored versus non-proctored exam scores and the exit exam failure rate. The goal of this assignment was to draw attention to the difficulties online students may face in efforts to mitigate score discrepancies and encourage more effective study habits for online students. In AC 2019-2020, faculty added additional education resources in those specific areas identified as weak areas for students (Statistics and Research Methods). Additionally, faculty split the online course into two sections, allowing more teacher-student interactions. Also, the discrepancy in class scores and the proctoring situation were discussed in detail with the online students.

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

Based on the analysis of AC 2019-2020 results, students who are graduating with an undergraduate degree in Psychology are not demonstrating an advanced understanding of psychology related concepts as is measured by the exit exam. In AC 2019-2020, 69.49% (n = 118) of students achieved a grade of 75% or higher on the specified sections. This was a significant drop from AC 2018-2019 (n = 57, 78.95%), so further analyses were conducted on the data.

First, there was a significant difference in the Fall 2019 (n = 48, 81.25%) and Spring 2020 (n=70, 61.43%) semesters. It should be noted that the Spring 2020 semester was interrupted in March by the coronavirus pandemic and all classes were shifted to an online delivery platform. This negatively impacted the performance of students on the

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

exit exam. The face-to-face class in the uninterrupted Fall 2019 semester showed a rate of 89.65% while the interrupted Spring 2020 face-to-face class showed a rate of 70.00%, an almost 20% drop in the percentage of those who passed with at least 75%.

Another issue was the continuing discrepancy between face-to-face and online scores. Face-to-face students showed a total across the academic year of 79.66.% (n = 59), while online students showed a rate of 58.32 % (n = 59). While this is a much smaller difference than in the previous assessment cycle, it is because the performance of the face-to-face students dropped almost 20 percentage points. On the other hand, the AC 2019-2020 numbers for the online students (58.32%) were almost identical to their AC 2018-2019 numbers (59.26%).

A last factor was proctoring. When NSU closed the campus and switched to online only education in the Spring 2020 semester, it meant that students who had previously taken their proctored exit exams through the NSU testing services at the various campuses, now had to use ProctorU. Numerous students reported that using ProctorU negatively impacted their testing experience

These changes had a direct impact on the students' ability to demonstrate advanced understanding of psychology related concepts.

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

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

The failure of the face-to-face classes to meet the target goal was very likely due to the shift in instructional delivery method as a result of campus closures to comply with federal and state stay-at-home orders due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, the discrepancy between the face-to-face and the online courses continues to be an issue. The online course was developed based on previous mandates that online courses should provide the same (as much as possible) educational experience as the that course's face to face classes.

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 analyze the online exit exam for specific areas of weaknesses and once those are identified, faculty will revise course notes, support materials, and assessments to address those weaknesses.

Faculty will support the splitting of PSYC 4830 (online) into two classes (if budget permits) to provide the ability to individualize instruction with these smaller classes to make a difference in final student performance scores.

Lastly, faculty noted that the capstone course, PSYC 4830: Advanced General, and the exit examination, is being phased out to be replaced by a new set of capstone courses

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

within 3 years. Resources will be shifted towards these new capstone courses which will improve the students' ability to demonstrate advanced understanding of psychology related concepts, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### Measure 1.2. (Indirect; Attitudes)

At the end of every semester, students enrolled in capstone course, PSYC 4830 Advance General, is administered a survey. Students are asked to rate their agreement with the statement "During my undergraduate career in Psychology, I developed a strong knowledge base of the key concepts and theories relating to psychology" on a Likert scale where 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 4 – agree, and 5 – strongly agree. At least 85% of the respondents will reply with a rating of 4 or 5 to indicate agreement with this statement.

**Findings:** Target was met.

AC 2019-2020	96% of students replied with responses of 4 or higher
AC 2018-2019	93% of students replied with responses of 4 or higher

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. In AC 2018-2019, 93.10% (N = 29; M = 4.62) of students replied with a rating of 4 or 5. It was noted that due to a lack of confidentiality in surveys on the current learning management system, online students were not assessed.

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 Course Steward used this survey as an assessment for this specific measure and explored options for confidential survey data gathering so that online students could be included in this measure.

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

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the Fall 2019 results, students were confident in their knowledge base of concepts and theories related to psychology and demonstrated self-reflection of learning. Actually, 96.15% (N = 26; M = 4.73) of students replied with a rating of 4 or 5. There were two caveats to this data:

1. It should be noted that due to a lack of confidentiality in surveys on the current learning management system, online students were not assessed. As with the last academic year, discussions were held with the electronic learning staff on how to collect data anonymously through the Moodle platform. Unfortunately, it is not currently possible to set it up though that course management software.

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

2. Data was collected in the Fall-2019 semester only. As all classes went online in March due to Covid-19, it was not possible to collect data during the Spring 2020 semester.

These changes had a direct impact on the students' ability to develop a strong knowledge base of the key concepts and theories relating to psychology.

### 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. Faculty will partner with electronic learning to explore solutions to perform a confidential assessment through Moodle.

These changes will improve the student's ability to develop a strong knowledge base of the key concepts and theories relating to psychology, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### Measure 1.3. (Direct; Knowledge)

At the end of the Fall semester, FIGS (freshman interest groups) students enrolled in PSYC 1010 Introduction to Psychology will be administered a pre-test version of the Department of Psychology exit exam. Specifically, the sections of the exam that will be a measure of SLO1 are: Introduction to Psychology; Physiological Psychology; Learning; Cognitive Abilities; Human Development; Personality; Psychological Disorders; and Treatment of Psychological Disorders. At least 70% of students will be able to demonstrate basic understanding of psychology related concepts by achieving a grade of 60% or higher.

**Findings:** Target was not met.

AC 2019-2020	9% of students earned a grade of 60% or higher
AC 2018-2019	12.06% of students earned a grade of 60% or higher

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was not met. In AC 2018-2019, 12.06% (N = 58) passed with 60% or higher.

Based on analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. The length of the exam was thought to be an issue, so the exam was reduced to fifty questions while reliability and content

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

validity of the exam were maintained. To ensure this was a valid measure of this SLO, in AC 2019-2020, students were administered a modified version of the Department of Psychology's exit examination to reduce test fatigue and answer sets. In AC 2019-2020, faculty planned for the Course Steward to incorporate portions of the pre-test exam into graded assignments throughout the semester. However, since the PSYC 1010 courses are prepared by a course steward and are standardized, including the tests, it was not possible for parts of the post-test exit exam to be incorporated into the existing assignments.

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

In AC 2019-2020, the target was not met. Based on the analysis of the results, FIGS students are having difficulty demonstrating a basic understanding of psychology related concepts. In AC 2019-2020, 9.30% (N = 43. Mean = 49.12%) passed with 60% or higher. Despite being administered a modified version of the exam, the change did not make a difference in the scores, which went down from the last academic year when the complete 100 question exam was used. The undergraduate coordinator and the Department Chair will be discussing both this SLO and the methodology for measuring it.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate basic understanding of psychology related concepts.

### **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. Faculty will recommend that the measurement for this SLO be changed. The undergraduate coordinator, the FIGS course instructor, and the Department Chair will discuss both this SLO and the methodology for measuring it.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate basic understanding of psychology related concepts, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### **SLO 2. Scientific and Critical Thinking.**

Students will be able to apply scientific tools and understanding to psychological research. This outcome aligns with the second outcome of the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major version 2.0 (2013).

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

### Course Map:

Tied to course syllabus objectives.

- PSYC 2430: Introduction into Experimental Methods
- PSYC 4400: Statistics
- PSYC 4410: Test and Measurement

### Measure 2.1. (Direct; Knowledge)

Psychology students in PSYC 4400 Statistics will complete an assignment whereby they have to read a research article and answer questions regarding the purpose, methodology, results, and conclusions of the paper (refer to appendix A for the PSYC 4400 paper rubric). At least 85% of students will earn a grade of 80% or higher on this paper.

**Findings:** Target was met.

AC 2019-2020	91.65% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher
AC 2018-2019	94.23% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. In AC 2018-2019, 94.23% (N = 312; M = 16.93) of students earned a grade of 80% or higher.

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 course steward used the current grading rubric but updated the research articles used in the assignment to monitor this assignment as an effective measure for this specific learning objective. In AC 2019-2020, PSYC 4400 was given a new course steward. While the new course steward continued to use the current grading rubric and the updated research articles in the assignment.

As a result of this change, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met.

In AC 2019-2020, 91.65% (N = 109; M = 17.83) of students earned a grade of 80% or higher. This was a slight drop from the 2018-2019 academic year (94.23% with N = 312, mean = 16.93). There are some questions about the 2018-2019 data given that there was a reported sample size of 312 students. That number likely included hundreds of nursing majors generally enrolled in the course each year, slightly inflating last year's results.

The changes to the research articles had a direct impact on the student's ability to apply scientific tools and understanding to psychological research.

### Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met.

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

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. The course steward will emphasize the assignment at the start of the semester to the various instructors and adjuncts who teach this course. Faculty will add a line to all course syllabi stating that one of the goals of the course is to be able to actually apply the statistical techniques to real world situations and that students will be assessed on that ability.

This change will improve the student's ability to apply scientific tools and understanding to psychological research, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### Measure 2.2. (Direct; Knowledge)

At the end of each semester, students enrolled in PSYC 4830 Advance General, which is the department's capstone course, will be administered a post-test version of the Department of Psychology exit exam. Specifically, the sections of the exam that will be a measure of SLO2 are: Experimental Psychology; and Statistics for Psychology. At least 85% of students will earn a grade of 75% or higher on these sections.

**Findings:** Target was not met.

AC 2019-2020	59.47% of students earned a grade of 75% or higher
AC 2018-2019	52.63% of students earned a grade of 75% or higher

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was not met. In AC 2018-2019, 52.63 % (N = 57) of students earned a grade of 75% or higher on these sections. Of note was the discrepancy between face-to-face and online scores with 83.33% (N = 30) of face-to-face and 18.51% (N = 27) online students achieving 75 % or higher.

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 course steward offered additional educational resources for the specific sections of the exit exam in which students struggled. Faculty added additional resources in those specific areas identified as weak areas for students (Statistics). Faculty also added an additional online section of PSYC 4830. (See measure 1.1 for additional analysis of the issues around PSYC 4830 assessments.) The discrepancy between course type was hypothesized to be related to online proctored exams which reduced cheating and subsequently, the exam scores. This was addressed by adding two face to face sections and having the online classes involved in a required discussion board assignment during week one of the course. This assignment involved topics such as discrepancy in class scores, proctored versus non-proctored exam scores and the exit exam failure rate. The goal of this assignment was to draw attention to the difficulties online students may face in efforts to mitigate score discrepancies and encourage more effective study habits for online students.

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was not met, though there was growth observed over AC 2018-2019 results.

In AC 2019-2020, 58.47 % (N = 118) of students earned a grade of 75% or higher on these sections. Of note is the discrepancy between face-to-face and online scores with 77.97% (N = 59) of face-to-face and 38.98% (N = 59) online students achieving 75% or higher.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to apply scientific tools and understanding to psychological research.

### **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, the Undergraduate Coordinator will meet separately with the course stewards for PSYC 2430 and PSYC 4400. Faculty will review these findings and the notes/assessments for the online PSYC 4830 sections for those two courses and discuss how to coordinate these materials better to support student mastery of course outcomes.

The failure of the face-to-face classes to meet the target goal was very likely due to the shift in instructional delivery method because of campus closures to comply with federal and state stay-at-home orders due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, the discrepancy between the face-to-face and the online courses continues to be an issue. The online course was developed based on previous mandates that online courses should provide the same (as much as possible) educational experience as the that course's face to face classes.

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 analyze the online exit exam for specific areas of weaknesses and once those are identified, faculty will revise course notes, support materials, and assessments to address those weaknesses.

Faculty will support the splitting of PSYC 4830 (online) into two classes (if budget permits) to provide the ability to individualize instruction with these smaller classes to make a difference in final student performance scores.

These changes will improve the student's ability to apply scientific tools and understanding to psychological research, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

### SLO 3. Ethical and Social Responsibility.

Students will be able to apply ethical standards to psychological science and practices and adopt values that build communities. This outcome aligns with the third outcome of the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major version 2.0 (2013).

#### Course Map:

Tied to course syllabus objectives.

- PSYC 3050: Diversity Issues in Psychology
- PSYC 3060: Social Psychology
- PSYC 4470: Theories of Personality
- PSYC 4510: Ethics in Psychology

#### Measure 3.1. (Direct; Knowledge)

Students in PSYC 3050 Diversity Issues in Psychology complete an assignment whereby they identify their own biases, reflect on where those biases originated from, and describe how they plan to overcome those biases (refer to appendix B for the PSYC 3050 paper rubric). At least 85% of students will earn a grade of 80% or higher on this paper.

**Findings:** Target was met.

AC 2019-2020	85% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher
AC 2018-2019	86.36% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher

#### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. In AC 2018-2019, 86.36% (N = 44; M = 84.13%) earned a grade of 80% or higher.

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 course steward encouraged self-reflections and planning of ethical responsibility through assignments that fostered students to examine biases and ethics.

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

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met, 85.00% (N = 80) earned a grade of 80% or higher. Faculty noted a Covid-19 effect, with the Fall 2019 students passing rate at 90.90% (N = 33) and the Spring 2020 students passing rate of 80.85%, a full 10% lower.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to apply ethical standards to psychological science and practices and adopt values that build communities.

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

### 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. The course steward will direct the instructors of PSYC 3050 to emphasize values and reflection of ethical responsibility through assignments that foster students to examine biases and ethics.

These changes will improve the student's ability to apply ethical standards to psychological science and practices and adopt values that build communities, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### Measure 3.2. (Direct; Knowledge)

Students in PSYC 4510 Ethics in Psychology will write a paper analyzing a case study concerning an ethical dilemma (refer to appendix C for PSYC 4510 paper rubric). At least 85% of students will receive a grade of 80% or higher.

**Findings:** Target was not met.

AC 2019-2020	71.86% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher
AC 2018-2019	46.67% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was not met. In AC 2018-2019, 46.67% (N = 60, M = 57.72%) of students received a grade of 80% or higher.

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 course steward used the current case study and updated rubric and reviewed the mean scores between classes to determine if there was a confounding variable that may be skewing these results so that appropriate actions could be considered in moving towards the stated goal.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was not met, though there was significant growth observed over AC 2018-2019 results (over 25 percentage points).

In 2019-2020, 71.86% (N = 59, M = 19.92 on a 25-point scale) of students received a grade of 80% or higher. As with other learning measures, there was a semester difference, but a reverse of other measures. The Fall 2019, students showed a lower pass rate (N = 31, 65.95%) than Spring 2020 students (N = 12, 91.67%). This may be a Covid-19 effect as well since 23 of the 35 Psychology majors enrolled in the Spring

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

2020 class chose to not attempt the assignment and thus were not included in the grade analysis, while only 5 of the 52 Fall 2019 students chose to not attempt the assignment.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to apply ethical standards to psychological science and practices and adopt values that build communities.

### **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, the Department Chair and Undergraduate Coordinator will share the results of these analyses with the course steward of PSYC 4510 and will identify, describe, and implement instructional design and strategies for improving these results and improving course participation.

These changes will improve the student's ability to apply ethical standards to psychological science and practices and adopt values that build communities, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### **Measure 3.3. (Indirect; Knowledge)**

Students in PSYC 4510 Ethics in Psychology will complete the National Institute of Health protecting human research participants training course. At least 90% of students will complete the training and submit their certificate.

**Findings:** Target was not met.

AC 2019-2020	89.29% of students completed training
AC 2018-2019	91.67% of students completed training

### **Analysis:**

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. In AC 2018-2019, 91.67% (N = 72) students completed the training and submitted the completion certificate.

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 course steward made the certification a graded course requirement to ensure consistency in meeting the stated goal.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was not met though results were within less than one percentage point of meeting target and representing only a slight decline from AC 2018-2019 results though boasting a higher overall N-count.

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

In AC 2019-2020, 89.29% (N = 84) students completed the training and submitted the completion certificate. In AC 2019-2020, the course steward made the certification a graded course requirement. Despite this change, 9 Psychology majors in the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 classes chose to not complete the assignment, a significant missing data point that could have made a difference in the overall results for this measure.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to apply ethical standards to psychological science and practices and adopt values that build communities.

### **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. Faculty recommend that the PSYC 4510 course steward change the assignment weighting to count for a greater percentage of the overall final course grade, thereby encouraging all students to submit this work as a demonstration of their mastery of the student learning outcome.

These changes will improve the student's ability to apply ethical standards to psychological science and practices and adopt values that build communities, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### **SLO 4. Communication.**

Students will be able to write using field appropriate writing style (i.e. APA style) and be able to orally communicate psychological research. This outcome aligns with the fourth outcome of the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major version 2.0 (2013).

### **Course Map:**

Tied to course syllabus objectives.

- PSYC 2430: Introduction to Experimental Methods
- PSYC 3060: Social Psychology

### **Measure 4.1. (Direct; Skills)**

Students in PSYC 2430 Introduction to Experimental Methods will write a research paper whereby the entire grade is based on appropriate APA style (refer to appendix D for PSYC 2430 paper rubric). At least 85% of students will receive a grade of 80% or higher.

**Findings:** Target was not met.

AC 2019-2020      45% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

AC 2018-2019      34.03% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher

### **Analysis:**

In AC 2018-2019, the target was not met. In AC 2018-2019, 34.03% (N = 191, M = 61.10%) of students received a grade of 80% or better.

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 course steward provided more support and instruction on APA style and encouraged students to utilize other resources on campus such as The Writing Center. In the Fall 2019 and until the Covid-19 interruption in Spring 2020, the course instructor also enforced campus attendance policy in face-to-face sections

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was not met, though results represent a marked improvement over the AC 2018-2019 results (over 10 percentage points), indicating that the changes implemented last year are moving the results in the right direction.

In AC 2019-2020, 45.00% (N = 180) of PSYC 2430 students received a grade of 80% or better on their APA style paper. While this is not even close to the target. It is very clear that many students are still struggling with APA style writing. This is anecdotally confirmed by instructors in other courses requiring an APA style paper. A number of students simply choose to write papers in MLM style, completely ignoring APA instructions and training.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to write using field appropriate writing style (i.e. APA style) and be able to orally communicate psychological research.

### **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, the Department Chair and the Undergraduate Coordinator will share these findings with the course steward for PSYC 2430. Instructors will be encouraged to provide more instructional support and direction on APA style and to refer students to campus resources. Budget permitting, additional sections of PSYC 2430 will be opened, allowing more individual instruction and feedback to students on their writing.

These changes will improve the student's ability to write using field appropriate writing style (i.e. APA style) and be able to orally communicate psychological research, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

### Measure 4.2. (Direct; Knowledge and Skills)

Students in PSYC 2430 Introduction to Experimental Methods will orally present the research paper from Measure 4.1 (refer to appendix E for PSYC 2430 presentation rubric). At least 85% of students will receive a grade of 80% or higher.

**Findings:** Target was met.

AC 2019-2020	90.7% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher
AC 2018-2019	85.5% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. In AC 2018-2019, 85.5% (N = 90, M = 80.91%) of students received a grade of 80% or higher. This outcome was a result of an effort to increase the online course's demonstration of direct knowledge and skills in experimental methods and APA format whereby the paper presentation was required for online students.

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 course steward analyzed whether it was feasible to incorporate some type of oral presentation for the online sections.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met and represents an improvement over AC 2018-2019 results.

In AC 2019-2020, 90.70% (N = 86) of Psychology majors received a grade of 80% or higher. These grades are for face-to-face students in the Fall 2019 semester only. In the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semesters, it was not feasible to require this assignment of online sections due to technology limitations (our Department computers lacked the functionality to support video conferencing technology). While the computers were upgraded in the Spring 2020 semester, campus closures due to federal and state stay-at-home orders due to Covid-19 meant that in the Spring 2020 semester, the PSYC 2430 instructors worked from home and were, therefore, unable to observe face-to-face students' presentations.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to write using field appropriate writing style (i.e. APA style) and be able to orally communicate psychological research.

### Action – Decision or Recommendation:

In AC 2019-2020, the target was met.

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

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. Faculty will incorporate this assigning into the online sections given that we now have the technology to do online observations.

These changes will improve the student's ability to write using field appropriate writing style (i.e. APA style) and be able to orally communicate psychological research, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### Measure 4.3. (Direct; Knowledge and Skills)

Students in PSYC 3060 Social Psychology will write a research paper whereby half the grade is based on appropriate APA style and the other half is based on the content as it refers to material from the field of Social Psychology (refer to appendix F for PSYC 3060 paper rubric). At least 85% of students will receive a grade of 80% or higher.

**Findings:** Target was met.

AC 2019-2020	92.06% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher
AC 2018-2019	76.84% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was not met. In AC 2018-2019, 76.84% (N = 95, M = 74.35%) of students received a grade of 80% or higher. This outcome was a result of the course steward modifying the grading rubric to specifically delineate the point allocation and providing more resources to students regarding the mechanics of APA writing and style via Moodle.

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 course steward incorporated a process to increase course content by adding resources and instructions related to APA style and guidelines.

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

In AC 2019-2020, 92.06% (N = 101) of students received a grade of 80% or higher. Results were consistent across semesters and online and face to face sections. Fall 2019 students showed a pass rate of 92.85% (N = 56) and Spring 2020 students (N = 45) showed a pass rate of 91.11%. Across all semesters, online students (N = 53) pass rate was 86.80%, while face to face (N+ 48) pass rate was 97.90%. This last difference may be due to the fact that the Spring face to face class was very small N=18, which may have contributed to their perfect pass rate (100%).

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

These changes impacted/made/had a direct impact on the student's ability to write using field appropriate writing style (i.e. APA style) and be able to orally communicate psychological research.

### **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. The APA paper grades in PSYC 3060 were appreciably better than the APA paper grades in other psychology courses. This clearly worked and in AC 2020-2021, the course steward will make these resources available to students, while also reviewing additional possible APA resources. In addition, the course steward will meet with the stewards of other courses requiring APA papers to share ideas and resources.

These changes will improve the student's ability to write using field appropriate writing style (i.e. APA style) and be able to orally communicate psychological research, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### **SLO 5. Professional Development.**

Students will be able to apply psychological content and skills to career targets and exhibit preparedness and meaningful professional direction for life after graduation. This outcome aligns with the fifth outcome of the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major version 2.0 (2013).

### **Course Map:**

Tied to course syllabus objectives.

- PSYC 2040: Psychology as a Profession
- PSYC 4600: Field Experience - elective
- PSYC 4830: Advance General

### **Measure 5.1. (Direct; Knowledge)**

Students in PSYC 2040 Psychology as a Profession will write an action plan detailing what the students plan to do after graduation (job or graduate school) and include a timeline of everything they need to do in order to achieve that target (refer to appendix G for PSYC 2040 paper rubric). At least 85% of students will receive a grade of 80% or higher.

**Findings:** Target was met.

AC 2019-2020      94.08% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

AC 2018-2019      79.6% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was not met. Students were given direct feedback regarding their stated plan and encouraged to identify potential barriers to success. As a result, in AC 2018-2019, 79.60% (N = 201, M = 79.02%) of students received a grade of 80% or higher.

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 encouraged students to seek information and preparation for career path as well as provided information on opportunities for learning about careers and guidance outside of the classroom. Also, faculty made sure to clarify exactly what was required for the assignment to encourage full completion and submission for all students.

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

In AC 2019-2020, 94.08% (N = 169) of students received a grade of 80% or higher. This is a marked improvement over the AC 2018-2019 rate of 79.60%. Results were very similar across semesters and learning platforms. Fall 2019 rates were 89.24% (N = 93) and Spring 2020 (N = 76) rates of 86.37%. Face-to-face rates across the semesters were (N = 94) 92.55%, while online rates (N = 76) were 90.78%.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to apply psychological content and skills to career targets and exhibit preparedness and meaningful professional direction for life after graduation.

### 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, the Department Chair and the Undergraduate Coordinator will share these results with the course steward and will direct the course steward to extend the changes made in the course. Additionally, the course steward will be directed to find updated external resources that reflect the changing employment situations in the various subfields of Psychology.

These changes will improve the student's ability to apply psychological content and skills to career targets and exhibit preparedness and meaningful professional direction for life after graduation, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

### Measure 5.2. (Direct; Knowledge)

Students in PSYC 2040 Psychology as a Profession will write a personal reflection essay whereby, they specify how the course has influenced their career targets (refer to appendix H for PSYC 2040 paper rubric). At least 85% of students will receive a grade of 80% or higher.

**Findings:** Target was met.

AC 2019-2020	99.4% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher
AC 2018-2019	84.01% of students earned a grade of 80% or higher

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. In AC 2018-2019, the course stewards gave more specific feedback related to career targets along with the grade. As a result, in AC 2018-2019, 85.07% (N = 201, M = 84.01%) of students received a grade of 80% or higher.

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 course steward provided specific and individualized feedback to students about their reflection papers.

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

In AC 2019-2020 academic year, 99.40% (N = 169) of students received a grade of 80% or higher. This is a substantial increase over last year's rates (84.01%). As with the previous measure, results were remarkably consistent across both semesters and learning platforms. Fall 2019 students (N = 103) had a pass rate of 99.03%, while Spring 2020 (N = 66) = 100%. Face-to-face students (N = 93) showed a pass rate of 98.92%, and the online students (N = 76) had a rate of 96.05%

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to apply psychological content and skills to career targets and exhibit preparedness and meaningful professional direction for life after graduation.

### 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 2019-2020, the course steward provided specific and individualized feedback to students about their reflection papers. While this may have had a positive impact on the paper grades, such a dramatic increase in results usually indicates a possible confound that may be affecting the data. In AC 2020-2021, the Department Chair and Undergraduate Coordinator will share the results of these analyses with the course steward and ask for a review of the submitted data to identify and describe any confounding variables and plan for instructional adjustments accordingly.

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

These changes will improve the student's ability to apply psychological content and skills to career targets and exhibit preparedness and meaningful professional direction for life after graduation, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### Measure 5.3. (Indirect; Skills)

Once a year, surveys will be distributed to the Department of Psychology's advisory committee which consists of professionals in the community who work with our students through internships or externships, or who have hired graduates from our department (refer to appendix I for the survey). Five questions on the survey ask the respondent to rate our students on the 5 student learning outcomes on a Likert scale whereby 1 – lowest and 5 – highest. At least 80% of the respondents will rate our students an average of 4 or more on those 5 measures.

**Findings:** Target was not met.

AC 2019-2020	no data was collected (COVID19)
AC 2018-2019	100% of ratings were at an average of 4 or higher

### Analysis:

In AC 2018-2019, the target was met. the department made more effort to collect responses from the entire advisory committee by collecting the survey data in advance of the due date for assessment data. As a result, in AC 2018-2019, 8 members of the advisory committee completed the survey (N = 8), 100% of whom gave a minimum rating of 4 on all 5 measures. The average rating for each survey question was:

- Knowledge Base in Psychology M = 4.5 Above Average
- Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking M = 4.13 Above Average
- Ethical and Social Responsibility in a Diverse World M = 4.5 Above Average
- Communication Skills M = 4.25 Above Average
- Professional Development M = 4.19 Above Average

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 department strove to have 100% of the advisory committee members respond to the survey. Faculty also noted that the lowest mean score was Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking. To increase this mean, a critical thinking assignment was administered in Psyc 4600-Field Experience. This assignment began Fall 2019 semester, due to low registration in summer. The goal of this assignment was to help students develop their abilities to interpret information (fact from opinion) and to use this information to reach conclusions.

Despite these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was not met. In AC 2019-2020, no data were available due to campus and school closures according to federal and state stay-at-home orders due to the coronavirus pandemic.

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

On Friday, March 6, 2020, an email with the survey was administered to the 13 agencies that supervised the field experience students. A follow up email was sent to the 13 agencies that supervised the field experiences students. A follow up email was sent on Thursday, March 12, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, on Friday March 13, 2020, all classes were cancelled until March 19, 2020 when the university reopened with all faculty/staff teleworking and all classes now online. Obviously, NSU was not the only agency effected and only one of the 13 agencies returned the survey. Therefore, we were not able to obtain a valid sample.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to apply psychological content and skills to career targets and exhibit preparedness and meaningful professional direction for life after graduation.

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

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

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2018-2019 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2020-2021, faculty will distribute the Survey to the Advisory Council twice a year: Fall semester 2020 and Spring semester 2021.

These changes will improve the student's ability to apply psychological content and skills to career targets and exhibit preparedness and meaningful professional direction for life after graduation, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

### **Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results:**

Program faculty made several decisions after examining results of AC 2018-2019 data analysis which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2019-2020.

- SLO 1: Faculty offered additional educational resources for the specific sections of the exit exam in which students struggled. Faculty added additional education resources in those specific areas identified as weak areas for students (Statistics and Research Methods). Faculty split the online course into two sections, allowing more teacher-student interactions. Also, faculty discussed the discrepancy in class scores and the proctoring situation with online students. Faculty used the survey as a course assignment and explored options for confidential survey data gathering so that online students could be included in this measure. Faculty modified the exam for measure 1.3.
- SLO 2: Faculty used the current grading rubric but updated the research articles used in the assignment to monitor this assignment as an effective measure for

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

this specific learning objective. the course steward offered additional educational resources for the specific sections of the exit exam in which students struggled. Faculty added additional resources in specific areas identified as weak areas for students (Statistics). Faculty also added an additional online section of PSYC 4830.

- SLO 3: Faculty encouraged self-reflections and planning of ethical responsibility through assignments that fostered students to examine biases and ethics. Faculty used the current case study and updated rubric and reviewed the mean scores between classes to determine if there was a confounding variable. Faculty made the certification a graded course requirement to ensure consistency in meeting the stated goal.
- SLO 4: Faculty provided more support and instruction on APA style and encouraged students to utilize other resources on campus such as The Writing Center. Faculty analyzed whether it was feasible to incorporate some type of oral presentation for the online sections. Faculty incorporated a process to increase course content by adding resources and instructions related to APA style and guidelines.
- SLO 5: Faculty encouraged students to seek information and preparation for career path as well as provided information on opportunities for learning about careers and guidance outside of the classroom. Also, faculty made sure to clarify exactly what was required for the assignment to encourage full completion and submission for all students. Faculty provided specific and individualized feedback to students about their reflection papers. Faculty added a critical thinking assignment in Psyc 4600-Field Experience.

### Plan of Action Moving Forward:

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2019-2020 and will take steps to continuously improve student learning in AC 2020-2021:

- SLO 1: Faculty will analyze the online exit exam for specific areas of weaknesses and once those are identified, faculty will revise course notes, support materials, and assessments to address those weaknesses. Faculty will support the splitting of PSYC 4830 (online) into two classes (if budget permits) to provide the ability to individualize instruction with these smaller classes to make a difference in final student performance scores. Faculty will partner with electronic learning to explore solutions to perform a confidential assessment through Moodle. Faculty recommend that the instrument for measure 1.3 be changed.
- SLO 2: Faculty will emphasize the assignment at the start of the semester to the various instructors and adjuncts who teach this course. Faculty will add a line to

## Assessment CYCLE 2019 – 2020

all course syllabi stating that one of the goals of the course is to be able to actually apply the statistical techniques to real world situations and that students will be assessed on that ability. Faculty will meet separately with the course stewards for PSYC 2430 and PSYC 4400. Faculty will review findings and the notes/assessments for the online PSYC 4830 sections and coordinate materials better to support student mastery of course outcomes.

- SLO 3: Faculty will direct the instructors of PSYC 3050 to emphasize values and reflection of ethical responsibility through assignments that foster students to examine biases and ethics. Faculty will share the results of these analyses with the course steward of PSYC 4510 and will identify, describe, and implement instructional design and strategies for improving these results and improving course participation. Faculty recommend that the PSYC 4510 course steward change the assignment weighting to count for a greater percentage of the overall final course grade, thereby encouraging all students to submit this work as a demonstration of their mastery of the student learning outcome.
- SLO 4: Faculty will share these findings with the course steward for PSYC 2430. Instructors will be encouraged to provide more instructional support and direction on APA style and to refer students to campus resources. Budget permitting, additional sections of PSYC 2430 will be opened, allowing more individual instruction and feedback to students on their writing. Faculty will incorporate this assigning into the online sections given that faculty now have the technology to do online observations. Faculty will make resources available to students, while also reviewing additional possible APA resources. In addition, faculty will meet with the stewards of other courses requiring APA papers to collaborate and share ideas and resources.
- SLO 5: Faculty will share these results with the course steward and will direct the course steward to extend the changes made in the course. Faculty will direct the course steward to find updated external resources that reflect the changing employment situations in the various subfields of Psychology. Faculty will share the results of these analyses with the course steward and ask for a review of the submitted data to identify and describe any confounding variables and plan for instructional adjustments accordingly. Faculty will distribute the Survey to the Advisory Council twice a year: Fall semester 2020 and Spring semester 2021.