

Instruction

Program: Psychology AA-T Degree
Instructional Division: Social Sciences
Program Lead: Michelle Oja

Program Mission Statement:

The mission of instructors teaching psychology at Taft College is to provide structured and semi-structured opportunities for students to develop and master the Knowledge, Skills, and Values consistent with the science and application of psychology.

Program Summary:

The Psychology Program at Taft College is in its second full year of offering an AA transfer degree (implemented in January 2012). The program is designed to prepare psychology majors to transfer to California universities. There are eight required courses in the program, including two outside of the department (BIO 1500 and BIO 1501/lab). The statistics course offered through mathematics (STAT 1501) may also be taken in lieu of the statistics course offered through the social science department (PSYC 2200). In addition, students are required to complete all general education pattern coursework and supplemental elective coursework for a total of 60 transferable units.

With one full-time instructor and 3-5 adjunct faculty members, and four full-time faculty in other departments or capacities, the Psychology Program has been able to consistently offer the required coursework for the transfer degree, as well as non-required psychology courses.

Annual Program Goals Update:

1. Review and align course level learning outcomes with program level learning outcomes for the psychology program.

This goal was not accomplished. Course level learning outcomes and program learning outcomes were reviewed. A draft of modifications was discussed by the one full-time faculty member and the division chair. It was believed that SLOs and PLOs would be modified in an institutional way during the Fall 2013 faculty in-service, so further modification and a discussion with more psychology (adjunct) faculty was delayed.

2. Review and align course level learning outcomes and program level learning outcomes with institutional learning outcomes.

This goal was not accomplished. Because final revision and approval of course SLOs and PLOs was delayed, it was decided not to align the current learning objectives with the ILOs. It was decided to map the ILOs to the finalized, fully vetted course and program objectives.

3. Explore ways to improve course success rates, especially in Psyc 2003, Stat 1510, and the online format of Psyc 2200.

This goal was not accomplished due to the workload of the new (and only) faculty member.

4. Explore service-learning or field work as a component of the AA in Psychology degree.

In sections of courses taught by the one full-time faculty member, extracurricular opportunities were offered as extra credit. Participation by students could indicate what activities the students are most interested. Students were most likely to attend events that were related to several of their classes, such as presentations by writers of books they had read in an English class. Similarly, PSYC 2003 requires students to work with children for three assignments. Although some of the students utilized the Taft College Childcare Center for these assignments, many students were able to work with children whom they already had a relationship with, such as church daycares, classrooms of teachers whom the Taft College students work with, or children of friends.

The one full-time faculty member also discussed possible educational field trips with the Psychology Club (because she is the advisor). Although the club members were interested in several ideas, the members were never able to contact the appropriate person at the target agencies to schedule a visit.

These results suggest that students would be interested in service-learning or field work if it was a requirement of a course or program, but it is difficult to motivate them to participate. The only exception to this may be providing service-learning or field work activities that involved people from their friends, families, faith communities, or past mentors/supervisors/teachers.

Course Enrollment Trends:

Due to the addition of a full-time Psychology instructor in Fall 2011, enrollment has increased in the program courses in Psychology. Enrollment in the online mode of Psyc 1500 has always been high, but increased substantially in Fall 2011. This upward trend continued in Fall 2012. Enrollment in the on-campus mode of this course has varied, but also increased substantially in Fall 2011.

BIOL 1500 taught online has declined after a peak in Spring 2010.

The offline mode of many of these courses is offered sporadically, so trends are not apparent. Other courses have had slight increases in enrollment or have maintained their enrollment over the last four years.

Course and Section Success Rates:

Although success rates differ dramatically by course section and semester, on-campus courses have higher success rates than online courses. Offline course success rates vary by semester, but are often low. The generally low success rate of the online offerings suggests the need for resources for instructors who teach in the online format.

In general, courses in this program are moderately to highly successful (60-90%). A few courses, however, have success rates of 100% (PSYC 1500 in Fall 2009; PSYC 2200 in Summer 2012; PSYC 2205 in Spring 2012; SOC 1510 in Spring 2012). These sections should be reviewed to determine what caused these perfect scores. For example, in Spring 2012, PSYC 2205 only had three students. This success rate seems reasonable if all three students passed the course. There are a variety of reasons why success rates in these courses are so low; a dialogue between the instructors may help determine what the primary causes are, and suggest ways to resolve these causes.

Major Counts:

The implementation of the new transfer AA degree in Psychology was in January 2012. Since then, there have been 192 majors.

Award Counts:

The transfer AA degree in Psychology was instituted in January 2012. Two students earned this degree in Spring 2012, and four students earned the degree in 2012/2013. Our total number of graduates doubled!

Other Data (Accuplacer, Student Evaluation of Course, CCSSE, etc.):

The two students who earned the transfer AA degree in Psychology in Spring 2012 have successfully transferred to CSUB, resulting in a transfer rate of 100%!

Further exploration of the program would be helpful in the area of basic skills. In the future, we would like data on student performance based on assessment level.

Course Level SLO Summary:

There is a high proportion of SLOs that are not scored in all courses, often from a third up to three-fourths of SLOs were not scored.

BIOL 1500 – Fundamentals in Biology

Two BIOL 1500 SLOs showed that most students were not proficient, with only 15% reaching a scoring level of 3. BIOL 1500 also assessed one ISLO related to evidence-based reasoning. On this ISLO, almost half of students reached a score of 4 or 5.

PSYC 1500 – Introduction to Psychology

Over past year, nine learning outcomes were assessed in Psyc 1500. Five division SLOs related to APA Style Writing were assessed in all three semesters. The majority of students were assessed at level 4 or 5 for all of these communication and writing SLOs. In Spring 2013, three GE SLOs were assessed. For the GE SLO related to discussing the major social, cultural, economic, and political forces on human beings and institutions, 70% of students were assessed at a 4 or 5. For GE SLOs related to explaining social science methodologies, all students with work to assess were assessed at a 4 or 5. For the GE SLO related to explaining principles, concepts, models, value systems, and ethics in the social sciences, all assessed students were assessed at a level of 3 or higher. PSYC 1500 instructors also assessed the ISLO related to evidence-based reasoning. About half of students were assessed at the highest two levels.

PSYC 2003 – Child Growth and Development

The APA Style Writing SLOs were assessed in Spring 2013 for PSYC 2003. For APA Formatting, 50% of students were assessed at a level of 3 or 4. For critiquing sources, 70% of students scored at a 3 or 4. Only 10% of students were assessed at or above a 3 for the ability to synthesize sources, write clearly and insightfully, or write a focused and coherent paper. Although there were some writing SLOs that

students were able to accomplish, there were several SLOs in which the majority of students only reached a scoring level of 1. There was often few to no students who reached the highest scoring levels.

PSYC 2200 - Elementary Statistics for the Behavioral and Social Sciences

Three APA Style Writing SLOs were assessed in PSYC 2200. The majority of students were assessed at levels of 3 or 4. No students reached the higher scoring levels on these APA-related SLOs. Five SLOs directly related to the course content (statistics) were evaluated. On four of these, no students were assessed at either of the highest two levels (Evaluate the appropriate conclusion from research; Generalize research conclusions appropriately; Use critical thinking; Seek and evaluate scientific evidence). Happily, most students were assessed at a level of 3 or higher for an SLO related to analyzing data. One GE SLO related to communication was assessed this year; the majority of students were assessed at the 2 or 3 level. Three ISLOs were assessed in this course. For the ability to apply evidence based reasoning, 48% of assessed students were at the highest level. In the other two ISLOs (communication and scrutinizes assumptions), about two-thirds of students assessed at a level of 2 or 3. Two degree SLOs were assessed in Fall 2012. Students were assessed at levels 2 and 3 on these learning outcomes related to critical and creative thinking for problem solving, and valuing empirical evidence.

PSYC 2205 – Introduction to Research Methods in the Social Sciences

One SLO was assessed for PSYC 2205 (ISLO related to evidence based reasoning). The majority of students were assessed in the highest two levels.

SOC 1510 – Introduction to Sociology

Five APA Style Writing SLOs were assessed in SOC 1510. Students were all either not scored or were assessed at the first level. Three GE SLOs were assessed in this course (Discuss the influence of major social, cultural, economic, and political forces on human behavior and institutions; Explain the methodologies in social science; Explain principles, concepts, models, value systems, and ethics in the social sciences). Most students were assessed at the lowest three levels.

STAT 1510 – Elementary Statistics

STAT 1510 assessed students at the 2 and 3 level for their ability to analyze real-world data, ability to present analyses, the GE SLO related communication, and the ISLO related to evidence-based reasoning. For the SLO related to evaluating the appropriateness of statistics used in the news, the majority of students were assessed at the 0 level.

Program Level SLO Summary:

No program SLOs were assessed for the Psychology AA transfer degree. Although course level learning outcomes and program learning outcomes were reviewed and discussed by the one full-time faculty member and the division chair, they have not been linked together. It was believed that SLOs and PLOs would be modified in an institutional way during the Fall 2013 faculty in-service, so further modification and a discussion with more psychology (adjunct) faculty was delayed.

Summary and Implications of Major Findings:

In general, the psychology courses in the degree program are healthy. The largest issue for the psychology courses seems to be suspiciously high success rates in a few courses, and lower success rates

in online courses. However, the non-psychology courses in the degree are more troubling. The courses with low success rates and low (or missing) SLO evaluations tend to be outside of the division. Both of these issues may be solved with professional development and inter-department dialogue.

Additionally, with the new transfer degree and new faculty, this is a great time to re-vamp the degree, as well as the SLOs for the Psychology Program. However, these tasks take time. One full-time faculty member generally does not have enough time to not only teach their classes, attend professional development trainings, accomplish program tasks (such as this review), and update and add new courses to the degree.

List of Annual Program Goal Statements:

1. Review and revision of the degree program, including:
 - a. SLOs (course, program, institutional level, and mapping)
 - b. Required courses for the degree
 - c. Develop new courses
 - d. CORs and C-IDs
 - e. Success rates and SLO attainment (In particular, courses with very high success rates (100%) to determine the cause of the high rate)
2. Explore techniques, including inter-departmental dialogue, to improve students' learning and success (and faculty completion of SLO assessments) in non-psychology courses in the psychology transfer degree program.
3. Professional development of degree faculty, particularly focusing on:
 - a. Faculty who teach courses with traditionally low success rates
 - b. Faculty who teach online courses
 - c. Improving success of underprepared or basic skills students in degree courses
4. Continually provide evidence that the psychology transfer degree program, with courses serving almost 900 students per semester, would benefit from another full-time psychology faculty member.