STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT REPORT

SUBMITTED BY:  LINDA COTE-REILLY
DATE:  JULY 30, 2014

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHERE AND HOW ARE DATA AND DOCUMENTS USED TO GENERATE THIS REPORT BEING STORED:

1. PSY 302 Research design for psychology grading rubric for final course product (i.e., an APA-formatted research report). Research grading rubrics for 6 sections of this course over 4 semesters (AYS 2012-2013 and 2013-2014) by 3 different faculty members are included. 64 student posters were evaluated.

2. PSY 497 Senior seminar grading rubric for final product (i.e., a 4000 word revised paper). Critical thinking grading rubrics for 6 sections of this course over 4 semesters (AYS 2012-2013 and 2013-2014) by 4 different faculty members are included. 67 student papers were evaluated.

3. Focus group summary. A focus group was conducted by SEHS Assoc. Dean Shannon Melideo Spring 2014 in PSY 497 senior seminar. 12 students participated.


5. Marymount alumni survey 2013, summary statistics from relevant items. 14 students participated.

Grading rubrics and summary statistics are presented in the appendix. All of these documents are located on a password protected computer and paper files in Dr. Linda Cote-Reilly’s locked office, Rowley G124. This document and all of its attachments have also been uploaded to the Department of Psychology Blackboard site.

Data from the grading rubrics for items 1 and 2 were entered into and analyzed using SPSS; printouts of the grading rubric and SPSS summary statistics are included. The SPSS files and raw paper data can be obtained from Dr. Cote-Reilly. The focus group summary (item #3 above) can also be obtained from the SEHS main office, and data from items 4 and 5 (above) can be obtained from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

List all of the program’s learning outcomes: (regardless of whether or not they are being assessed this year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Year of Last Assessment</th>
<th>Year of Next Planned Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research - Students will apply psychological research methodologies and statistical techniques to a research question. (Construction of knowledge)</td>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>2013-2014 (this year)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic Year: 2013-2014

Program: Psychology

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Critical Thinking - Students will demonstrate critical evaluation of a psychological topic through effective writing. (Analysis of knowledge)</th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>2013-2014 (this year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Communication Skills - Students will demonstrate effective presentation skills within the discipline. (Transmission of knowledge)</td>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>2014-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Preparation - Students will demonstrate and apply specialized knowledge within psychology and related fields, such as education, human services, business, etc., by using this training in an internship setting. (Application of knowledge)</td>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>2014-2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the Department of Psychology underwent a successful program review in 2012-2013 and made program revisions in 2013-2014 as a result of that program review. One of the changes we made (which was approved by APBP) was that we would no longer formally assess two learning outcomes because they are redundant with LAC and/or University outcomes. The two discontinued outcomes are Global Perspective and Ethics. Our 4 learning outcomes listed above are consistent with American Psychological Association recommendations for undergraduate psychology programs (APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major Version 2.0, 2012).

Describe how the program’s outcomes support Marymount’s Mission, Strategic Plan, and relevant school plan:

The Psychology program’s outcomes support Marymount’s Mission in the following ways:
1. Scholarship is a hallmark of a Marymount education is supported by the Research outcome (i.e., Students will apply psychological research methodologies and statistical techniques to a research question).
2. Emphasizing academic excellence at the undergraduate level is supported by the Critical Thinking outcome (i.e., Students will demonstrate critical evaluation of a psychological topic through effective writing).
3. Opportunities for Personal and Professional Development are supported by the Oral Communication Skills outcome (i.e., Students will demonstrate effective presentation skills within the discipline).
4. Career Preparation is supported by the Career Preparation outcome (i.e., Students will demonstrate and apply specialized knowledge within psychology and related fields, such as education, human services, business, etc., by using this training in an internship setting).

The Psychology program’s outcomes support Marymount’s Strategic Plan and the SEHS School Plan as it relates to:

1. Offering rigorous, cohesive, integrated undergraduate curricula that produce superior graduates able to succeed in their positions and communities – This is reflected in each of our four learning outcomes geared toward research and statistical methodology, effective writing and critical thinking skills, effective oral communication skills, and career preparation through the internship. These learning outcomes are consistent with American Psychological Association recommendations about what psychology majors need.
2. **Strengthening Marymount’s Catholic identity** – This is reflected in our emphasis on ethics throughout our curriculum but not in our program outcomes per se. For example, we teach students about the APA Code of Conduct as it applies to conducting research with human participants and expect them to abide by it. We also ask students to reflect upon and write about ethical behavior at their internship site.

3. **Strengthening Marymount’s ties to the larger community through outreach and collaboration** – Through their internship, students connect with the larger community. Many of our psychology majors choose community outreach programs for their internship sites (e.g., Doorways shelter for women and children, AFAC) and some of our students’ internship supervisors are Marymount alum (e.g., Annetta Benjamin Counseling Center).

Please note that the SEHS Plan highlights all three of the items that are identified above from Marymount’s Strategic Plan. The Psychology program outcomes support the SEHS goals (stated on the SEHS website) of fostering caring, reflective, and ethical practitioners grounded in both theory and practice in Psychology. As such, the Psychology program’s learning outcomes are consistent with the American Psychological Association’s recommendations for what college students need to succeed in the 21st century. Specifically, the Department of Psychology at Marymount University focuses on the following 4 outcomes, which are interrelated:

1) **Scientific reasoning (Construction of knowledge)**
   All students complete a 3 course methodology sequence beginning in their first semester with a 1 credit laboratory course designed to allow students to "work with" the material they are learning in their introductory psychology course. This course helps students to understand how we know what we know (how knowledge in our field is created). No other Universities in the area have such a course. We also have a Statistics course that lays the foundation for students to conduct their own research project in our Research Methods course. In addition, approximately 15% of our majors are working on research with Psychology faculty beyond the classroom (this includes Discover grants, Honors theses, other student independent projects for course credit, and faculty grants).

2) **Critical thinking (Analysis of knowledge)**
   Unlike mathematics where 2 + 2 always equals 4, the study of human behavior is complex and the answers to our questions ever-changing. Thus, the faculty in our department teach students to think critically about psychological phenomena by first evaluating the validity of the source of the information (information literacy), and secondly by asking students to weigh the evidence (before coming to a conclusion) using a variety of techniques (i.e., experimentation, case studies, studying controversial topics, peer discussion).

3) **Communication skills (Transmission of knowledge)**
   Psychology majors hone their communication skills by writing papers and through oral presentations throughout their careers at Marymount. Students take at least two writing-intensive courses in their major so that they can learn to think and write like psychologists. Our focus on communication skills will set students apart from their peers in the workplace and graduate studies.
Academic Year: 2013-2014  
Program: Psychology

4) Application of knowledge through real-world experiences (for example, internship)
Students spend 200 hours at a site of their choosing, reflecting their own interests and career goals. Examples of recent internship sites include: Arlington County Juvenile Court (forensic psychology), National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (nonprofit service), NIH (research), Alternative House (counseling), St. Thomas More Elementary School (education), working with cognitively challenged adults at Sibley Hospital (healthcare), and Navy Federal Credit Union (business). Internships are important for students because they help students to focus their career interests and goals, teach them about workplace culture, and provide essential networking opportunities. A number of our students are offered full-time jobs at their internship sites. Our Alumni Survey (2013) indicated that most of our graduates were employed in psychology or a related field (62.5%).

Provide a brief description of the assessment process used including strengths, challenges and planned improvements:

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

1. Psychology Department Rubrics/Direct measure. The Psychology faculty previously identified the product to be evaluated (i.e., the research report from PSY 302 Research Design for Psychology) to assess students’ proficiency in Research. Each student’s work product for the Research Learning Outcome was directly evaluated by the course instructor using the departmental rubrics for Research (Appendix A). Research grading rubrics for 6 sections of this course over 4 semesters (AYs 2012-2013 and 2013-2014) by 3 different faculty members were gathered and entered into SPSS item-by-item. Mean scores for each of the five items on the rubric and the overall mean scores were analyzed; summary statistics appear in Appendix A. A total of 64 student papers were evaluated.

   The Psychology faculty previously identified the product to be evaluated (i.e., the 4000-word final paper for PSY 497 Senior Seminar in which students evaluated the pros and cons of a controversial issue in Psychology) to assess students’ proficiency in critical thinking. Each student’s work product for the Critical Thinking Learning Outcome was directly evaluated by the course instructor using the departmental rubric for Critical Thinking (Appendix B). Critical thinking grading rubrics for 6 sections of this course over 4 semesters (AYs 2012-2013 and 2013-2014) by 4 different faculty members were gathered and entered into SPSS item-by-item. Mean scores for each of the four items on the rubric and the overall mean scores were analyzed; summary statistics appear in Appendix B. 67 student papers were evaluated.

2. Focus Group/Indirect measure. A focus group was conducted by the Associate Dean of SEHS (Shannon Melideo) Spring 2014 in PSY 497 senior seminar using questions generated by the Department Chair (Linda Cote-Reilly). Students gave open-ended responses to 7 questions and were allowed to comment at the end of the focus group. An SEHS staff member transcribed the questions and student responses. Student responses to the two questions pertaining to research and critical thinking appear in Appendix C. 12 students participated.
3. **Marymount Graduating Student Survey – Evaluation of Preparation for the Psychology Department 2012-2013/Indirect measure.** This survey was administered and analyzed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Responses to pertinent items for Research and Critical Thinking (a total of 5 items) were summarized. These results appear in Appendix D. 25 students participated.

4. **Marymount Alumni Survey 2013/Indirect measure.** This survey was administered and analyzed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Responses to pertinent items for Research and Critical Thinking (a total of 5 items) were summarized. This survey appears in Appendix E. 14 students participated.

**STRENGTHS OF THIS YEAR’S PROCESS**

The Department of Psychology improved its assessment of student learning over past years in several ways:

1. A combination of Direct and Indirect Measures were used to assess student learning; these data together provide a comprehensive picture of student learning.

2. This is the first time the revised grading rubric was used for the Critical Thinking Outcome and the second time it is being used for the Research Outcome. Moreover, the assignment and rubric for each of these outcomes correspond directly to each other and are consistent across different sections of the course and different professors.

3. We have direct assessment of 100% of students who took PSY 302 *Research Design for Psychology* (Research standard) and PSY 497 *Senior Seminar* (Critical Thinking) in the past two years.

4. Statistical analyses were conducted in SPSS and in such a way that we could determine whether there were differences among sections and professors in whether students achieved the learning standards.
CHALLENGES AND PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

There were no challenges with this year’s assessment process.

Describe how the program implemented its planned improvements from last year:

| Outcome                        | Planned Improvement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Research and Critical Thinking | Create grading rubrics for Research and Critical Thinking to be used by all faculty in our department teaching courses where these skills are assessed so that we have consistency in student learning goals and student assessment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                | The grading rubrics were revised Summer 2012 and implemented Fall 2012 for the first time. These rubrics appear in Appendix A and B. The Critical Thinking grading rubric was adapted from the AAUP Critical Thinking rubric for undergraduates.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Research and Critical Thinking | Use course-embedded direct assessment for these two outcomes, as we do for the Oral Communication Skills outcome. All instructors teaching PSY 302 Research Design for Psychology graded students’ final projects using our departmental Research rubric. All instructors teaching PSY 497 Senior Seminar graded students’ final papers using our departmental Critical Thinking rubric.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                | This planned improvement was implemented in Fall 2012. This is the first time we have ever been able to directly assess 100% of students’ work for Research and Critical Thinking.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Global Perspective and Ethics  | This was not a planned improvement in 2012, instead this improvement was a result of our Program Review in 2013. Our Department will no longer formally assess two learning outcomes (Global Perspective and Ethics) because they are redundant with LAC and/or University outcomes. Having four learning outcomes instead of six allows our department to focus on the learning outcomes most central to our program. The 4 remaining learning outcomes are consistent with American Psychological Association recommendations for undergraduate psychology programs ([APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major Version 2.0, 2012](#)). |
|                                | This change was approved by APBP, and we have made this change beginning with this assessment report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
Provide a response to last year’s University Assessment Committee review of the program’s learning assessment report: (List each recommendation and provide a specific response to each).

1. In our last assessment report submitted in 2012 (because we had our program review in 2013), we stated that the Department of Psychology would use program-wide rubrics for our standards and that we would then use course-embedded assessment for some of our standards (Research, Critical Thinking, Oral Communication Skills). The Assessment Committee questioned our use of course-embedded assessment although they did not state why (the feedback on our report said effectively that we had a strong process and should not mess with it, but this process is even stronger). We have been using course-embedded direct assessment of Oral Communication Skills (previously called Presentation) since 2008. As a department we have decided that we will use course-embedded assessment for both Research and Critical Thinking for the following reasons:

   - As mentioned in our last assessment report, in past assessments (2008-9, 2009-10, 2010-11) students had difficulty identifying and we had difficulty collecting appropriate and exemplary work products to assess their outcomes throughout their college years. We had identified specific courses and assignments that we recommended students use as exemplars of each outcome (typically in 300-level or higher courses), and we became more explicit that students should submit a specific assignment (and embedded this in the syllabi for the specific courses). However, our best response rate was 80%. The Department also pilot tested the use of TaskStream, asking students in each of the identified courses to purchase TaskStream and deposit their specific assignment into it at the end of the course. However, this did not improve our ability to get our hands on student assignments for this assessment. We found that students balked at the cost of TaskStream, many did not purchase it, and too many students submitted something other than the recommended assignment (many simply did not keep their work even though the instructors of courses with recommended assignments asked them to).

   - The American Psychological Association recommends course-embedded assessment so that faculty can assess whether they are meeting the standards in their own courses (rather than program-wide, as this document does) so that they can make changes as necessary while the course is on-going, in order to achieve student outcomes. It is not helpful to either instructors or students to realize two semesters later that they did not learn what we wanted them to learn.

   - Both course-embedded and non course-embedded assessments are direct measures of student achievement, the same rubric is used, and often the same faculty members are doing the evaluation, therefore we do not expect much difference in the results of the assessment.

   - The Assessment Committee’s objection to using course-embedded assessment may stem from a concern that bias would be introduced into the assessment process or perhaps faculty would be less objective when evaluating student performance. There were no statistically significant differences in student achievement of the standards among faculty class sections, as reported below. Neither faculty teaching the courses nor I knew at the time the assessment was being made that differences among faculty would be examined, but none were found.
In the past assessment process some faculty were assessing the same student products twice – once during the course itself and again during the summer; this redundancy is not an efficient use of their time. In sum, our solution to the ongoing and vexing problem of collecting appropriate papers for assessment was to use course-embedded direct assessment for our standards, as well as other data (e.g., graduating student survey, alumni survey, focus groups), and this seems to be an excellent solution.

2. The second recommendation was that we provide tables and graphs of the data; those are presented at the end of this document. Please note that in previous reports we did not append any information that we got from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (assuming it was readily available to the Assessment Committee), but we do so here.

3. The third recommendation was that we use data from previous years to show progress over time. We do not do that here because our change to uniform program-wide rubrics was relatively recent, therefore some of our rubrics and assignments have changed and so are not 100% comparable with data used in past assessments. In the assessment that follows we do summarize past assessment results and we use direct assessment data from multiple years (a two-year period).
Learning Outcome 1: Research

Is this outcome being reexamined?  X Yes  ☐ No

If yes, give a brief summary of previous results (including trends) and any changes made to the program.

Results of the 2011 direct assessment showed that students were having difficulty identifying work to submit for assessment. When only students who submitted the correct assignment (PSY 302/202 Research Methods) were included in the 2011 assessment, the group mean was 2.93, just shy of the goal of 3.0 and above the mean of 2.84 from the 2008-2009 assessment. Although the group mean was above 3.0 when work from PSY 302 was submitted, only 50% of students achieved a 3.0 or better in the 2011 assessment. The results of the indirect assessment in 2011 and 2008-2009 showed that the majority of students felt prepared to conduct research and use quantitative and qualitative methods generally. At the time of the 2011 assessment not all students had matriculated through our new and improved methodology sequence. Specifically this is the first assessment cycle in which all of our majors have taken PSY 105 General Psychology Laboratory, the first course in our methodology sequence. In PSY 105 students conduct research projects related to what they are learning in PSY 101 General Psychology.

Assessment Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measures</th>
<th>Performance Standard</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain how student learning will be measured and indicate whether it is direct or indirect.</td>
<td>Define and explain acceptable level of student performance.</td>
<td>Discuss the data collected and student population</td>
<td>1) Describe the analysis process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct assessment: Full-time Psychology faculty teaching PSY 302 rated their students’ final research reports in PSY 302 using the grading rubric in Appendix A.</td>
<td>An acceptable level of performance is a mean of 3.00 on the 5-point rating scale, with 66% (2/3 majority) of students earning ratings of 3.00 or above.</td>
<td>Research grading rubrics for 6 sections of this course over 4 semesters (AYs 2012-2013 and 2013-2014) taught by 3 different faculty members were gathered. A total of 64 student papers were</td>
<td>2) Present the findings of the analysis including the numbers participating and deemed acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data for each of the 5 items on the rubric and for each of the 64 students were entered into SPSS; data about the instructor and section were also entered. Next mean scores were computed for each of the five items separately and an overall mean score was computed. Summary statistics appear in appendix A. (Note that M = mean and SD = standard deviation, as is the style in Psychology).</td>
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For item 1 Quality of the Literature Review/Introduction,
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Indirect assessment: The Associate Dean conducted a focus group in PSY 497 Senior Seminar, Spring 2014.</th>
<th>An acceptable level of performance is a majority of students responding positively to the question (2/3 majority or 66%).</th>
<th>Students were asked, “How well do you think the Department of Psychology has prepared you to conduct and understand research to answer questions in Psychology?” 3 out of 12 students in the focus group responded to the question.</th>
<th>All 3 students who responded said they felt prepared to do research, thereby supporting the findings from the other direct and indirect measures in this section (see Appendix C for full responses).</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indirect assessment:</td>
<td>An acceptable level of performance is a mean</td>
<td>Student responses to two questions, “Find</td>
<td>For the item “Find appropriate sources of information,” M = 4.36, SD = .76, and 84% of students rated this item as</td>
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</table>
Academic Year: 2013-2014
Program: Psychology

Marymount Graduating Student Survey 2012-2013 administered by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

- Of 3.00 on the 5-point rating scale, with 66% (2/3 majority) of students rating their preparation as “good or excellent”.
- Appropriate sources of information and “Use quantitative/qualitative techniques within your professional field,” were analyzed. 25 Psychology majors responded to the survey.

Marymount Undergraduates M = 4.16, SD = .83, 82.7%.

For the item “Use quantitative/qualitative techniques within your professional field,” M = 4.00, SD = .82, and 68% of students rated this item as good or excellent. This rating is greater than SEHS M = 3.70, SD = .96, 64.8%, and comparable to the mean rating for Marymount Undergraduates M = 4.03, SD = .84, 79.8%.

These data indicate that our students are meeting this standard.

Indirect assessment: Marymount Alumni Survey 2013 administered by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

- An acceptable level of performance is a majority (66%) of students rating their preparation as “good or excellent”.
- Student responses to two questions, “Find appropriate sources of information” and “Use quantitative/qualitative techniques within your professional field,” were analyzed. 14 Psychology alumni responded to the survey.

Marymount Undergraduates M = 4.03, SD = .84, 79.8%.

100% of students rated the item “Find appropriate sources of information” as good or excellent which is more than either SEHS 92.3%, and Marymount Undergraduates 80.7%.

75% of students rated the item “Use quantitative/qualitative techniques within your professional field” as good or excellent, which is more than either SEHS 66.7% or Marymount Undergraduates 67.3%.

These data indicate that our students are meeting this standard.

Interpretation of Results

Extent this Learning Outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):

Based on the data in the table above, both direct and indirect measures indicate that Psychology students are achieving this learning outcome.
Program strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to assessment of outcome:

Compared to our two previous assessments, we have seen big improvement in data gathering to assess this standard and in student performance on this standard. Data in the table above indicate that our program has prepared students well to find appropriate sources of information for their research. Even though we met the standard, on the alumni survey students rated their ability to use qualitative and quantitative techniques in the field lower than finding appropriate sources of information. In the focus group, one student commented that s/he would have liked more time to learn SPSS. Because SPSS is so expensive, students only have an opportunity to use it in a computer lab, and are unlikely to purchase it for their home computer. This represents an opportunity for improvement. Psychology students are introduced to SPSS in PSY 105 General Psychology Laboratory and again in PSY 302 Research Design for Psychology and they master it when they do research with Psychology faculty beyond the classroom (e.g., Discover, Honors, PSY 433 Research or PSY 451 Project). Approximately 12% of our majors do research beyond the classroom each year.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:

Our assessment for this year indicated that our students met the standard (assessed directly and indirectly) therefore no changes are called for. However, based upon our Program Review in 2013, our Department has made two big changes to our methodology curriculum effective Fall 2014. In the past we had 5 courses in our methodology sequence (PSY 105 General Psychology Laboratory, PSY 201 Statistics for the Social Sciences, PSY 270 Tests and Measurements, PSY 300 Research Writing, and PSY 302 Research Design for Psychology) which was not only out of sync with APA recommendations and our Benchmark and Aspirational schools, it also created a long gap in time between PSY 105 General Psychology Laboratory and PSY 302 Research Design for Psychology which made it difficult for students to retain critical information (such as how to use SPSS). Thus even though students were introduced to SPSS in PSY 105, 3 semesters would pass before they took PSY 302. By streamlining our methodology sequence, we hope to strengthen students’ research skills (and reduce forgetting across semesters) by presenting the courses closer in time relative to each other and allowing juniors and seniors more time in their schedule to work on research independently or with a faculty member. Our Honors students will also now be better prepared to conduct an empirical Honors project, as is customary in our field, because they will have taken PSY 302 Research Design for Psychology by the end of their junior year. Second, by having fewer courses in the methodology sequence, we are also able to commit more full-time faculty to teaching the critical and time-intensive courses in the methodology sequence.
Learning Outcome 2: Critical Thinking

Is this outcome being reexamined?  X Yes  No

If yes, give a brief summary of previous results (including trends) and any changes made to the program.

This outcome was last assessed in 2009-2010 and at that time the learning outcome was achieved (M  3.00 and at least 66% of student ratings  3.00) on all measurements (direct and indirect). Since that time the department has changed the product used to assess critical thinking and the manner in which critical thinking is assessed. Specifically the product used to assess critical thinking is student final papers from their capstone course PSY 497 Senior Seminar in which students evaluate the pros and cons of a debated topic in Psychology (PSY 497 is now a WI and DSC INQ course). In the 2009-2010 assessment the student product was their paper from PSY 300 Research and Writing for Psychology. The manner in which critical thinking is assessed has also changed, specifically, the department has created a rubric to assess Critical Thinking that is uniformly used to assess student papers across sections of PSY 497 (this rubric was adapted from AAUP standards and appears in Appendix B).

Assessment Activity

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<td>1) Describe the analysis process. 2) Present the findings of the analysis including the numbers participating and deemed acceptable.</td>
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Direct assessment: Full-time Psychology faculty teaching PSY 302 rated their students’ final research reports in PSY 302 using the grading rubric in Appendix A. An acceptable level of performance is a mean of 3.00 on the 5-point rating scale, with 66% (2/3 majority) of students earning ratings of 3.00 or above. Critical thinking grading rubrics for 6 sections of this course over 4 semesters (AYs 2012-2013 and 2013-2014) taught by 4 different full-time faculty members were collected. 67 student data for each of the 4 items on the rubric and for each of the 64 students were entered into SPSS; data about the instructor and section were also entered. Next mean scores were computed for each of the four items separately and an overall mean score was computed. Summary statistics appear in appendix B. For item 1 Explanation of Issues, M = 4.03, SD = .76 and 100% of students scored 3 or above. For item 2 Evidence, M = 3.73, SD = .95 and 91% of students scored 3 or above. For item 3 Student’s Position, M = 3.72, SD = .90 and 95.5% of
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Indirect assessment: The Associate Dean conducted a focus group in PSY 497 Senior Seminar, Spring 2014.</th>
<th>An acceptable level of performance was a majority of students responding positively to the question (2/3 majority or 66%).</th>
<th>Students were asked, “How well do you think the Department of Psychology has prepared you to think critically in order to analyze and evaluate new information in Psychology?” 2 out of 12 students in the focus group responded to the question.</th>
<th>Both students commented that being a small university was a positive, with one stating that s/he appreciated the opportunity to choose a topic of interest to him/her and the other commenting that s/he liked being exposed to other topics by proofreading and commenting on other students’ papers in senior seminar. Neither student response directly addressed critical thinking.</th>
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<td>Indirect assessment: Marymount Graduating Student Survey</td>
<td>An acceptable level of performance was a mean of 3.00 on the 5-point rating scale, with 66% (2/3 majority or 66%).</td>
<td>Student responses to three questions, “Conduct research to support a position,” “Develop a coherent”</td>
<td>In response to the item “Conduct research to support a position,” M = 4.00, SD = .76, and 80% of students rated this item good or excellent, which is higher than either SEHS M = 3.65, SD = .90, 70.4%, or Marymount Undergraduates M =3.86, SD = .89, 74.4%.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
2012-2013 administered by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.  

An acceptable level of performance was a majority (66%) of students rating their preparation as “good or excellent”.

Indirect assessment: Marymount Alumni Survey 2013 administered by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Student responses to three items about how their education has prepared them to “Conduct research to support a position,” “Develop a coherent written argument,” and “Evaluate the quality of information” were analyzed. 14 Psychology alumni responded to the survey.

In response to the item “Develop a coherent written argument,” M = 4.20, SD = .82, and 76% of students rated this item good or excellent, which is a higher mean rating (and comparable %) to SEHS M = 3.94, SD = 1.00, 74.1%, and Marymount Undergraduates M = 4.05, SD = .85, 79.6%.  
In response to the item “Evaluate the quality of information,” M = 4.32, SD = .75, and 84% of students rated this item good or excellent, which is higher than either SEHS M = 4.00, SD = .95, 77.8%, and Marymount Undergraduates M = 4.17, SD = .83, 83.5%.

These data indicate that our students are meeting this standard.

72.7% of Psychology alumni rated their preparation to “Conduct research to support a position,” good or excellent, which is more than either SEHS 69.2% or Marymount Undergraduates 58%.  
91.7% of Psychology alumni rated their preparation to “Develop a coherent written argument,” as good or excellent, which is greater than either SEHS 85.2%, or Marymount Undergraduates 66.9%.

100% of Psychology alumni rated their preparation to “Evaluate the quality of information” as good or excellent, which is greater than either SEHS 81.5% or Marymount Undergraduates 72.2%.

These data indicate that our students are meeting this standard.

Interpretation of Results

Extent this Learning Outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):

Both direct and indirect measures indicate that Psychology students are achieving this learning outcome (see data in previous table).

Program strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to assessment of outcome:

The new Critical Thinking rubric is a strength of our program (Appendix B). Our Critical Thinking rubric was adapted from the AAUP rubric for critical thinking. Our use of this rubric in different sections of the same class and ultimately across the curriculum will enhance students’ critical thinking outcomes. At this time there is no need to make changes in order to improve this outcome because both direct and indirect measures indicate that Psychology students are achieving this learning outcome.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:

As a department we have decided that only full-time faculty will teach the course where students are expected to have mastered critical thinking (i.e., PSY 497 Senior Seminar) and that all full-time faculty will take turns teaching this course. This change was implemented in 2013-2014 and will continue going forward. All departmental faculty will be encouraged to use the departmental Critical Thinking rubric to assess students’ critical thinking skills across the curriculum.

These are the only curricular changes or program improvements that we will make based on this year’s assessment outcome. As referred to above, we have just made dramatic curriculum changes to our program as a result of our 2012-2013 Program Review, and those changes will be implemented beginning with the 2014-2015 catalog.