



Student Learning Outcomes

The psychology department identified five student learning outcomes related to undergraduate research. These outcomes were developed at our first CUR Site Visit in January 2018.

- Review, evaluate, and integrate findings from the primary literature
- Design and execute an empirical project/methodology
- Analyze and interpret data
- Communicate process
- Develop identity as a scientist

In Year 2 (FA 18 – SP 19) we will focus on:

- **Analyze and interpret data**

Modified Courses

To scaffold abilities in analyzing and interpreting data the psychology department plans to:

- **Modify Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 101)**
 - In spring 2019 our PSYC 101 instructors will be adding laboratory-like experiences in which students will gain knowledge in basic scientific methodology and experiences with basic data visualization.
- **Modify our traditional Statistics (PSYC 301) and Methods (PSYC 303)**
 - The department is working on a two-course sequences that will integrate the traditional statistics and methodology courses in psychology. The goal is to teach statistical skills in the context of appropriate methodology. We believe this change will assist with conceptual understanding and retention of information.

Successes

The psychology department identified three successful aspects of our experiences with the CUR Transformations Project thus far:

- **Departmental buy-in**
 - Our faculty (14 tenure-track lines) are all interested, invested in making curricular changes and have responded positively to surveys on teaching preferences, preferences for the American Psychological Association curricular guidelines, and future curricular options.
- **Collaborative re-structuring**
 - The department has worked collaboratively on curricular re-structure.
- **Embracing backward scaffolding**
 - The department has developed the beginning structure of a backward designed scaffolded curriculum.

Table 1. Current SMCM Psychology Program Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the Psychology major, students will be able to:
• use appropriate statistical and methodological approaches to analyze data.
• interpret the results of empirical investigations of behavioral processes, including placing them in the context of current literature.
• compare contrasting theoretical perspectives of psychology.
• explain key concepts within at least four diverse content areas of psychology.
• analyze problems related to behavior and mental processes using critical thinking.
• develop original evidence-based arguments related to behavior and mental processes.
• demonstrate clear written articulation of ideas in psychology.
• demonstrate effective oral communication of ideas in psychology.
• use appropriate and varied sources to construct an argument in psychology.

Challenges

The psychology department identified several challenges for moving forward:

- **Zero-sum game**
 - How do we balance content knowledge (and amount) with increased scaffolding of methodological skills?
- **Workload problems**
 - How do we restructure the curriculum without producing an increase in faculty workload?
- **Research as a course?**
 - How do we incorporate smaller directed research experiences within the curriculum and within the traditional faculty workload?