

**Assessing the General Education Behavioral Science Division
Student Learner Outcomes in PSY 101:
A Pilot Study***

by
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Three credits of Chaminade's General Education Requirements for all Baccalaureate Degrees include a Behavioral Science Course. General Psychology (PSY 101) is an optional course fulfilling this requirement. Consistent with the need for assessing student learning outcomes (SLO) at the program level, the student learning outcomes for the General Education Requirements also need to be assessed. As there is, at this time, no agreed upon approach for assessing the overall student learning outcomes for the General Education Requirements, it is necessary to perform this assessment of student learning outcomes within the specific course, in this case, the General Psychology course. The *Chaminade University Catalog* 2009-2010, on page 71, states that the student for the Behavioral Science Requirement will demonstrate:

1. The ability to apply the scientific method to the study of human behavior in various environmental contexts.
2. An understanding of human behavior relative to various environmental contexts.
3. An understanding of human behavior relative to adapting to various changing environmental contexts.

In order to assess these student learning outcomes, a series of 12 multiple choice questions (four per student learning outcome) were selected and administered during the final exams in the three sections of PSY 101, General Psychology course taught by the authors. The questions were drawn from 4 different chapters in the same "Exploring Psychology" textbook (CH's 1, 3 11 & 15). Out of 12 possible correct answers, a mean total score of 7.38 with a standard deviation of 2.49 was obtained from the 68 student respondents. The KR20 reliability coefficient for the instrument was found to be .630.

SLO #1 Applying Scientific Method to Study of Human Behavior

Of the four questions assessing this SLO, 26.5% of the students answered 100% (4/4) correct; 30.9% answered 75% (3/4) correct; 27.9% answered 50% (2/4) correct; 13.2% answered 25% (1/4) correct; and, 1.5% answered 0% (0/4) correct. The mean score for this SLO assessment was 2.68 with a standard deviation of 1.06.

SLO #2 Understanding Human Behavior relative to Environment

Of the four questions assessing this SLO, 22.1% of the students answered 100% (4/4) correct; 35.3% answered 75% (3/4) correct; 23.5% answered 50% (2/4) correct; 13.2% answered 25% (1/4) correct; and, 5.9% answered 0% (0/4) correct. The mean score for this SLO was 2.54 with a standard deviation of 1.15.

SLO #3 Understanding Human Behavior relative to Changing Environment

Of the four questions assessing this SLO, 17.6% of the students answered 100% (4/4) correct; 19.1% answered 75% (3/4) correct; 33.8% answered 50% (2/4) correct; 20.6% answered 25% (1/4) correct; and, 8.8% answered 0% (0/4) correct. The mean score for this SLO was 2.16 with a standard deviation of 1.20.

Conclusion

The data and the analysis of the data for assessing the General Education Behavioral Science Division SLO's in PSY 101, General Psychology classes, indicate that students have demonstrated an understanding of two of the three student learning outcomes. With 75% or 3 out of 4 questions answered correctly considered "passing" for each SLO, 57.4% passed SLO #1 and SLO #2; but only 36.7% passed SLO #3. Item #7 on the instrument (in SLO #3) had the lowest correct percentage and may either need to be revised or instructors may need to cover this concept in more depth. Specifically, the distractor "D" of this item, which 37% of the students answered as correct, may need to be revised. The overall internal reliability of the developed instrument is considered adequate for this pilot study (.630), but may be increased when difficulties with item #7 in SLO #3 are addressed.

*Note: This is an abbreviated assessment report for web page publication purposes only. The complete report with actual examination items, correct answer percentages and other information can be viewed upon request in the Behavioral Sciences Division Office.