

Major/Program: Psychology

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Fall 2014-Spring 2015

What are the student learning outcomes in the **major/program**?

Students who major in Psychology will be able, upon graduation, to:

- 1) Describe the basic psychological principles and theories from a variety of sub-areas and apply these theories and principles in specific situations.
- 2) Describe the scientific method as it applies to behavioral research.
- 3) Conduct basic data analyses, including the calculation of descriptive statistics, the performance of parametric and non-parametric tests, and the creation of graphic presentation.
- 4) Describe in writing the rationale, method, results, and analyze the significance of research in which the student was an active participant.

Which outcome(s) did you assess this academic year?

#4

**How did you assess** the learning outcomes this academic year?

Professor Frances Daniel examined how writing cover letters to the instructor influenced final papers in research methods courses. After receiving instructor feedback on drafts of each section of an American Psychological Association style research paper throughout the semester, students in two classes wrote cover letters to the instructor explaining how the instructor feedback was incorporated into their final paper. Students in the two control classes received the same type of feedback throughout the semester but were not required to write cover letters.

Please **summarize the data** you have collected this academic year.

Students enrolled in the cover letter classes showed more improvement in the quality of their papers than the students in the control classes, as shown below.

77.23 mean final draft score for students who wrote cover letters

82.72 mean final draft score for students in control classes

**Please describe any programmatic changes you have made or are planning to make based on the data you have collected (action steps).**

Prof. Daniel, who conducted this assessment and has published the results, has incorporated this technique as a permanent part of her research methods syllabus. We will distribute the published paper describing this project to other instructors who teach research methods to encourage their use of this technique.

Please report on the progress of your **action steps** reported in 2013-2014. See [Assessment Results](#) for your previous unit reports.

Professor Daniel continues to incorporate application exercises into her statistics classes and we have encouraged other statistics instructors in our department to follow the same practice.

**\*\*Note:** Please use this template to provide the responses to the prompts above.\*\*