



## *Rethinking Education in Psychology and Psychology in Education*

### **Education Leadership Conference 2003 Undergraduate Education Workshop Summary**

**Coordinator: Maureen McCarthy, Ph.D.**

This workshop addressed issues of accountability and assessment in undergraduate education. Two distinguished speakers provided a context for the workshop. **Diane Halpern** (APA President-Elect) provided an overview of assessment in the context of a liberal arts curriculum and **Caryn McTighe Musil** (Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Global Initiatives, American Association of Colleges and Universities) addressed the role of diversity with respect to institutional evaluation.

**Bill Hill** (Director of the Kennesaw State University Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) and **Dana Dunn** (Professor of Psychology, Moravian College) facilitated the discussion of assessment of the psychology major with special attention to issues of human diversity and ethics. Participants were challenged to consider alternative models of assessment strategies, and to make recommendations for future directions in the assessment of the undergraduate major in psychology.

The discussion session began with an overview, provided by Bill Hill, of the initiatives that have shaped the undergraduate curriculum. The following key references were presented:

- McGovern, Thomas V. (Ed.) (1993) *Handbook for Enhancing Undergraduate Education in Psychology*. Washington, DC: APA.
- The APA Psychology Partnerships Project (P3) Assessment Working Group.
- Halonen, J., Bosack, T., Clay, S., & McCarthy, M. A. (2003). A rubric for authentically learning, teaching and assessing scientific reasoning in psychology. *Teaching of Psychology, 30*, 196-208.
- “Measuring Up” – Best Practices in Assessment in Psychology Education Conference (September 27-29, 2002 in Atlanta, Georgia)
- Dunn, D., & Mehrotra, C. (Eds.). (in press). *Measuring up: Assessment challenges and practices for psychology*. Washington, DC: APA.
- Report on *Undergraduate Psychology Major Learning Goals and Outcomes* (APA Board of Educational Affairs Task Force on Undergraduate Psychology Major Competencies, March 2002)
- Assessment CyberGuide for Learning Goals and Outcomes in the Undergraduate Psychology Major (APA Board of Educational Affairs Task Force on Undergraduate Psychology Major Competencies)

Dr. Hill then led an interactive session in which participants were asked to identify current practice at their respective campuses and consider the positive and negative aspects of the BEA report on *Undergraduate Psychology Major Learning Goals and Outcomes* relative to their assessment efforts. Participants identified the St. Mary's Conference proceedings (*Handbook for Enhancing Undergraduate Education in Psychology*) and the BEA report on *Undergraduate Psychology Major Learning Goals and Outcomes* as the documents that guided their assessment efforts.

Dana Dunn outlined several areas of assessment that could be considered (i.e., classroom, program, faculty, administrators) when assessment plans are developed. The group was then divided into groups whose charge was to develop a program evaluation for possible implementation on their home campuses—the groups examined five of the learning outcomes: 1) critical thinking skills in psychology; 2) application of psychology; 3) values in psychology; 4) information and technological literacy; and 5) sociocultural and international awareness. Each group reported the results of their discussion and the following plans were offered.

### Goal 3: Critical Thinking Skills

The group derived the following performance-based assessment for evaluating scientific reasoning students who have completed an undergraduate program of study in psychology.

- Assign student to read an article from an empirically-based journal. They would then complete the following tasks:
  - identify themes and arguments.
  - evaluate credibility of argument or data presented.

### Goal 4: Application to Psychology

The group examined what students should know about applying principles of psychological testing and measurement. The group suggested that evaluation of application of psychology could be conducted through the following activity.

- Strategy: Assign students to write an article to different audiences regarding a current topic in testing (e.g., impact of No Child Left Behind legislation).
- Explain impact of the topic to several different constituencies. For example, a general audience, parents, or an empirically-based journal article.

### Goal 5: Values in Psychology

In addition to having knowledge about the APA Ethics Code, students should adhere to the ethics code. In order to evaluate both knowledge and application participants recommended that the following activities would allow for evaluation of competence.

- Students would write a proposal for IRB approval.
- Students would be able to identify ethical issues when presented with a case study.
- Students would write an evaluation or self-assessment of what they learned from the experience of writing a proposal for IRB approval.
- Students could complete the test for IRB certification.

## Goal 6: Information and Technology

Students should recognize the importance of information gathering and technological skills in research methods. One member of the group offered an activity that would provide students with a valuable opportunity for self-assessment.

- Each semester students select an article and highlight everything that s(he) doesn't understand at the beginning of the semester. The faculty member retains the article until the end of the semester, and again asks the student to highlight sections of the article that s/he does not understand. An analysis of the changes in understanding provides both the student and faculty member with an evaluation of knowledge gained throughout the semester.

## Goal 8: Sociocultural and interpersonal

Students should have minimum level of awareness regarding sociocultural and multicultural issues. One technique for assessing awareness is provided below:

- Videotape students at beginning of course to provide baseline of understanding.
- Expose students to videos that contain prejudicial and discriminatory situations.
- Require reflection papers comparing their initial understanding and current understanding relative to the video tape illustrating discrimination.

The final portion of the workshop was devoted to development of future plans for addressing assessment of the undergraduate major. Participants suggested that assessment efforts could be beneficial to the discipline of psychology and other disciplines as well. The following specific suggestions were offered.

### Future Directions

- Develop additional rubrics for evaluating a poster, oral presentation, or written assignment.
- Provide examples of exceptional student work as a comparison for authentic assessment practices.
- Make students more aware of recommended learning outcomes and involve them in the process.
- Recommend seeking APA endorsement of the BEA *Undergraduate Psychology Major Learning Goals and Outcomes*.
- Suggest that the Education Directorate reach out to other disciplines – national organizations – to generalize assessment practices to other disciplines.
- Disseminate the American Psychological Association *Learner-Centered Psychological Principles: A Framework for School Reform and Redesign* (November 1997).  
<http://www.apa.org/ed/lcpnewtext.html?CFID=2396488&CFTOKEN=76052466>
- Obtain APA representation at NCATE.
- Address matriculation between community colleges and four-year institutions.
- Carefully consider issues related to evaluation of faculty relative to student learning.
- Develop an assessment manual for all disciplines.

- Create assessment models for psychology departments to use and adapt. Disseminate demonstration models so that assessment can be adopted (or adapted) without difficulty in an increasing number of psychology departments and programs. Such models would be useful so that individual programs need not create an assessment project from scratch, which is time consuming, expensive, and often the reason that assessment practices are not embraced.

Presenters and Panelists:

Dana Dunn  
Diane F. Halpern  
Bill Hill  
Caryn McTighe Musil

Donna K. Duffy  
Randall Engle  
James E. Freeman  
Laraine M. Glidden  
Christine C. Iijima Hall  
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Chris Koch  
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Linda M. Noble  
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Tonja Ringgold  
Jerry Rudmann  
Kenneth A. Weaver  
Richard Wesp  
Phil Zimbardo

Participants:

William E. Addison  
Barry S. Anton  
Drew C. Appleby  
Bernard Beins  
Charles Brewer

Staff Organizer:

Maureen McCarthy

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