



Executive Summary

Goal 5: Professional Development Committee

GROUP MEMBERS

Jerry Rudmann, Chair
Deb Brihl
Karen Naufel
Carlota Ocampo

Jaye Van Kirk
Kristin Vespia
Jason Young (CABE)

CONTEXT

The group for Goal 5 began compiling a running list of challenges and issues facing assessment of professional development. Discussions began with a review of key ideas from assigned readings for the conference. Kuh et al. (2015) suggested that most universities and colleges were caught up in a "culture of compliance" rather than doing assessment for program improvement purposes. The authors stressed practical utility of assessment practices rather than traditional psychometric measures. They recommended embedded assessments as an efficient assessment strategy and endorsed the pursuit of assessment consequences to promote "closing the loop."

Some institutions, for example, rely heavily on adjunct instructors who are not fully connected with the department. We wondered about strategies that might help the learning outcome leaders encourage departmental colleagues put to use SNAP's assessment strategies and minimize fear of comparisons between colleagues and across departments.

PLANNING MATRIX

Early in its work, the committee developed a planning matrix to help organize its thinking and guide its work. The matrix below provides a brief example.

Goal Domain	Measureable Attitude, Knowledge or Action	Assessment Strategy / Tool	Setting of Assessment	Learning Experiences
Career knowledge and skills	Expresses positive attitudes about marketability of psychology major/minor/courses	Survey of student attitudes	Pre / post introductory course, careers course, at graduation, post-graduation	Introductory students read and reflect on Monitor career articles. Students in career course conduct interviews of psychologists.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

After closely examining the Goal 5 sub-goals, three outcomes emerged that more clearly represent professional development outcomes:

1. Apply psychological content and skills to career goals

2. Articulate, apply, and exhibit skills derived from psychology to workplace or graduate school success
3. Prepare for workforce careers and graduate school

Having the three “emerged” outcomes and using an organizing matrix was helpful. The committee then set about identifying assessment tools having promise of serving as outcome measures.

REFLECTIONS

Professional development is a challenging area to assess within the undergraduate psychology curriculum. There are existing assessment strategies and instruments relevant to Goal 5, but not many. It is crucial to teach and assess Goal 5 outcomes as faculty are often asked to write letters of recommendation asking if a student has appropriate skills and how fully developed those skills are.

The introductory course offers an important opportunity to promote psychological literacy of non-majors about occupations in psychology and skills developed within the major. Many programs offer a career course; however, it is important that we assess career development just as we assess other topics in psychology, as the student progresses through Introductory, Developmental, and Capstone levels. We can do that by integrating it into the curriculum in a variety of locations.

Advisors can help students see how different classes help develop the skills needed for different career paths. In addition, advisors can recommend that students use other resources available such as the career development, research projects, study abroad options, and internships to name just a few.

Instructors can explain how certain assignments are teaching students more than just content but also skills such as time management, self-efficacy and ability to work with others.

Students can reflect on assignments asking them to show what skills were used during the creation of the project going again beyond just content knowledge.

Textbooks can have career options integrated rather than placed in separate boxes.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The group members expressed a desire to stay vigilant for instruments relevant to Goal 5 outcomes. Although we found some assessment exemplars for Goal 5, we think that some assessments remain to be developed. For example, we need to develop a comprehensive assessment for graduates who have entered the workforce or graduate school. To what extent can our graduates describe, apply, and appreciate the knowledge and skills learned in our curricular, co and extra-curricular learning experiences?