COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES
Personality Psychology

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Overview of Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are descriptions of what students should be able to know and do following a particular course or program. Learning outcomes are useful in that they identify a set of goals for instructors to use in their teaching. These learning outcomes provide an essential set of building blocks for the assessment of students' performance. Most universities and professional organizations recommend that instructors identify a set of objectives for each course and assess the extent to students meet these objectives.

Relevant National Learning Outcomes

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2013) offers a list of student learning outcomes for all psychology curricula. For my content courses, the following outcomes are particularly relevant. Students completing this course should be able to:

- Describe key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in psychology (APA Objective 1.1) – This includes several subordinate outcomes that involve learning the basics of the discipline.
- Describe applications of psychology (APA Objective 1.3) – This includes several subordinate outcomes that involve understanding the application of the discipline to personal issues, social needs, and applied settings.
- Use scientific reasoning to interpret psychological phenomena (APA Objective 2.1) – This includes several subordinate outcomes that involves the use of reasoned principles and empirical data to interpretations.
- Demonstrate effective writing for different purposes (APA Objective 4.1) – This includes several subordinate outcomes that involve using appropriate spelling, grammar, and style in scientific writing.

Specific Learning Outcomes for My Course

I have outlined specific learning outcomes that are designed to reflect the APA learning outcomes described above. Specifically, students completing this course will:

- Explain the key characteristics of various theories and approaches to understanding human personality, including their respective advantages and disadvantages. (Aligns with APA Objective 1.1)
- Apply concepts from the psychology of personality to an understanding of one's own personality functioning. (Aligns with APA Objective 1.3)
- Examine and interpret psychological research as it pertains to the understanding, critique, and development of theories and concepts in personality psychology. (Aligns with APA Objective 2.1)
- Demonstrate effective writing that communicates the understanding, application, and interpretation of personality psychology principles and research. (Aligns with APA Objective 4.1)

How the Learning Outcomes are Addressed and Assessed in My Course

The relevant learning outcomes are outlined on the first day of the course, are explicitly emphasized throughout the course, and form the cornerstone of the grading rubric used in the course (see Wendorf, 2017).

In Table 1 below (in a format adapted from Fink, 2003), I have outlined how my course is designed around these learning outcomes. The table briefly describes the learning experiences and assessment techniques that are directly relevant to each outcome.

Overall, I encourage all of my students to be familiar with this information because it explains why and how the various assignments and exams in the course are important.

References

American Psychological Association. (2013). *APA guidelines for the undergraduate psychology major (Version 2.0).* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from www http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.aspx

Fink, D.L. (2003). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wendorf, C. A. (2017). *Grading rubric and explanation: For all of my courses.* Retrieved from https://cwendorf.github.io/teaching/Wendorf-GradingRubricExplanation.pdf

Table 1: Explicit and Assessed Learning Outcomes for
My Personality Psychology Course

Learning Outcomes What specific learning outcome is explicitly addressed in this learning experience?	Course/Unit/Experience Design What do students specifically do to address the learning outcome during this learning experience?	Assessment Context What is the assessment method and its context/setting for this learning experience?	Formal Feedback What formal feedback do students receive about their representation of learning in this experience?
Explain the key characteristics of various theories and approaches to understanding human personality, including their respective advantages and disadvantages.	Course readings, videos, and discussions focus on the explanation of the key principles.	Course quizzes, activities, and discussion questions are assessed to the extent to which students accurately use these concepts.	For the written portions, students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the student work.
Apply concepts from the psychology of personality to an understanding of one's own personality functioning.	Students participate in discussions and activities targeted at applying the relevant principles. They often provide examples that demonstrate applicability to their own personality.	Course quizzes, activities, and discussion questions are assessed to the extent to which students accurately apply the concepts to real-life situations, including their own.	For the written portions, students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the student work.
Examine and interpret psychological research as it pertains to the understanding, critique, and development of theories and concepts in personality psychology.	Course materials, along with activities and discussions, highlight relevant empirical studies and describe their applicability.	Course quizzes, activities, and discussion questions are assessed to the extent to which students accurately interpret and apply the findings from relevant research.	For the written portions, students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the student work.
Demonstrate effective writing that communicates the understanding, application, and interpretation of personality psychology principles and research.	Activities and online discussions provide ample opportunities to address the applications principles above and to use effective writing in doing so.	Course activities and discussion questions are assessed to the extent to which students use appropriate and effective writing.	For the written portions, students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the student work.