

2014-2015 Psychology's Report of  
Assessment of Values and Character

The psychology department selected one part, Openness to Experience, of their Program Learning Outcome, *Values and Character*, to assess in the 2014-2015 academic year. The description of the department's Program Learning Outcome *Values and Character* is that "our students will value, appreciate, and welcome, through understanding and demonstrative action, scientific methods, ethics, faith, and openness to experience." The psychology department focused on Openness to Experience, which states "students will understand the importance and desirability of a diversity of experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds (including ethnic, sociocultural, and gender diversity). They will embrace ambiguity, being comfortable without closure or black-and-white answers, and valuing questions as much as answers."

In support of this, the department was interested in how senior students enrolled in Capstone Senior Practicum in Psychology (PSY 196) were rated by their internship site supervisors on these qualities.

### **Method**

**Participants.** Eighteen students (3 males; 15 females) were enrolled in PSY 196 in the 2014-2015 academic year. [PSY 196 is one of two required capstone courses for all senior psychology majors.] Each student in PSY 196 spends at least 100 hours interning at a local organization (of their choosing) under the tutelage and supervision of an on-site supervisor. Sites included places like Cottage Hospital, the Center for Developmental Play and Learning, Bishop Diego High School, Sanctuary Psychiatric Center, Dos Pueblos High School, and Hearts Equestrian Center. For this assessment, all site supervisors of the 18 students were interviewed. One site supervisor was not cooperative in responding to the questions posed, so data are missing for 2 of the 18 students.

**Materials.** The psychology department members discussed and approved a series of questions related to Openness to Experience (Appendix A) in its August and October 2014 department meetings.

**Rubric.** The department members developed a rubric in August 2014 to evaluate Openness to Experience (Appendix B). The ratings selected for the rubric were: Underdeveloped, Developing, Effective, and Distinguished. The department set a benchmark of 75% of the students performing at the Effective or above level (indicated by the red outline in Table 1, below).

**Procedure.** Site supervisors were notified by phone and email during the first 3 weeks of Fall and Spring semester and given the questions they would be asked at the completion of the semester about the student intern (See Appendix C). Andrea Gurney conducted site visits during the last 2 weeks of the Fall 2014 semester and Steve Rogers did site visits in the last several weeks of the Spring 2015 semester, during which the supervisor was asked to respond to the Openness to Experience questions. Responses were audio taped and/or written.

After all interviews were completed, each psychology department member individually rated each of the 18 students on the 4 questions utilizing the rubric. The department members then met and discussed their individual ratings; the mean was used to determine the final rating.

### **Results**

Of the 18 students enrolled in PSY 196 over the 2014-2015 academic year, 12 of them had an average score of "Effective" (3) and 3 had an average score of "Distinguished" (4). [As aforementioned, one of the site supervisors was not informative and the department was unable to rate the 2 students at that site; thus, no score was attained for 2 of the 18 students.] One student scored below Effective with an average score of 2.1. In summary, 15 out of 16 students average scores were Effective (3) or above. [See Table 1 below to see the number of students who performed at each level of the rubric.]

### **Discussion**

The findings in this assessment indicate that 97% of our senior students enrolled in the Capstone Practicum course are engaged and open to new experiences at their internships. Our benchmark as a department was Effective (3) or better. Given that the students assessed are seniors in college, this is appropriate; we expect and hope that our students will continue to develop in these areas after they graduate. Overall, as a department, we are pleased with the ways in which our students engaged at their internship sites in regards to cultural awareness and diversity.

After discussing these results at the August 24, 2015 department meeting, the department members agreed that the assessment results were helpful as one aspect of our *Values and Character* Assessment. As a department, we agreed it would be beneficial to assess another aspect of *Values and Character* and are therefore planning on doing so in our next 6-year assessment cycle.

Table 1

Rubric for, and Student Performance on, Values and Character Assessment, specifically Openness to Experience

	<b>Underdeveloped 1</b>	<b>Developing 2</b>	<b>Effective 3</b>	<b>Distinguished 4</b>
<p>Q1. In what ways does the student behave that demonstrate awareness of different cultures? To what extent does the student recognize the benefit of having multiple perspectives from people who come from different cultural backgrounds?</p>	Student does not demonstrate awareness of other cultures (only from their perspective), and is not aware that other perspectives can be advantageous.	Some awareness but not consistent; once in a while student is aware of the benefits of the other's perspective.	Good awareness; student recognizes the benefits of the other's perspectives. <b>13</b>	Excellent awareness and an appreciation of how the other's perspective can be beneficial. <b>3</b>
<p>Q2. How well, and in what ways, does the student respect people who are different from her/himself, regardless of the student's cultural background?</p>	Derogatory or indifferent to people's differences.	Shows some level of tolerance and demonstrates some respect of differences. <b>1</b>	Shows respect for a range of differences. <b>12</b>	Uniquely sensitive towards differences and embracing those differences. <b>3</b>
<p>Q3. How well, and in what ways, does the student recognize his/her limitations due to his/her own cultural experiences?</p> <p>[** Two of the student supervisors did not answer this question.]</p>	Student does not recognize own limitations within his/her culture, impresses upon others his/her own cultural values.	Student somewhat recognizes his/her limitations, acknowledges that the cultural experience can vary between individuals <b>1</b>	Student is aware that his/her cultural experiences are limited and can name this awareness. <b>9</b>	Student recognizes that his/her own cultural experiences are limited and the ways these limitations affect his/her perspective. <b>4</b>
<p>Q4. How well does the student act as if s/he is a responsible member of the community? Specifically, does the student put others before her/himself? Does the student extend him/herself to help others, or do the student's own concerns come first?</p>	Student is unaware of others needs' and is not a team player. Student is focused mainly on his/her own needs. <b>1</b>	Student recognizes needs of others but does not go out of his/her way to put others before him/herself.	Student puts others needs' before his/her own needs' in most circumstances. Student acts as a responsible member of the community. <b>6</b>	Student puts others needs' before his/her own needs' and actively seeks out ways to help build the community/ organization. <b>9</b>

\* \* \* \* \*

Please see responses below per the PRC reviewers' comments in the 2013-2014 Annual Assessment Report regarding:

- **No reference to 2012-2013 annual assessment report**

There was no reference to that report because, as was stated in the Conclusion section of the report, our "results met both benchmarks identified by the department." The inference that would be reasonable is that the department concluded that no updates or changes were necessary.

- **No follow-ups to the 2013 PRC's response**

The 2013 PRC's response included:

1. A request for demographic data of the surveyed alumni, but that information was provided in the long report.
2. It also requested additional information about how the department selected survey items that produced such positive results, but that information was also contained in the long report: Items were selected from the College Students' Beliefs and Values Survey (Higher Education Research Institute) that had face validity in the judgment of department members.
3. It requested that the department's Action Plan be submitted using a template that was not available at the time the Action Plan was developed and submitted to Mark Sargent (2013-2014 academic year). In consultation with Mark, it was determined that the department had already completed this task.

- **Lack of incontrovertible and detailed evidence of department collaboration and ownership in the 2013-2014 report**

The terms "The department," "The psychology department," "us," and "we," and phrases like "reasons were discussed," "After discussing these results, the department agreed," and "With some discussion, department members achieved a consensus," refer to all members of the department in meetings where all members were present. Discussions of, and choices and decisions about assessments, development of the rubrics, and results, were made in department meetings in May and August.

- **No closing-the-loop activities are suggested for the first assessment in the 2013-2014 report**

Because "the department agreed that the assessment results were helpful, given the limitations of the assessment instrument, and concluded that the seniors are accomplished in most aspects of this critical thinking assessment," the department did not believe that closing-the-loop activities were necessary, and so none were suggested.

- **The number of students involved in the process is rather small in the 2013-2014 report**

Eighteen students participated in the first assessment; that was approximately 80% of the graduating senior for 2013-2014. The second assessment involved 7 seniors, which was large for that capstone course. It was not until September 2015, that it was suggested that the department collect data over several years if the enrollments in courses assessed were considered "too small." The department will keep this in mind for future assessments.

- **At least one of the tools will need improvement to produce quality evidence in the 2013-2014 report**

It's not clear which tool is being referenced here, but both tools were considered acceptable assessments by the department, despite the limitations that primarily involved administration of the assessment, not the tool itself.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Values and Character Questions: Openness to Experience**

1. In what ways does the student behave that demonstrate awareness of different cultures? To what extent does the student recognize the benefit of having multiple perspectives from people who come from different cultural backgrounds?
2. How well, and in what ways, does the student respect people who are different from her/himself, regardless of the student's cultural background?
3. How well, and in what ways, does the student recognize his/her limitations due to his/her own cultural experiences?
4. How well does the student act as if s/he is a responsible member of the community? Specifically, does the student put others before her/himself? Does the student extend him/herself to help others, or do the student's own concerns come first?

## APPENDIX B

### Rubric for Values and Character Assessment

	<b>Underdeveloped 1</b>	<b>Developing 2</b>	<b>Effective 3</b>	<b>Distinguished 4</b>
<i>Q1. In what ways does the student behave that demonstrate awareness of different cultures? To what extent does the student recognize the benefit of having multiple perspectives from people who come from different cultural backgrounds?</i>	Student does not demonstrate awareness of other cultures (only from their perspective), and is not aware that other perspectives can be advantageous.	Some awareness but not consistent; once in a while student is aware of the benefits of the other's perspective.	Good awareness; student recognizes the benefits of the other's perspectives.	Excellent awareness and an appreciation of how the other's perspective can be beneficial.
<i>Q2. How well, and in what ways, does the student respect people who are different from her/himself, regardless of the student's cultural background?</i>	Derogatory or indifferent to people's differences.	Shows some level of tolerance and demonstrates some respect of differences.	Shows respect for a range of differences.	Uniquely sensitive towards differences and embracing those differences.
<i>Q3. How well, and in what ways, does the student recognize his/her limitations due to his/her own cultural experiences?</i>	Student does not recognize own limitations within his/her culture, impresses upon others his/her own cultural values.	Student somewhat recognizes his/her limitations, acknowledges that the cultural experience can vary between individuals	Student is aware that his/her cultural experiences are limited and can name this awareness.	Student recognizes that his/her own cultural experiences are limited and the ways these limitations affect his/her perspective.
<i>Q4. How well does the student act as if/s/he is a responsible member of the community? Specifically, does the student put others before her/himself? Does the student extend him/herself to help others, or do the student's own concerns come first?</i>	Student is unaware of others needs' and is not a team player. Student is focused mainly on his/her own needs.	Student recognizes needs of others but does not go out of his/her way to put others before him/herself.	Student puts others needs' before his/her own needs' in most circumstances. Student acts as a responsible member of the community.	Student puts others needs' before his/her own needs' and actively seeks out ways to help build the community/ organization.

## APPENDIX C

Thank you, in advance, for partnering with Westmont College Psychology Department. It is always a rich experience for our students to complete a semester long internship, and we recognize this wouldn't be possible without your willingness!

As you know, we always appreciate your input. To this end, we will continue to utilize the Site Supervisor Evaluation Form (attached) when we meet at the end of this semester. In addition to this form, we are hoping to get your feedback on the four questions below. Please be mindful of these as you observe and interact with the student this semester. I will look forward to talking with you about them in a couple of months!

1. In what ways does the student behave that demonstrate awareness of different cultures? To what extent does the student recognize the benefit of having multiple perspectives from people who come from different cultural backgrounds?
2. How well, and in what ways, does the student respect people who are different from her/himself, regardless of the student's cultural background?
3. How well, and in what ways, does the student recognize his/her limitations due to his/her own cultural experiences?
4. How well does the student act as if s/he is a responsible member of the community? Specifically, does the student put others before her/himself? Does the student extend him/herself to help others, or do the student's own concerns come first?

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached via email at [gurney@westmont.edu](mailto:gurney@westmont.edu) or 805-565-6057. Thank you, again, for your attentiveness to this matter.