

Pilot Program-to-Program Articulation Project Psychology – July 1 Interim Report

Submitted: June 30, 2010

The committee has maintained an active online dialogue about the fundamental areas within and outside the Psychology major in the last several weeks. This discussion has been developed around two primary threads: Areas/courses within the discipline of Psychology and Areas/Courses outside of the Major that students should experience within the first two years. We believe that in order for such an articulation project to be successful we must create and come to consensus on the framework that included both Psychology courses and Recommended Core Electives. At this point in the process, we have focused our discussion on the following structures:

Overall Structure of Psychology Major for PA PASSHE and “Opt-In” Institutions and Community Colleges

The American Psychological Association has published Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology major. In these guidelines, APA addresses both breadth and depth of knowledge. What we propose is a general structure, based on the APA guidelines, that will provide a common baseline that will allow students at Pennsylvania Community Colleges (and indeed, students at various PASSHE and “Opt-in” schools) to transfer their curriculum easily to other participating 4-year institutions in Pennsylvania, while at the same time give the 4-year schools flexibility in identifying the requirements for their major.

APA has identified “Knowledge Base in Psychology” as a key goal for the undergraduate major, and has identified four major content categories. We will use these to address the ‘breadth’ requirements. Major Content Categories (and an attempt at Operational Definitions):

1. **Human Development** – This category would include courses such as Child Growth and Development. In this area, the focus is on how Physical, Cognitive, and/or Social changes that occur as part of the aging process contribute to human behavior.
2. **Individual Processes** – This category would include courses such as Abnormal Psychology, Personality, and Social Psychology. In this area, the focus on how Person, Situation, or Person-in-Situation factors contribute to Human Behavior, focusing on either normal or abnormal behavior.
3. **Learning and Cognition** – This category would include courses such as Learning, Memory, and Cognition. In this area, the focus on how behavior is shaped either by the immediate environment (S-R learning or Operant Learning) or by an individual’s thoughts, beliefs, memories, and/or expectations.
4. **Biological Basis of Behavior and Mental Processes** – This category would include courses such as Physiological Psychology and Sensation and Perception. In this area, the focus on how behavior is affected by the operation or the Central and/or Peripheral Nervous system.

APA has also identified “**Research Methods**” as a key goal for the undergraduate Psychology major. This area includes the design of research studies as well as the analysis of the data collected, in order to develop and test hypotheses about human behavior.

Cutting across these goals, APA has identified different levels of competencies (Basic, Developing, and Advanced) to address the ‘depth’ of understanding. Tables describing these competencies are attached in the appendix. Briefly, the levels of competencies are defined as:

Basic (retention and comprehension): Skills students should acquire in introductory-level psychology courses such as general psychology and psychology of adjustment

Developing (application and analysis): Skills that should emerge as students progress through lower- and upper-division courses in an undergraduate psychology curriculum

Advanced (evaluation and creation): Skill levels expected of students completing capstone educational experiences and nearing the end of a psychology major (p. 3)

Recommended General Outline of the Psychology Major: *(We particularly want the committee's feedback on this area here.)*

Using these models provided by APA, the general outline of the Psychology major could be as follows:

1. Basic-level competency across all major subfields of Psychology (as might be accomplished in a General Psychology Survey course)
2. Developing-level competency in at least two of the 4 major content categories as defined by APA *(this number could be increased if all agree, but two seemed like a safe number to start with)*
3. Developing-level competency in Research Design and Analysis
4. Advanced-level competency in at least one of the major content categories as defined by APA *(likewise, this number could be increased if all agree)*

Further clarification:

Completion of a Developing competency in one major area does not necessarily mean that students will have met the pre-requisite for an Advanced competency course in that area. For example, a course in Learning may meet the Developing level criteria for the 'Learning and Cognition' area, but does not mean that the student is eligible to take an advanced lab in Cognition.

Four-year institutions are free to require more than what is proposed. For example, students may be required to acquire developing competency in all 4 areas, or in 3 of 4 areas. Students may be required to complete a course in the History and Systems of Psychology. They may be required to acquire Advanced competency in two of the four areas. They may be required to complete some kind of independent project or other capstone course.

TABLE A1

Goal 1: Knowledge Base of Psychology

Demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

| Outcome Areas | BASIC <i>retention and comprehension</i> | DEVELOPING <i>analysis and application</i> | ADVANCED <i>evaluation and creation</i> |
|---|--|--|--|
| Nature of psychology | Define psychology as the science that studies behavior and mental processes and the profession that applies that science | Distinguish the similarities and differences between the professional and scientific communities in psychology | Evaluate the influence of context in the evolving definition of psychology |
| Relationship of psychology to science | Explain how psychology meets the criteria of science | Analyze how psychological research reflects scientific principles | Evaluate psychological science as a means of understanding behavior and mental processes |
| Role of behavior in psychology | Describe behavior and mental processes empirically, including operational definitions Distinguish behavior from inferences about behavior | Identify antecedents and consequences of behavior and mental processes Predict likely patterns of behavior from context | Interpret behavior and mental processes at an appropriate level of complexity |
| Structure of psychology | List and explain the major research and applied subfields of psychology | Differentiate appropriate subfields to address specific research areas and/or assist in addressing specific behavioral concerns | Speculate about psychology's continuing evolution and refinement of subfields |
| Relationship of psychology to other disciplines | Identify the connections between psychology and other disciplines | Compare and contrast the assumptions, methods, and choice of problems of psychology with those of other disciplines | Integrate knowledge derived from psychological science with that of other disciplines |
| Objectives of psychology (Describing, understanding, predicting, and controlling behavior and mental processes) | Identify and explain the primary objectives of psychology | Compare and contrast the primary objectives of psychology | Evaluate the strengths and limitations of the primary objectives of psychology |
| Historical perspectives in psychology | Describe the key eras of the major schools of thought in the history of psychology (including their founders, assumptions, explanatory concepts, and methods) | Compare and contrast historical perspectives | Assess the relative importance of the major schools of thought in the history of psychology Defend a historical perspective |

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Appendix: Take from American Psychological Association. (2008). *Teaching, learning, and assessing in a developmentally coherent curriculum*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, Board of Educational Affairs. Retrieve from www.apa.org/ed/resources.html

Foundation Courses outside of the Major in Psychology

In addition to courses in the content area of Psychology, the committee recommends that students demonstrate fundamental skills of Communication (written and oral), Quantitative Skills, Information/Technological Literacy, Critical Thinking Skills, Knowledge of Scientific Method and Understanding of Social Diversity.

"Foundation courses: Courses required to be completed by students that provide an academic foundation for the degree, general education or advanced study in a major". PA House Bill 185

The 30-credit framework policy is based on the following organization of coursework (English, public speaking, math, science, art, humanities, history and the behavioral and social sciences). We can add recommended "core general electives". The six categories of the 30-credit Framework, common/representative course titles as noted in the Framework Equivalency Standards includes:

Category 1 (select no more than 1 course)

Course Title: English Composition I

Category 2 (select no more than 1 course)

Course Title: Public Speaking

Category 3 (select no more than 2 courses)

Course Titles:

Calculus I

Precalculus

Elementary Statistics (Recommended General Core)

College Algebra (Recommended General Core)

Foundations of Mathematics

Category 4 (select no more than 2 courses)

Course Titles:

General Chemistry I (majors / non-majors courses)

General Chemistry II (majors /non-majors courses)

General Biology I (major/ non-major courses) (Recommended General Core)

General Biology II (majors and non-majors courses) (Recommended General Core)

General Physics I (non-calculus)

General Physics II (non-calculus)

Anatomy & Physiology I

Anatomy & Physiology II

Introduction to Astronomy

Category 5 (select no more than 2 courses)

Course Titles: General Psychology

Introduction to Sociology (Recommended General Core)

American National Government

Educational Psychology

History of Western Civilization II

Principles of Macroeconomics

Principles of Microeconomics

U.S. History I
U.S. History II
History of Western Civilization I
Contemporary Social Problems (Recommended General Core)
Introduction to Anthropology (Recommended General Core)
Human Growth & Development
Child Psychology

Category 6 (select no more than 2 courses)

Course Titles: Introduction to Music
Introduction to Philosophy
Elementary Spanish I
Elementary Spanish II
Painting I
Elementary French I
Elementary French II
Drawing I
Ethics (Recommended General Core)
Introduction to Art
German I
German II
Introduction to Literature (Can also be known as Introduction to Poetry, Interpreting Literature, Reading Literature, Theses in Literature, Topics in Literature, Current Themes in Literature)
Survey of American Literature
Literature of the Western World
World Literature
American Literature
Survey of English Literature
Introduction to Theatre

Source: PA TRAC Transfer Credit Framework Document

Next Steps:

- ❖ Continue the on-line discussion on the frameworks until Mid-July
- ❖ Review feedback from the committee members and clarify and address any questions on the discussion.
- ❖ Create a document to share with all constituents to obtain feedback by the end of July or first week in August.