This document represents the work of the Task Force on Undergraduate Psychology Major Competencies appointed by the American Psychological Association's Board of Educational Affairs. The document has been endorsed by the Board of Educational Affairs.

UNDERGRADUATE PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES: A Report

Task Force Members:

Jane S. Halonen (Chair), James Madison University,
Charles L. Brewer, Furman University
and the APA Board of Directors,
William Buskist, Auburn University,
Angela R. Gillem, Arcadia University,
Diane Halpern, Claremont McKenna College,
G. William Hill IV, Kennesaw State University,
Margaret A. Lloyd, Georgia Southern University
and the APA Board of Educational Affairs,
and Jerry L. Rudmann, Coastline Community College

APA Staff Liaisons:

Barney Beins and Martha Braswell

With special thanks to the
2000 Outcomes Task Force of the California State University System
Mary J. Allen, Richard Noel, and Jess Deegan, California State University, Bakersfield;
Diane Halpern, Claremont McKenna College,
and Cynthia Crawford, California State University, San Bernardino

Overview

This document represents the work of the Task Force on Undergraduate Psychology Major Competencies appointed by the American Psychological Association's Board of Educational Affairs. The document outlines 10 goals and suggested learning outcomes that represent reasonable departmental expectations for the undergraduate psychology major across educational contexts. The goals are divided into two major categories: (1) Knowledge, skills, and values consistent with the science and application of psychology and (2) Knowledge, skills, and values consistent with liberal arts education that are further developed in psychology. The document concludes with a preliminary discussion of assessment principles and a proposal for developing appropriate assessment strategies based on the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes*. This next step will be critical in promoting high quality learning experiences in the undergraduate psychology major.

Outline of Contents

Introduction

Task Force Charge

This document represents the work of the Task Force on Undergraduate Psychology Major Competencies, appointed in 2001 by the Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) of the American Psychological Association (APA). The BEA charged the Task Force to develop goals and learning outcomes for the undergraduate psychology major. Members of the Task Force represent a variety of institutional perspectives on the nature of the undergraduate curriculum and its aims.

The *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* described in the document support psychology as both "liberating science and art" (McGovern & Hawks, 1998). A baccalaureate degree in psychology should document that students can think as scientists about behavior and experience and have developed skills and values that reflect psychology as both a science and an applied field.

Variations in psychology's role in institutions across the country make achieving consensus on goals and learning outcomes difficult. In some colleges and universities, psychology is part of a school or college comprised of the natural sciences. In others, psychology is aligned with the social science or the humanities. Some traditions group psychology with education. Besides organizational diversity, psychology departments also differ in their programmatic emphases, student constituency, faculty expertise, and resources. All of these factors affect the character of how psychology instruction unfolds at any given institution. Undergraduate programs vary, and they should vary to meet the local, state, and regional needs. Despite these differences, Task Force members believe that consensus on goals and learning outcomes can be achieved by developing goal and outcomes that can apply broadly across diverse educational contexts (i.e., campus-based programs as well as Internet-based programs).

The *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* capture a set of optimal expectations for student performance at the completion of the baccalaureate degree. Applying these to individual department plans, faculty must take into account local factors, such as institutional and departmental missions and student characteristics. Regardless of department size and resources, we think that the proposal represents reasonable over-arching goals for the undergraduate psychology curriculum, but we do not wish to dictate to departments how students should achieve those goals. We challenge psychology departments to use the document as a resource to facilitate collaborative discussions that will result in the creation of departmental goals and expectations. The document can facilitate choice in curriculum design, goal setting, and assessment planning. As such, we regard the recommendations as "aspirational." In this spirit, broad discussion of the document should produce two desirable results. First, the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* will maximize departmental autonomy in designing programs uniquely suited to their students' needs while attending to best practice benchmarks. At the same time, the document offer departments solid arguments to procure resources to promote the best quality education possible in their specific educational contexts.

The proposed recommendations support high-quality undergraduate education in psychology. It is not the intent of the committee to establish requirements for accreditation, which the use of the term standards can connote, nor to dictate course requirements. The Task Force believes that specifying a set of common goals and outcomes based on voluntary compliance will be the most effective means for promoting consistent, high quality undergraduate programs across educational contexts at this juncture in psychology's history.

In developing the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes*, the Task Force members surveyed existing literature on undergraduate psychology and assessment. (A review of relevant literature and references for this document can be found in Appendix A.) We borrowed the general format of this proposal from the Task Force on Outcomes from the California State University System (Allen, Noel, Deegan, Halpern, & Crawford, 2000). We are in their debt for the conceptual foundation that their work provided for our deliberations. Appendix B lists the faculty who contributed to the CSU Outcomes Task Force. We also wish to acknowledge the contributions made by several psychology departments in response to calls for exemplars placed on relevant professional listservers. They provided examples of departmental missions, student outcomes, and assessment strategies that helped to guide our deliberations. Appendix C lists the departments and their representatives who sent in review materials.

To extend representation to a diverse array of institutions and relevant organizations, the Task Force assembled an Advisory Panel (see Appendix D for a list of reviewers) to review draft versions of the document. We thank Advisory Panel members for the helpful commentary and guidance offered throughout the process. We were impressed with the thoughtful feedback, careful critique, and enthusiastic support that we received from the panel members. We also sought and received helpful feedback from members of related professional organizations with interests in psychology curricula. Appendix E lists those organizations.

The development of the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* represents the first step in forging national agreement about the nature of the undergraduate psychology major. Widespread acceptance and use of the document will depend on the ease with which the document translates into effective assessment planning. Following APA endorsement of the document, Task Force members will elaborate assessment exemplars that should provide the background and support that will facilitate voluntary compliance with the outcomes. Preliminary details of this next stage of work are described at the end of the document.

The Task Force views the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* as a "living document." In the spirit of continuous improvement, we believe the endorsement of the outcomes must be followed with a systematic plan for periodic review and revision to reflect national and international developments in the discipline and in education. We propose that reviews of the document could take place at seven-year intervals, roughly equivalent to the typical cycle of academic program reviews on many campuses across the country. When the Task Force reconvenes, we support the idea that some members from the prior Task Force should carry over into the next review process to take advantage of their prior experience. Those members continuing in service should join new appointees who can bring a fresh perspective to the revision. Subsequent revisions will require approval from the Council of Representatives.

The Need for *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes*

Why do we need national learning goals and outcomes in undergraduate psychology? First, current best practices in higher education rely on setting clear expectations for student learning, aligning curricula with these expectations, assessing student attainment, and using assessment results to effect changes to promote better student learning. We believe that implementing this model and adopting the proposed outcomes will improve the quality of learning and teaching in psychology. For some time, there has been widespread concern about the quality of education at all levels in this country along with increasing pressures for accountability. In this climate, undergraduate psychology departments feel pressure to develop mission statements, goals, objectives, and assessment plans for the major. We created this document to support departments in this work by providing a common set of outcomes along with the promise of future guidance on reasonable assessment strategies to help departments evaluate how well their students are achieving the outcomes. We trust that the document will be useful to students, faculty, administrators, educational leaders, policymakers, and other stakeholders concerned with education in psychology.

Second, the discipline of psychology suffers from challenges to its identity. The nature of the discipline is often assumed to be solely service-oriented. As a consequence, the science foundation of the discipline can be surprising to those without a background in psychology, including incoming psychology majors. We believe that the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* firmly establish the major as a science. We also hope that this rationale will support departmental efforts to secure resources in keeping with science education. In addition, the very breadth of psychology makes conveying its identity important to the discipline. As professional opportunities in psychology diversify and psychological perspectives blend with other disciplines in new interdisciplinary configurations, the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* reinforce a common identity.

Third, the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* can provide students and their prospective employers with a clear set of expectations about the knowledge and skills majors strive to demonstrate upon graduation. We anticipate that psychology majors could become far more effective in describing their accomplishments upon graduation based on curricular experiences in which expectations have been made explicit and serve as the basis for a reasonable assessment plan.

Fourth, the discipline of psychology should demonstrate educational leadership in this important area, yet our efforts have lagged behind many other disciplines (e.g, nursing, chemistry, theatre arts) in clarifying what their majors strive to know and do before graduation. The *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* should not only clarify national expectations, but will also contribute to a growing international effort to articulate goals and outcomes for the undergraduate major. The use of the outcomes could also generate research on effective practices.

Fifth, these *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* provide a timely complement to several related national projects focused on quality improvement. For example,

the APA approved and published *National Standards for the Teaching of High School Psychology* (Maitland et al., 1999). In addition, APA's Board of Educational Affairs is in the process of articulating criteria for education and training guideline development and evaluation. Completing expectations for appropriate education at the four-year level adds an important piece of the overall education and training context in psychology (cf. Benjamin, 2001).

Sixth, these *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* could facilitate the development of articulation agreements between two- and four-year colleges and universities. Although the outcomes address expectations for baccalaureate level programs, the clarification of performance expectations may facilitate conversations about how two-year programs can build the most effective foundation for the undergraduate major that will be completed in college and university contexts.

Finally, the rapid proliferation of distance learning courses and programs brings new pressure to clarify goals and outcomes to promote learning expectations comparable to traditional classrooms. A common set of outcomes will aid the development and evaluation of these online programs.

Assumptions Underlying the Undergraduate Learning Outcomes

The *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* described in this document rest on several key assumptions about the psychology major, the dynamic nature of the discipline, the diversity of psychology departments across the United States, and the assessment of performance relative to the outcomes. These assumptions provide a framework for understanding the intentions of the Task Force. Specifically, Task Force members assume that the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* will:

- encompass the knowledge, skills, and values that undergraduates strive to acquire while pursuing the psychology baccalaureate degree within the tradition of liberal arts that emphasizes science education. We concur with the curriculum reforms of the last 50 years (detailed in Appendix A) that promote sound scientific training as fundamental to the undergraduate major in psychology;

- incorporate the broad theoretical and research bases of psychology;

- reflect the immense range of learning opportunities and experiences available to psychology majors, including internships and practica, service learning, research assistance and laboratory work, and computer and online applications, in addition to traditional classroom approaches;

- reflect the reality that psychology education often begins in high school or in a 2-year college, typically ends with the baccalaureate degree, and may continue through graduate school, postdoctoral work, and beyond;

- enable departments to communicate *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* in a manner that will help their majors understand the relevance of the psychology curriculum to post-baccalaureate aspirations. The outcomes foster the development of lifelong learning skills and include competencies that will prepare students for entrance into the work force upon receipt of the bachelor's degree as well as acceptance into graduate or professional schools;

- reflect the importance of diversity and cross-cultural issues in the discipline as well as the growing internationalization of psychology and the need to prepare psychology majors to understand behavior and experience that may or may not transcend geographic boundaries;

- apply to psychology departments across institutional settings (2-year, 4-year or doctoral level, private or public, faith-based or secular, campus-based or Internet-based, large or small, and so on) that contribute to student achievement at the baccalaureate level;

- reflect the views that any outcome is meaningful only to the extent that it is accurately assessed and that the outcomes assessment process will focus on student performance if it is to improve learning and teaching;

- allow for many legitimate ways to reach a learning outcome, especially given that outcomes are developmental in nature. Although we propose a common set of goals and outcomes, we are not advocating a common pedagogy or curriculum or specifying how the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* should be addressed by specific courses. The Task Force acknowledges and supports the autonomy of individual psychology departments in determining the performance levels appropriate for their students and assessment procedures and tools appropriate to measure their students' performances; and

- can be implemented primarily for formative purposes (e.g., curriculum development, assessment of student learning relative to department expectations, reinforcement and development of effective educational practices) although departments may be successful in using adherence to the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* for summative purposes (e.g., resource allocation). Although discipline-based national goals and outcomes do not carry the same weight of accreditation standards, key institutional decision makers do consider nationally endorsed expectations to guide curriculum development and allocate institutional resources.

Structure of the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes*

In this document we provide details for 10 suggested goals and related learning outcomes for the undergraduate psychology major. These *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* represent what the Task Force considers to be reasonable departmental expectations for the psychology major in United States' institutions of higher education. We grouped the 10 goals into two major categories:

(I) Knowledge, Skills, and Values Consistent with the Science and Application of Psychology.
This category represents activities that provide hallmarks of psychology education. Responsibility for development in and assessment of these areas rests primarily with the psychology faculty in coursework or psychology advising, and

(II) Knowledge, Skills, and Values Consistent with Liberal Arts Education that are Further Developed in Psychology.
This category includes activities that usually are part of a general education program or liberal arts education. Responsibility for student development in these areas and assessment of students' achievements tends to be shared across a broader range of disciplines than just psychology; however, psychology coursework can contribute to and expand upon these general education goals in significant ways. In turn, well-developed liberal arts skills can contribute to student achievement within the psychology major.

Each of these categories contains 5 goals:

Knowledge, Skills, and Values Consistent with the Science and Application of Psychology

Goal 1. Theory and Content of Psychology
Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

Goal 2. Research Methods in Psychology
Students will understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.

Goal 3. Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology
Students will respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes.

Goal 4. Application of Psychology
Students will understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues.

Goal 5. Values in Psychology
Students will be able to weigh evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a discipline.

Knowledge, Skills, and Values Consistent with Liberal Arts Education that are Further Developed in Psychology

Goal 6. Information and Technological Literacy
Students will demonstrate information competence and the ability to use computers and other technology for many purposes.

Goal 7. Communication Skills
Students will be able to communicate effectively in a variety of formats.

Goal 8. Sociocultural and International Awareness
Students will recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of sociocultural and international diversity.

Goal 9. Personal Development
Students will develop insight into their own and others' behavior and mental processes and apply effective strategies for self-management and self-improvement.

Goal 10. Career Planning and Development

Students will emerge from the major with realistic ideas about how to implement their psychological knowledge, skills, and values in occupational pursuits in a variety of settings.

Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes

Each of the 10 goals includes specific, numbered outcomes that articulate suggested strategies for how the goals can be demonstrated. Task force members believe that each goal can be addressed in departments' curriculum designs and assessment plans; however, departments may choose formally to emphasize selected goals and outcomes depending on their emphases, traditions, or resources. We have designated separate sub-points for particular outcomes to provide further assistance in developing performance expectations.

Our emphasis on certain content areas as part of the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* should not be construed as dictating course requirements. For example, our emphasis on the development of career skills does not imply that these activities must transpire in a formal course on careers in psychology. Similarly, we are not advocating that separate courses in the history of psychology or group dynamics must be included in the undergraduate curriculum, but leave it to the ingenuity of departments to determine contexts in which students can learn those relevant skills and perspectives.

Knowledge, Skills, and Values
Consistent with the Science and Application of Psychology

Goal 1. Theory and Content of Psychology

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

Suggested Learning Outcomes:
Students will be able to:

1.1 Describe the nature of psychology as a discipline.

a. Explain why psychology is a science.

b. List the primary objectives of psychology: describing, understanding, predicting, and controlling behavior and mental processes.

c. Compare and contrast the assumptions and methods of psychology with those of other disciplines.

d. Describe the contributions of psychology perspectives to interdisciplinary collaboration.

1.2 Use the concepts, language, and major theories of the discipline to account for psychological phenomena.

a. Describe behavior and mental processes empirically, including operational definitions

b. Identify antecedents and consequences of behavior and mental processes

c. Interpret behavior and mental processes at an appropriate level of complexity

d. Use theories to explain and predict behavior and mental processes

e. Integrate theoretical perspectives to produce comprehensive and multi-faceted explanations

1.3 Explain major perspectives of psychology (e.g., behavioral, biological, cognitive, evolutionary, humanistic, psychodynamic, and sociocultural).

a. Compare and contrast major perspectives

b. Describe advantages and limitations of major theoretical perspectives

1.4 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding representing appropriate breadth and depth in selected content areas of psychology:

a. theory and research representing each of the following four general domains:
   (1) learning and cognition
   (2) individual differences, psychometrics, personality, and social processes, including those related to sociocultural and international dimensions
   (3) biological bases of behavior and mental processes, including physiology, sensation, perception, comparative, motivation, and emotion
   (4) developmental changes in behavior and mental processes across the life span

b. the history of psychology, including the evolution of methods of psychology, its theoretical conflicts, and its sociocultural contexts

c. relevant levels of analysis: cellular, individual, group/systems, and culture

d. overarching themes, persistent questions, or enduring conflicts in psychology, such as
   (1) the interaction of heredity and environment
   (2) variability and continuity of behavior and mental processes within and across species
   (3) free will versus determinism
   (4) subjective versus objective perspective
   (5) the interaction of mind and body

e. relevant ethical issues, including a general understanding of the APA Code of Ethics

.

Goal 2. Research Methods in Psychology

Students will understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.

Suggested Learning Outcomes:
Students will be able to:

2.1 Describe the basic characteristics of the science of psychology.

2.2 Explain different research methods used by psychologists.

a. Describe how various research designs address different types of questions and hypotheses

b. Articulate strengths and limitations of various research designs

c. Distinguish the nature of designs that permit causal inferences from those that do not

2.3 Evaluate the appropriateness of conclusions derived from psychological research.

a. Interpret basic statistical conclusions

b. Distinguish between statistical significance and practical significance

c. Describe effect size and confidence intervals

d. Evaluate the validity of conclusions presented in research reports

2.4 Design and conduct basic studies to address psychological questions using appropriate research methods.

a. Locate and use relevant databases, research, and theory to plan, conduct, and interpret results of research studies

b. Formulate testable research hypotheses, based on operational definitions of variables

c. Select and apply appropriate methods to maximize internal and external validity and reduce the plausibility of alternative explanations

d. Collect, analyze, interpret, and report data using appropriate statistical strategies to address different types of research questions and hypotheses

e. Recognize that theoretical and sociocultural contexts as well as personal biases may shape research questions, design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation

2.5 Follow the APA Code of Ethics in the treatment of human and nonhuman participants in the design, data collection, interpretation, and reporting of psychological research.

2.6 Generalize research conclusions appropriately based on the parameters of particular research methods.

a. Exercise caution in predicting behavior based on limitations of single studies

b. Recognize the limitations of applying normative conclusions to individuals

c. Acknowledge that research results may have unanticipated societal consequences

d. Recognize that individual differences and sociocultural contexts may influence the applicability of research findings

Goal 3. Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology

Students will respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes.

Suggested Learning Outcomes:
Students will be able to:

3.1 Use critical thinking effectively.

a. Evaluate the quality of information, including differentiating empirical evidence from speculation and the probable from the improbable

b. Identify and evaluate the source, context, and credibility of information

c. Recognize and defend against common fallacies in thinking

d. Avoid being swayed by appeals to emotion or authority

e. Evaluate popular media reports of psychological research

f Demonstrate an attitude of critical thinking that includes persistence, open-mindedness, tolerance for ambiguity and intellectual engagement

g. Make linkages or connections between diverse facts, theories, and observations

3.2 Engage in creative thinking.

a. Intentionally pursue unusual approaches to problems

b. Recognize and encourage creative thinking and behaviors in others

c. Evaluate new ideas with an open but critical mind

3.3 Use reasoning to recognize, develop, defend, and criticize arguments and other persuasive appeals.

a. Identify components of arguments (e.g., conclusions, premises/assumptions, gaps, counterarguments)

b. Distinguish among assumptions, emotional appeals, speculations, and defensible evidence

c. Weigh support for conclusions to determine how well reasons support conclusions

d. Identify weak, contradictory, and inappropriate assertions

e. Develop sound arguments based on reasoning and evidence

3.4 Approach problems effectively.

a. Recognize ill-defined and well-defined problems

b. Articulate problems clearly

c. Generate multiple possible goals and solutions

d. Evaluate the quality of solutions and revise as needed

e. Select and carry out the best solution

Goal 4. Application of Psychology

Students will understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues.

Suggested Learning Outcomes:
Students will be able to:

4.1 Describe major applied areas of psychology (e.g., clinical, counseling, industrial/organizational, school, health).

4.2 Identify appropriate applications of psychology in solving problems, such as

a. the pursuit and effect of healthy lifestyles

b. origin and treatment of abnormal behavior

c. psychological tests and measurements

b. psychology-based interventions in clinical, counseling, educational, industrial/organizational, community, and other settings and their empirical evaluation

4.3 Articulate how psychological principles can be used to explain social issues and inform public policy.

a. Recognize that sociocultural contexts may influence the application of psychological principles in solving social problems

b. Describe how applying psychological principles can facilitate change

4.4 Apply psychological concepts, theories, and research findings as these relate to everyday life.

4.5 Recognize that ethically complex situations can develop in the application of psychological principles.

Goal 5. Values in Psychology

Students will be able to weigh evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a science.

Suggested Learning Outcomes:
Students will be able to:

5.1 Recognize the necessity for ethical behavior in all aspects of the science and practice of psychology.

5.2 Demonstrate reasonable skepticism and intellectual curiosity by asking questions about causes of behavior.

5.3 Seek and evaluate scientific evidence for psychological claims.

5.4 Tolerate ambiguity and realize that psychological explanations will often be complex and tentative.

5.5 Recognize and respect human diversity and understand that psychological explanations may vary across populations and contexts.

5.6 Assess and justify their engagement with respect to civic, social, and global responsibilities

5.7 Understand the limitations of their psychological knowledge and skills.

Knowledge, Skills, and Values Consistent with Liberal Arts Education that are Further Developed in Psychology

Goal 6. Information and Technological Literacy

Students will demonstrate information competence and the ability to use computers and other technology for many purposes.

Suggested Learning Outcomes:
Students will be able to:

6.1 Demonstrate information competence at each stage in the following process:

a. Formulate a researchable topic that can be supported by database search strategies

b. Locate and, choose relevant sources from appropriate media, which may include data and perspectives outside traditional psychology and Western boundaries

c. Use selected sources after evaluating their suitability based on
--appropriateness, accuracy, quality, and value of the source
--potential bias of the source
--the relative value of primary versus secondary sources, empirical versus non-empirical sources, and peer-reviewed versus nonpeer-reviewed sources

d. Read and accurately summarize the general scientific literature of psychology

6.2 Use appropriate software to produce understandable reports of the psychological literature, methods, and statistical and qualitative analyses in APA or other appropriate style, including graphic representations of data.

6.3 Use information and technology ethically and responsibly.

a. Quote, paraphrase, and cite correctly from a variety of media sources

b. Define and avoid plagiarism

c. Avoid distorting statistical results

d. Honor commercial and intellectual copyrights

6.4 Demonstrate these computer skills:

a. Use basic word processing, database, email, spreadsheet, and data analysis programs

b. Search the World Wide Web for high quality information

c. Use proper etiquette and security safeguards when communicating through email

Goal 7. Communication Skills

Students will be able to communicate effectively in a variety of formats.

Suggested Learning Outcomes:
Students will be able to:

7.1 Demonstrate effective writing skills in various formats (e.g., essays, correspondence, technical papers, note taking) and for various purposes (e.g., informing, defending, explaining, persuading, arguing, teaching).

a. Demonstrate professional writing conventions (e.g., grammar, audience awareness, formality) appropriate to purpose and context

b. Use APA style effectively in empirically-based reports, literature reviews, and theoretical papers

7.2 Demonstrate effective oral communication skills in various formats (e.g., group discussion, debate, lecture) and for various purposes (e.g., informing,. defending, explaining, persuading, arguing, teaching).

7.3 Exhibit quantitative literacy.

a. Apply basic mathematical concepts and operations to support measurement strategies

b. Use relevant probability and statistical analyses to facilitate interpretation of measurements

c. Articulate clear and appropriate rationale for choice of information conveyed in charts, tables, figures, and graphs

d. Interpret quantitative visual aids accurately, including showing vigilance about misuse or misrepresentation of quantitative information

7.4 Demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills.

a. Listen accurately and actively

b. Use psychological concepts and theory to understand interactions with others

c. Identify the impact or potential impact of their behaviors on others

d. Articulate ideas thoughtfully and purposefully

e. Use appropriately worded questions to improve interpersonal understanding

f. Attend to nonverbal behavior and evaluate its meaning in the communications context

g. Adapt communication style to accommodate diverse audiences

h. Provide constructive feedback to colleagues in oral and written formats

7.5 Exhibit the ability to collaborate effectively.

a. Work with group to complete projects within reasonable timeframes

b. Solicit and integrate diverse viewpoints

c. Manage conflicts appropriately and ethically

d. Develop relevant workplace skills: mentoring, interviewing, crisis management

Goal 8. Sociocultural and International Awareness

Students will recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of sociocultural and international diversity.

Suggested Learning Outcomes:
Students will be able to:

8.1 Interact effectively and sensitively with people from diverse backgrounds and cultural perspectives.

8.2 Examine the sociocultural and international contexts that influence individual differences.

8.3 Explain how individual differences influence beliefs, values, and interactions with others and vice versa.

8.4 Understand how privilege, power, and oppression may affect prejudice, discrimination, and inequity.

8.5 Recognize prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors that might exist in themselves and others.

Goal 9. Personal Development

Students will develop insight into their own and others' behavior and mental processes and apply effective strategies for self-management and self-improvement.

Suggested Learning Outcomes:
Students will be able to:

9.1 Reflect on their experiences and find meaning in them.

a. Identify their personal and professional values

b. Demonstrate insightful awareness of their feelings, emotions, motives, and attitudes based on psychological principles

9.2 Apply psychological principles to promote personal development.

a. Demonstrate self-regulation in setting and achieving goals

b. Self-assess performance quality accurately

c. Incorporate feedback for improved performance

d. Purposefully evaluate the quality of one's thinking (metacognition)

9.3 Enact self-management strategies that maximize healthy outcomes.

9.4 Display high standards of personal integrity with others.

Goal 10. Career Planning and Development

Students will emerge from the major with realistic ideas about how to implement their psychological knowledge, skills, and values in occupational pursuits in a variety of settings.

Suggested Learning Outcomes:
Students will be able to:

10.1 Apply knowledge of psychology (e.g., decision strategies, life span processes, psychological assessment, types of psychological careers) to formulating career choices.

10.2 Identify the types of academic experience and performance in psychology and the liberal arts that will facilitate entry into the work force, post-baccalaureate education, or both.

10.3 Describe preferred career paths based on accurate self-assessment of abilities, achievement, motivation, and work habits.

10.4 Identify and develop skills and experiences relevant to achieving selected career goals.

10.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of lifelong learning and personal flexibility to sustain personal and professional development as the nature of work evolves.

Assessment of *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes*

The Task Force members believe that the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* and assessment planning are inextricably intertwined. Specifying performance criteria in the absence of well-designed plans to gather evidence on program effectiveness is likely to be an unproductive enterprise. Although the Task Force was not charged at this stage with suggesting assessment practices for this process, the development of the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* was driven by our belief that each goal with its associated outcomes must reflect measurable behaviors for the undergraduate psychology major. After drafting the goals and outcomes, we discussed appropriate assessment methods that could be applied to each goal and their related outcomes. We considered a wide variety of both quantitative and qualitative assessment methods (e.g., objective tests; essays tests; formative assessments; projects; student portfolios; self-assessment practices; surveys of current students, alumni, and employers; and unobtrusive/archival measures). We also examined the potential advantages and disadvantages of each strategy for measuring specific outcomes listed for each goal.

Our discussions have already generated many principles that we will elaborate in the next phase of this project to assist departments in formulating effective assessment plans for the undergraduate major. A preliminary listing of those principles include the following:

- A set of outcomes is meaningful and useful in improving instruction only if student abilities are measured thoughtfully with the specific intent of improving teaching and learning. Whenever possible, direct feedback could be provided to the students completing assessment activities to facilitate their learning.
- Assessment planning should encourage systematic improvement rather than concentrate on deficiency. Depersonalizing the potential threat imposed by assessment may make it easier for faculty members to embrace assessment practices.
- Although some aspects of assessment can be accomplished using multiple choice testing formats, other approaches to assessment often provide a richer picture of student achievement.
- Departments may choose to focus only a few goals on an annual basis. The document proposes ideal goals and outcomes under optimal conditions with appropriate resources to support assessment activity. Departments can craft assessment plans that provide feedback on targeted dimensions that will help improve or maintain high quality education. One strategy may involve assessing a subset of desired goals and outcomes in a given year with the expectation of assessing other goals and outcomes in subsequent years.
- Departments will benefit from discussions that compare existing curriculum to the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* to establish departmental standards. Examining how individual courses contribute to achieving departmental standards will help departments identify their relative strengths as well as areas that need improvement or are less highly valued in the mission of the department.
- Wherever possible, assessment is most beneficial when it is embedded within existing coursework. Such strategies reduce the burden for faculty and increase the motivation for students to take assessment activities seriously.

- In assessment-unfriendly departments, individual faculty may still be able to participate in assessment activities by using the *Undergraduate Psychology Learning Goals and Outcomes* to facilitate individual course planning.
- Departments will need to ask specific individuals in the department to assume overview responsibilities for departmental assessment. Assessment planning is energy and time intensive. This important work should be supported with release time and recognition for service to forestall deteriorating attention to assessment concerns.
- Assessment activities are expensive. Departments should not be expected to implement assessment plans without appropriate financial support.

Our preliminary assessment discussion strengthened our belief that the long-term success and popular adoption of the proposed *Undergraduate Learning Goals and Outcomes* depends upon the development of a companion document that addresses effective assessment strategies in detail. Therefore, the Task Force strongly recommends a second phase of work that will result in a document that articulates principles of best practice in assessment. This document will summarize existing assessment methods, evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each for assessing the *Undergraduate Learning Goals and Outcomes*, and provide exemplars from departments that have found efficient and effective assessment solutions to promote student learning and satisfy program evaluation needs. We believe that this companion document is critical. We have targeted September, 2002, for the completion of this stage of the project. This deadline also provides the opportunity to present the Undergraduate Learning Goals and OUtcomes and associated assessment practices at a national conference, "Measuring Up: Best Practices in Assessment," designed to assist psychology educators and administrators. The conference is scheduled in Atlanta for late September, 2002.

Appendix A

A Brief History on the Psychology Curriculum Reform and References

The current proposal for *Undergraduate Psychology Goals and Outcomes* builds on a long tradition of curriculum examination and reform in psychology. Prior to World War II, psychology was "organizationally amorphous" (Brewer, 1997, p. 434) because coursework in psychology could be found in departments of philosophy, ethics, religion, education, pedagogy, English or history. Despite the flourishing of psychology programs and departments after the war, psychologists invested little time in systematic analysis of the evolving curriculum.

The first conference on the psychology curriculum took place at Cornell University in 1952. All of the participants were male and taught at large universities. According to Brewer (1997), the Cornell participants concluded that undergraduate psychology education should promote four objectives: develop students intellectually through a liberal education; establish a psychology content base; promote personal growth and adjustment; and foster "desirable attitudes and habits of thought" (Buxton et al., 1952, pp. 2-3). These themes have persisted in various forms through subsequent curriculum review efforts, including the Michigan Conference in 1960 and the Kulik Report of 1973 as well as the current proposal.

The American Psychological Association's Committee on Undergraduate Education (CUE) sponsored two other efforts to support high quality undergraduate programming in the 1980s (Brewer, 1997). In 1982, CUE interviewed 100 department heads to identify their concerns. Department heads asked APA to establish a recommended content and structure and content of the undergraduate curriculum. A subsequent report (Schierer & Rogers, 1985) sponsored by the CUE attempted to provide some answers. The report included information on practices from universities, four-year colleges, and two-year colleges.

Contemporary Curriculum Scholarship

The American Psychological Association/Association of American Colleges project report (McGovern et al., 1991) articulated an early set of specific goals that integrated psychology with broader liberal arts learning. The St. Mary's Conference identified assessment (Halpern et al., 1993) and curriculum (Brewer et al., 1993) groups to continue this attention to teaching and learning in the discipline. The "Quality Principles" (McGovern & Reich, 1996), officially endorsed as APA policy for undergraduate education by the Council of Representatives, represented a tangible product of the St. Mary's Conference. The Quality Principles have served as guidelines for educational practice at the undergraduate level since that time. More recently, the Psychology Partnerships Project (2000) convened groups on assessment and curriculum, among other project groups, to explore how psychology education changed over the last decade as well as to promote best curricular and assessment practices.

The assessment movement that flourished late in the last century set the stage for renewed examination of what students know and do as a result of their major studies. Accrediting agencies began to require universities to devise assessment plans as a way of holding institutions accountable for providing educational experiences that would fulfill the promises made in their mission statements. Initially educators protested new accrediting requirements as additional work for limited gain (Hutchings, 1990). However, many educators began to view assessment more positively. For example, Halpern (1988) advocated assessment as a new and powerful tool for improving teaching and learning; she discussed strategies to measure the "value added" from undergraduate experiences as a means to promote better quality education. She articulated six general areas that should be reflected in a departmental assessment plan: knowledge base, thinking skills, language skills, information gathering and synthesis,

interpersonal skills, and practical experience. Her work was particularly influential in early department discussions of undergraduate outcomes.

Although assessment-driven literature is relatively new in curriculum scholarship, other models have begun to emerge. For example, Graham (1998) described Alverno College's assessment-based curriculum in which performance criteria drive student evaluation. Their curriculum emphasizes theoretical reasoning, methodological proficiency, professional interaction, and self-reflection as the overarching learning objectives to help students think, act, and interact using the frameworks of psychology.

Levy, Burton, Mickler, and Vigorito (1999) recommended a matrix strategy to facilitate program review, a process that has been emerging as a standard operating procedure in higher education. Their approach contrasts specific course offerings with targeted outcomes, including perspectives, knowledge, skills and attitudes, to determine where deficiencies in learning experience might compromise department objectives. Several surveys (Messer, Griggs, & Jackson, 1999; Perlman & McCann, 1999a,b) report patterns of departmental requirements to promote comparisons of department practices. Such works satisfy pressures to find appropriate "benchmarks" for excellence, which may be critical to ensuring continuing institutional support for psychology programs. State projects, such as the Task Force on Outcomes from the California State University System (Allen, Noel, Deegan, Halpern, & Crawford, 2000) represent important collaborative efforts to produce reasonable benchmarks. The current committee borrowed the general format for this document from their design.

High School Psychology Emerges

During the last decade, increased attention has been devoted to the promotion of quality at the high school level (Ernst & Petrossian, 1996). When the APA Council of Representatives

endorsed the *National Standards for the Teaching of High School Psychology* (Maitland et al., 1999), they upheld the responsibility of the organization in promoting high quality education at the introductory level. The success of those standards provided further incentive to the Board of Educational Affairs to explore the development of goals and learning objectives at the undergraduate level.

References

Allen, M. J., Noel, R., Deegan, J., Halpern, D., & Crawford, C. (2000). Goals and objectives for the undergraduate psychology major: Recommendations from a meeting of California State University psychology faculty (pp.1-7). Statesboro, GA: Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology.

Benjamin, L. T. (2001). American psychology's struggle with its curriculum: Should a thousand flowers bloom? American Psychologist, 56, 735-742.

Brewer, C. L. (1997). Undergraduate education in psychology: Will the mermaids sing? American Psychologist, 52, 434-441.

Brewer, C. L., Hopkins, J. R., Kimble, G. A., Matlin, M. W., McCann, L. I., McNeil, O. V., Nodine, B. F., Quinn, V. N., & Saundra. (1993). Curriculum. In T. V. McGovern (Ed.), Handbook for enhancing undergradaute education in psychology (pp. 161-182). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Buxton, C. E., Cofer, C. N., Gustad, J. W., MacLeod, R. B., McKeachie, W. J., & Wolfle, D. (1952). Improving undergraduate instruction in psychology. New York: Macmillan.

Ernst, R., & Petrossian, P. (1996). Teachings of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS): Aiming for excellence in high school psychology instruction. American Psychologist, 51, 256-258.

Graham, S. (December, 1998). Developing student outcomes for the psychology major: An assessment-as-learning framework. New Directions, 7, 165-170.

Halpern, D. F. (1988). Assessing student outcomes for psychology majors. Teaching of Psychology, 4, 181-186.

Halpern, D. F., Appleby, D. C., Beers, S. E., Cowan, C., L., Furedy, J. J., Halonen, J. S., Horton, C. P., Peden, B. F., & Pittenger, D. F. Targeting outcomes: Covering your assessment concerns and needs. In T. V. McGovern (Ed.), Handbook for enhancing undergradaute education in psychology (pp. 161-182). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Hutchings, P. (June 30, 1990). Assessment and the way we work. American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum. Washington, DC.

Kulik, J. A., (1973). Undergraduate education in psychology. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Levy, J., Burton, G., Mickler, S., & Vigorito, M. (1999). A curriculum matrix for psychology program review. Teaching of Psychology, 26, 291-294.

Maitland, L. L., Anderson, R. M., Blair-Broeker, C. T., Dean, C. J., Ernst, R., Halonen, J. S., Mandel, B., McKeachie, W. J., & Reedy, M. J. (1999). The National Undergraduate Guidelines for the Teaching of High School Psychology. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

McGoven, T. V. (1993). (Ed.). Handbook for enhancing undergraduate education in psychology (pp. 161-182). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

McGovern, T. V., Furomotor, L., Halpern, D. F., Kimble, G. A., & McKeachie, W. J. (1991). Liberal education, study in depth, and the arts and science major--Psychology. American Psychologist, 46, 598-605.

McGovern, T. V., & Hawks, B. K. (1986). The varieties of undergraduate experience. Teaching of Psychology, 13, 174-181.

McGovern, T. V., & Reich, J. N. (1996). A comment on the Quality Principles. American Psychologist, 51, 252-255.

Messer, W. S., Griggs, R. A., & Jackson, S. L. (1999). A national survey of undergraduate psychology degree options and major requirements. Teaching of Psychology, 26, 164-171.

Perlman, B., & McCann, L. I. (1999). The structure of the psychology undergraduate curriculum. Teaching of Psychology, 26, 171-176.

Perlman, B., & McCann, L. I. (1999). The most frequently listed courses in the undergraduate psychology curriculum. Teaching of Psychology, 3, 177-182.

Scheirer, C. J., & Rogers, A. M. (1985). The undergraduate psychology curriculum: 1984. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Appendix B

California State University Faculty Who Contributed to the CSU Outcomes Document

Mary Allen, California State University, Bakersfield
Rachel August, California State University, Sacramento
Steve Bacon, California State University, Bakersfield
Lori Barker-Hackett, California Polytechnic University
Kay Bathurst, California State University, Fullerton
Lisa Bohon, California State University, Sacramento
Tammy Bourg, California State University, Sacramento
Robert Christenson, California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo
Keith Colman, California State University, Long Beach
Caran Colvin, San Francisco State University
Robert Cooper, San Jose State University
Chris Cozby, California State University, Fullerton
Cynthia Crawford, California State University, San Bernardino
Jess Deegan, California State University, Bakersfield
Stuart Fischoff, California State University, Los Angeles
Susan Frances, Humboldt State University
Diane Halpern, California State University, San Bernardino
Sharon Hamill, California State University, San Marcos
Diane Harris, San Francisco State University
Nancy Harrison, California State University, Hayward
Lawrence Herringer, California State University, Chico
Susan Hillier, Sonoma State University
Megumi Hosoda, San Jose State University
Senqi Hu, Humboldt State University
Lumei Hui, Humboldt State University
Robert Kapche, California State University, Long Beach
John Kim, San Francisco State University
Jan Kottke, California State University, San Bernardino
Eleanor Levine, California State University, Hayward
Brennis Lucero-Wagoner, California State University, Northridge
Laurel McCabe, Sonoma State University
Jeffery Mio, California Polytechnic University, Pomona
Elizabeth Nelson, California State University, Stanislaus
Linden Nelson, California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo
Richard Noel, California State University, Bakersfield
Sandra Pacheco, California State University, Monterey Bay
Beth Rienzi, California State University, Bakersfield
Jean Ritter, California State University, Fresno
Wes Schultz, California State University, San Marcos
Susan Siaw, California Polytechnic University, Pomona
Paul Spear, California State University, Chico
Sheila Grant Thompson, California State University, Northridge
Debra Valencia-Laver, California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo

Eddie Vela, California State University, Chico
Michael Wapner, California State University, Los Angeles
Art Warmoth, Sonoma State University
Marilyn Wilson, California State University, Fresno

Appendix C

Psychology Departments Contributing Exemplars

Augusta State University
Steve Hobbs

California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo
Linden Nelson

Georgia Southern University
Margaret A. Lloyd

Kennesaw State University
G. William Hill, IV

LeMoyne College
Vincent Hevern

Loras College
Thomas Pusateri

Pine Manor College
Nancy White

State University of New York-Oswego
Karen Wolford

University of Central Florida
Jack McGuire

Valdosta State University
Deborah Brihl

Western Kentucky University
Retta Poe

Wilson College
Bev Ayers-Nachamkin

Appendix D

Roster of Advisory Panel Members for the Undergraduate Psychology Standards

as of November 15, 2001

R1

Jo-Ann Amadeo, Univeristy of Maryland
Charlotte Brown, University of Pittsburgh
James E. Freeman, University of Virginia
Bill Badecker, Johns Hopkins University
Richard Griggs, University of Florida
Greg Kimble, Duke University
Wilbert J. McKeachie, University of Michigan
George Knight, Arizona State University
Deep Sran, University of Maryland
Judith Torney-Purta, University of Maryland
Ronald D. Taylor, University of Kentucky
Michael Wertheimer, University of Colorado
Susan Whitbourne, University of Massachusetts
Sheldon Zedeck, University of California at Berkeley

Regional Universities

William Addison, Eastern Illinois University
Mary Allen, California State University-Bakersfield
Drew Appleby, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
Suzanne Baker, James Madison University
Douglas Bernstein, University of South Florida
Deborah S. Brihl, Valdosta State University
Janet Carlson, State University of New York at Oswego
Stephen F. Davis, Emporia State University
Sari Dworkin, California State University-Fresno
Elizabeth Hammer, Loyola University of New Orleans
Rosemary Hays-Thomas, University of West Florida
Stephen H. Hobbs, Augusta State University
Eric Landrum, Boise State University
Marc B. Levy, Southern Oregon University
Margaret Matlin, State University of New York at Geneseo
Virginia Andreoli Mathie, James Madison University
Janet R. Matthews, Loyola University of New Orleans
Lee McCann, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
Maureen McCarthy, Austin Peay State University
Thomas McGovern, Arizona State University-West
Jack McGuire, University of Central Florida
Linden L. Nelson, California Polytechnic State University

Linda Noble, Kennesaw State University
Richard C. Noel, California State University-Bakersfield
Barry Perlman, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
David J. Pittenger, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Retta Poe, Western Kentucky University
Antonio Puente, University of North Carolina at Wilmington
Pat Santoro, Frostburg State University
Rik Seefeldt, University of Wisconsin-River Falls
Bonnie R. Seegmiller, CUNY-Hunter College
Carol L. Smith, University of Massachusetts-Boston
Robert F. Smith, George Mason University
Kandy J. Stahl, Stephen F. Austin State University
Claudia Stanny, University of West Florida
Michael Stoloff, James Madison University
Kenneth A. Weaver, Emporia State University
Rick Wesp, East Stroudsberg University of Pennsylvania
Val Whittlesey, Kennesaw State University
Janie Wilson, Georgia Southern University
Karen Wolford, State University of New York at Oswego

4 year Colleges
Ruth Ault, Davidson College
Bev Ayers-Nachamkin, Wilson College
Susan Beers, Sweet Briar College
Deborah L. Best, Wake Forest University
Katherine A. Black, University of Hartford
Theodore N. Bosack, Providence College
Greg Burton, Seton Hall University
Sam Cameron, Arcadia University
Stephen Chew, Samford University
Lisa N. Coates-Shrider, McMurry University
Nancy K. Dess, Occidental College
Kathy Dillon, Western New England College
Dana S. Dunn, Moravian College
Dana Gross, St. Olaf College
Vincent Hevern, LeMoyne College
Eugene Gilden, Linfield College
Faith D. Gilroy, Loyola College Baltimore
Cynthia Gray, Alverno College
Dana Gross, St. Olaf College
Karen Jackson, Texas Women's University
Norine Johnson, Boston College
Wesley P. Jordan, St. Marys College of St. Marys MD
Kenneth D. Keith, University of San Diego
Jim Korn, St. Louis University
Phyllis Ladrigan, Nazareth College

Jeff Levy, Seton Hall University
Neil Lutsky, Carleton College
Ann McGillicuddy-Delisi, Lafayette College
Loretta Neal McGregor, Oauchita Baptist University
Wayne Messer, Berea College
Thomas Pusateri, Loras College
Jill Reich, Bates College
Cynthia J. Smith, Wheeling Jesuit University
Paul C. Smith, Alverno College
Randolph A. Smith, Oauchita Baptist University
Becky Stoddardt, St. Mary's College
Elizabeth Swenson, John Carroll University
Thomas J. Thieman, College of St. Catherine
James Wallace, St. Lawrence University

Community Colleges
James Bell, Howard Community College
Ann Ewing, Mesa Community College
Diane Finley, Prince George's Community College
Kenneth Gray, College of DuPage
David R. Murphy, Waubonsee Community College
Mark Vernoy, Palomar Community College

High School
Carol Dean, Lake Park High School, Lake Park, IL
Craig Gruber, Walt Whitman High School, Maryland
Laura Maitland, Mepham High School, Bellmore, NY
Bates Mandel, School District of Philadelphia

Organization Representatives
Merry Bullock, APA
Ted Feinberg, NASP Assistant Executive Director

Text Author
Wayne Weiten

Appendix E

Members of These Professional Organizations Provided Feedback to Task Force*

American Psychological Association

American Psychological Society

Association of Heads of Departments in Psychology (ADHP)

Council of Undergraduate Teachers of Psychology (CTUP)

Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology (COGDOP)

Council of Undergraduate Psychology Programs (CUPP)

National Association for School Psychology (NASP)

Project Kaleidoscope (PKal)

Psi Beta

Psi Chi

Society for the Teaching of Psychology (STP)

Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS)

* feedback should not be construed as "endorsement" by the member or member's organization at this stage of the process