

Assessing Student Performance in Traditional and Professional Studies: Psychology Major.

Vanguard University of Southern California is committed to ensuring that all of our programs are designed to provide quality education. One of the questions we ask ourselves is whether student performance in traditional undergraduate programs and adult/professional studies programs is equivalent. To answer this important question for Psychology majors in traditional (TUG) and professional studies (SPS), during 2012-2013 academic year we assessed Psychology student learning outcomes of Writing in Psychology/American Psychological Association (APA style) and Integration of Faith and Learning. In addition, we assessed one of the Core/Institutional learning outcomes, Oral Communication.

To assess **Writing** and **Integration of Faith and Learning** we used the “Hiding Place” book review assignment from traditional PSYC 324 Social Psychology (57 papers) and SPS PSYD 324 Social and Cultural Psychology (21 paper). As can be seen from the table below, SPS students scored higher on Formatting and APA style (Trad 80% vs. SPS 87%) and Integration of Faith and Learning (Trad 86% vs. SPS 93%), while traditional students scored higher on Quality of Writing and Grammar (Trad 98% vs. SPS 88%). Only the last difference was statistically significant; however, it is likely due in part to the difference in assignment instructions: traditional students were required to have the paper first read by the Writing Center; there was no such requirement for SPS students. Overall, students in both groups performed on Developed or Highly Developed levels.

Student Type		Quality of Writing and Grammar	Formatting Requirements & APA Style	Integration of faith & learning
TUG	Mean	24.40	19.98	43.16
	N	57	57	57
	Std. Deviation	1.898	5.340	8.518
	Minimum	15	5	24
	Maximum	25	25	50
	Range	10	20	26
SPS	Mean	21.90	21.76	46.67
	N	21	21	21
	Std. Deviation	3.208	4.784	5.660
	Minimum	15	10	25
	Maximum	25	25	50
	Range	10	15	25

To assess **Oral Communication**, data from traditional undergraduate students were collected from Social Psychology PSYC 324 in the Fall of 2012 (N=30). Similar data were collected from 2 sections of SPS Social and Cultural Psychology in 2012 and 2013 (N=23). Students presentations were assessed with the university rubric based on VALUE rubric. Results are summarized in the rubric below. For each student type (TUG or SPS), the number and percentage of students performing at specific level are indicated.

Oral Communication

	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Organization	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.
	TUG 1/30 3% SPS 0	5/30 16% SPS 3/23 13%	11/30 37% SPS 10/23 43%	13/30 43% SPS 10/23 43%
Language	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are imaginative, memorable and compelling and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.
	0	5/30 16% SPS 4/23 17%	13/30 43% SPS 10/23 43%	12/30 40% SPS 9/23 39%
Delivery	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.
	2/30 6% SPS 1/23 4%	3/30 10% SPS 3/23 13%	14/30 47% SPS 11/23 48%	11/30 37% SPS 6/23 26%

Supporting Material	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis which minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis which partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis which generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis which significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
	1/30 3% SPS 1/23 4%	2/30 6% SPS 2/23 9%	12/30 40% SPS 10/23 43%	15/30 50% SPS 10/23 43%
Central Message	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)
		3/30 10% SPS 2/23 9%	13/30 43% SPS 10/23 43%	14/30 47% SPS 11/23 48%

Most students scored on Developed and Highly Developed levels. Nevertheless, some student scored in Initial and Emerging categories. This suggests that providing further opportunities for development of oral communication might be helpful to students. and results of both groups are quite similar.

Comparison of traditional and professional studies student performance suggests that results of both groups are quite similar. Thus, assessment of all three Student Learning Outcomes considered in this report (Writing for Psychology, Integration of Faith and Learning, and oral Communication) indicate that Psychology students in both traditional and professional studies formats perform on similar, generally satisfactory and above levels. Collection of data from Capstones/400 level courses should be the next step in verifying this conclusion.