



COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Cultural Psychology

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Overview of Learning Outcomes

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

Relevant Local and National Learning Outcomes

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

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

Importantly, the American Psychological Association (APA, 2013) learning outcomes maintain a sociocultural focus throughout the entire listing of program outcomes. Nonetheless, the following outcomes are particularly relevant to this particular course. Students completing this course should be able to:

- Incorporate sociocultural factors into scientific inquiry (APA Outcome 2.5) – This includes several subordinate outcomes that involve identifying how cultural factors can influence psychological theory and research.
- Adopt values that build community at local, national, and global levels (APA Outcome 3.3) – This includes several subordinate outcomes that involve understanding the importance and functioning of diversity.

The University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point (2017) specifies three learning outcomes that are particularly relevant to all U.S. Diversity courses (which includes this course). Students completing this course should be able to:

- Describe how people or institutions in the United States have constructed diverse identities and cultures based on ability, ethnicity, gender, language, nationality, race, religion, sexuality, socio-economic status, etc. (UWSP GEP USD Outcome 1)
- Explain how individuals or groups in the United States have responded to the experience of discrimination and inequality. (UWSP GEP USD Outcome 2)
- Demonstrate understanding of and empathetic insight about diverse cultural perspectives in the United States. (UWSP GEP USD Outcome 3)

Specific Learning Outcomes for My Course

I have outlined specific learning outcomes that are designed to encompass and combine the UWSP and APA learning outcomes described above. I believe that by fulfilling these learning outcomes, students will meet the spirit of both the UWSP and APA outcomes. Specifically, students completing this course will:

- Explain the key psychological mechanisms that create cultural groups and identities along with the psychological processes that result from those groups and identities.
- Describe applications of cultural psychology to personal and societal issues including (but not limited to) prejudice, discrimination, inequality, and acculturation.
- Examine the role that cultural factors play in the creation, implementation, and interpretation of empirical psychological research.
- Demonstrate understanding of and empathetic insight about diverse cultural groups at the local, national, and global levels.
- Demonstrate effective scientific writing that communicates the understanding, application, and interpretation of cultural psychology principles and research.

How the Learning Outcomes are Addressed and Assessed in My Course

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

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

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

References

- American Psychological Association. (2013). *APA guidelines for the undergraduate psychology major (Version 2.0)*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from [www http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.aspx](http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.aspx)
- Fink, D.L. (2003). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. (2017). *GEP learning outcomes*. Retrieved from [http://www.uwsp.edu/acadaff/GEP/ GEP_Category_Learning_Outcomes.docx](http://www.uwsp.edu/acadaff/GEP/GEP_Category_Learning_Outcomes.docx)
- Wendorf, C. A. (2017). *Grading rubric and explanation: For all of my courses*. Retrieved from <https://cwendorf.github.io/teaching/Wendorf-GradingRubricExplanation.pdf>

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

| Learning Outcomes What specific learning outcome is explicitly addressed in this learning experience? | Course/Unit/Experience Design What do students specifically do to address the learning outcome during this learning experience? | Assessment Context What is the assessment method and its context/setting for this learning experience? | Formal Feedback What formal feedback do students receive about their representation of learning in this experience? |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Explain the key psychological mechanisms that create cultural groups and identities along with the psychological processes that result from those groups and identities. | In-class lectures, discussions, and small group exercises emphasize the use and application of relevant principles. Course materials focus on the explanation of the key principles. | In-class multiple-choice and essay exam questions assess the extent to which students accurately use these concepts. | For the written portions, students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the student work. |
| Describe applications of cultural psychology to personal and societal issues including (but not limited to) prejudice, discrimination, inequality, and acculturation. | Students participate in class discussions and complete out-of-class exercises targeted at applying the relevant principles. They typically create their own examples that demonstrate applicability. | In-class essay exams explicitly require students to provide relevant everyday examples. In-class multiple choice exam questions require students to examine the application of everyday examples. | For the written portions, students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the student work. |
| Examine the role that cultural factors play in the creation, implementation, and interpretation of empirical psychological research. | Course materials, along with in-class lectures and discussions, highlight relevant empirical studies and describe their applicability. | In-class essay exams explicitly require students to provide empirical evidence for major conceptual claims. In-class multiple choice exam questions require students to examine the application of empirical evidence. | For the written portions, students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the student work. |
| Demonstrate understanding of and empathetic insight about diverse cultural groups at the local, national, and global levels. | Course materials and all in-class elements use many cultural groups examples to emphasize the key principles of the course. | In-class exams – both the essay and multiple choice sections – require students to use cultural examples to highlight the connections to knowledge and applications aspects. | For the written portions, students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the student work. |
| Demonstrate effective scientific writing that communicates the understanding, application, and interpretation of cultural psychology principles and research. | Out-of-class activities provide ample opportunities to address the concerns above and do write about them using effective writing. | Both the in-class essays and the out-of-class activities serve as assessments of the ability to use effective scientific writing. | For the written portions, students receive a rubric that shows their level of performance on this objective. Written comments are also made on the student work. |