Psychology Program
Student Learning Outcomes

© 2019, University of North Alabama, Montana State University, and University of St Andrews

FACILITATORS:

Bliss Adkison
Academic Affairs
University of North Alabama

Janyce B. Fadden
College of Business
University of North Alabama

Purpose: The purpose of this case study was to identify the student's pathway through the learning outcomes for the program, identify changes that needed to be made to the learning outcomes, modify those outcomes, and provide a successful demonstration of continuous improvement to program learning outcomes and the assessment of those learning outcomes by using Rapid Improvement with Leantools.

Design/methodology/approach: This case study used Rapid Improvement with LeanTools in order to facilitate a faculty led conversation that resulted in positive change and improvement in assessment of the program's learning outcomes. Faculty were asked to meet for four hours during the month of August in 2019 in order to discuss institutional effectiveness within their department and the assessment of their student learning outcomes. Faculty within the department were asked to list their student learning outcomes, complete a BOSCARD, map the current state of their program, complete a cause and effect diagram, map an ideal state, and then create an action item list. Rapid Improvement with Leantools enabled faculty to thoroughly see how a student flows through the program's courses and the advancement of content throughout the program. This approach allowed for the accurate assessment of where specific content was being taught to the student and how learning outcomes were being measured within the program content.

Findings:

The following findings that are within control of the department were found during the exercise using Rapid Improvement with LeanTools:

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Student learning outcomes are not in alignment with goals of the department
2. Student
3. Student learning outcomes did not reflect current goals of the department nor workforce readiness initiatives
4. Student learning outcome content is mainly covered in elective courses-instead of core courses
5. Measurement of student learning outcomes were not used for effective change in curriculum on a consistent basis
6. The tool for measuring assessment of student learning outcomes is not sufficient, nor does it yield data that is usable for the demonstration of continuous improvement
   a. Tool used for measurement of all student learning outcomes was the Major Field Test (MFT)-a test that is not required in the course nor as a part of the program.
   b. No benchmark data for improvement
   c. Timeframe of assessment does not allow for adequate change and tracking of improvement to the student
7. Student learning outcomes should be re-evaluated

Measures that are Causing Unsuccessful Outcomes

1. No data is collected regarding job demand and needs in order to modify program
2. There is no "closing of the loop" in regards to assessment and modifications to the program being reassessed for effectiveness

Causes concerning People that Contribute to Unsuccessful Outcomes

1. Lack of Graduate Student Assistant
2. Faculty development is needed in regards to pedagogies and assessment

Methods that are Causing Unsuccessful Outcomes

1. There is limited career focus in classes
2. Research is introduced in a nonmethodical way
3. There are significant time constraints within PY 465W and PY 375
4. Need for increased scientific writing and communication skills training for students
5. Need for increased internships with local organizations
6. Need for experience in implementing interventions for students
7. Lack of seminar courses
8. Need for distributed practice training
9. Need for a systematic way of advising
10. Increased need for tracking student research experience with data management system

Tools that are causing Unsuccessful Outcomes

1. Lack of organization of research times and resources

Research-No credit hour yield

1. Research is a vital component of the student's successfulness to advance to graduate programs. Faculty were engaging in research with students, which took up significant time and resources, but were not being adequately compensated nor were sufficient credit hours being produced to reflect the hours spent. During the Lean session, faculty were able to solve this issue and create a credit hour baring research lab sequence that would allow them to document the students research journey throughout the program, while also providing additional credit hours. In order to compensate for the load of faculty, sections of PY 201 were combined in order to open up room for a 4th course as the research lab. Tracks for the research sequence will be created in order to cover specific research topics and objectives.

Rapid Improvement with Lean Tools Event

The above presented to the reader the purpose, method, and findings in correlation with the Department of Psychology's Rapid Improvement with Lean Tools Event. A variety of tools were used during the event in order to facilitate the faculty lead discussion of improvement within their program learning outcomes. These tools included:

1. A BOSCARD
2. Listing of Student Learning Outcomes
3. Listing of Courses within the program
4. A Current State Map of the Student's Journey through the Program
    a. Identification of the sequence of courses
    b. Identification of student learning outcome assessments
    c. Identification of where each learning outcomes is taught and in which course it is taught
5. Idea Cards
6. A Cause and Effect Diagram
7. A Future State Map
8. An action list

Each of the tools above will be thoroughly explained in the outline of events below.

Event:

The Department of Psychology's faculty gathered in a mutual meeting space (Library) in order to conduct the Rapid Improvement Event. The event was facilitated by Janyce Fadden and Bliss Adkison. The faculty understood that they were participating voluntarily in a case study in order to demonstrate how Rapid Improvement with Lean Tools could contribute to Institutional Effectiveness at UNA.

The Department of Psychology had recently experienced a change in leadership-appointment of a new department chair. This department chair expressed a need for the reevaluation of the program's student learning outcomes and thus, this event was scheduled. The goal of the department was to evaluate their student learning outcomes, the assessment of those outcomes, and how the results are used for continuous improvement. According to those in the department, the student learning outcomes had not been evaluated by the faculty as a whole in some time.

The event began with the development of the BOSCARD. The BOSCARD is a tool that promotes conversation centered around the following topics concerning the department of Psychology's learning outcome assessment:

B-Background
O-Objective
S-Scope
C-Constraints
A-Assumptions
R-Risks
D-Deliverables

Faculty identified the following for each topic listed above:

Background	- Accreditation - SLOs based on Subject - Multiple courses in each SLO - Course content based exclusively as written - Not developed by participants 13 years ago learning outcomes were developed - Not reviewed by department - Courses not mapped to Los - Never looked at student progress through program - Student referred that are struggling in first picked major - University misconception of program
Objective	- Update both IE process and SLOs - Tying updates to Department Goals - Align SLOs goals to strategic plan - Tie to strengths and weaknesses of faculty and program - Tie to faculty growth - Increase student value of flow through program - Career ready student
Scope	- Begins with student declaring major - Ends with student graduating from major
Constraints	# of faculty - Budget

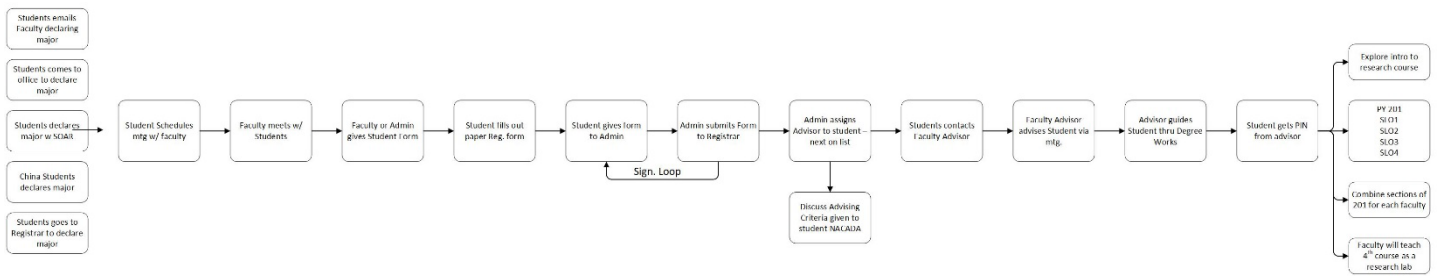|	
	• Scattered • SACSCOC Standards
Assumptions	• ABA certificate program standards • APA Standards
Risks	• Declined Enrollment • Stagnation • Fewer Resources • Students are subpar
Deliverables	• Current State Map • Action Plan • Complete Annual Reports • Determination of next meeting

The faculty were then asked to list the program learning outcomes that they currently have:

1. Knowledge and Comprehension subject material in areas of:
   a. Learning and Cognition
   b. Sensory Processes
      Perceptive Psychologies
      Physiological Psychologies
      Comparative Psychologies
      Evaluating Psychologies
   c. Clinical, abnormal, personality
   d. Life-span development and social psychology

After listing the student learning outcomes of the program, the faculty were asked to list the courses required for the program and also any electives. The following list was created:

- PY 201
- PY 222
- PY 321
- PY 361 (BI 101, 111, 201)
- PY 375 (222, MA 147, 201)
- PY 465W (375, 201)
- Electives 6 hours at 300-400 level
- PY 000-Exit Exam

Faculty then created a current state map of how the student flows through the program. While advising information is included in this map, for the purpose of our scope, faculty focused on the student's progression through the course work to graduation. The maps below are the result of the current state mapping:

Students emails Faculty declaring major

Students comes to office to declare major

Students declares major w SOAR

China Students declares major

Students goes to Registrar to declare major

Student Schedules mtg w/ faculty → Faculty meets w/ Students → Faculty or Admin gives Student Form → Student fills out paper Reg. form → Student gives form to Admin → Admin submits Form to Registrar → Admin assigns Advisor to student – next on list → Students contacts Faculty Advisor → Faculty Advisor advises Student via mtg. → Advisor guides Student thru Degree Works → Student gets PIN from advisor

Sign. Loop

Discuss Advising Criteria given to student NACADA

Explore Intro to research course

PY 201
SLO1
SLO2
SLO3
SLO4

Combine sections of 201 for each faculty

Faculty will teach 4th course as a research lab

Faculty members created over 15 idea cards during the mapping which are statements about ways the process could be improved. These ideas were categorized and kept for consideration during the creation of the future state map and the action item list.

Eliminate PIN and use click on Degree Works

Online Form for declaring major

Talk to Registrar about paper major form

Online Form for INTEREST IN PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR/MINOR

Give declaring Student info on career/student orgs

Add required Course on Career preparation

Make indoctrination easier w/ beginning of year/ semester meeting

Create a uniform process for declaring major. One advisor

Once person is interested they meet w/ one advisor

Create Cohorts

Include Research in Flow

Include APA in Flow

Add career focused courses or activities

The faculty then evaluated the current state and their idea cards. The faculty were then asked to participate in completed a cause and effect diagram. This diagram was used in order to facilitate a conversation and bring awareness to what causes student learning outcomes assessment to be unsuccessful. The faculty identified many of the concerns that were mentioned above in the "Findings" section of this report.
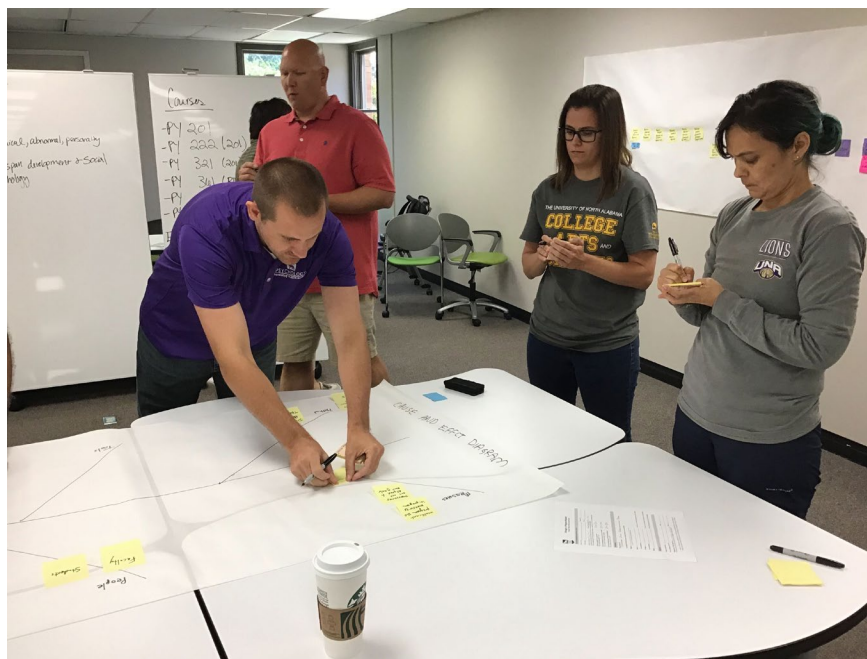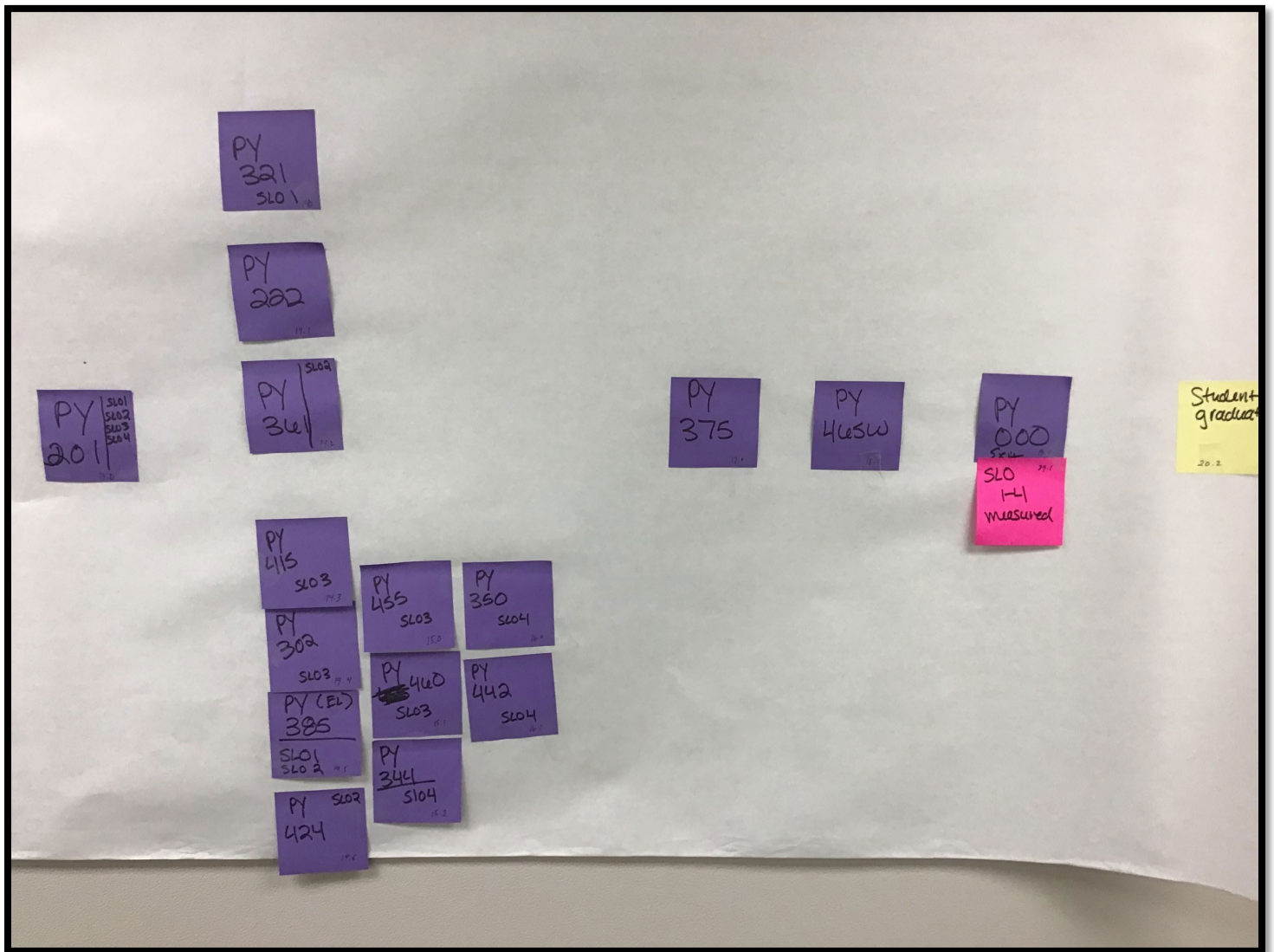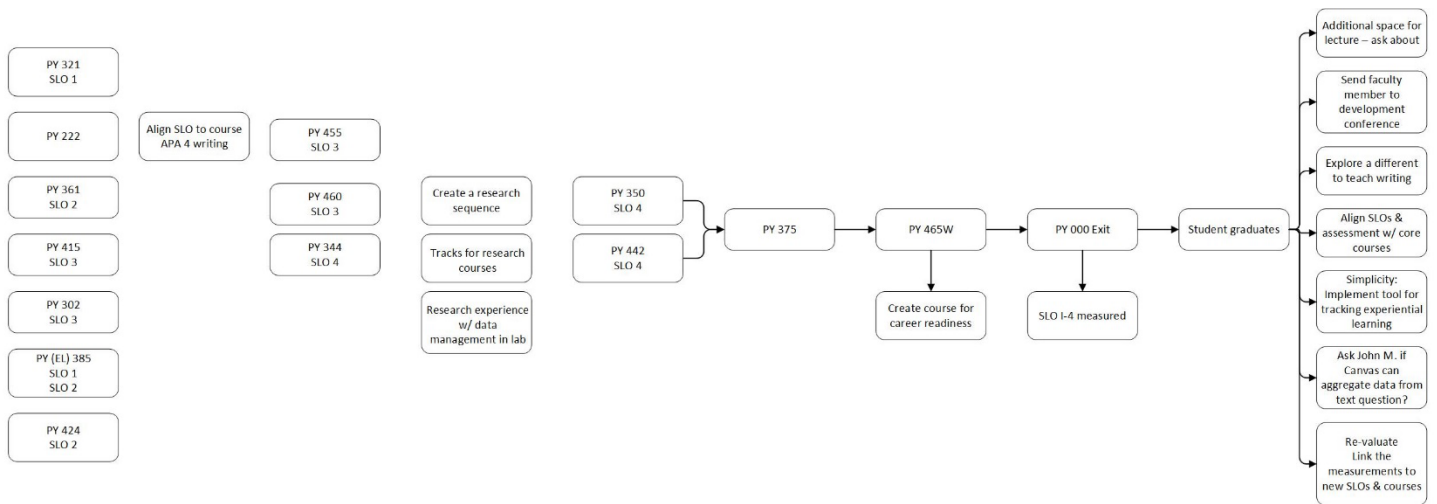

Faculty were asked to review the cause and effect diagram after completion. Faculty identified the causes that were within their control to change and also those that were not within their control to alter. For example, one cause that was identified regarding methods that cause unsuccessful learning outcome assessment was the fact that research was introduced in a nonmethodical way. Faculty felt that they had control over changing this cause and could do so by creating a research method track within their proposed research methods lab course.

After the development and conversation shifted from the cause and effect diagram, the faculty were led to construct a future state map and also create action items that they could take immediately to improve student learning outcome assessment. The following diagram demonstrates some of the changes that were identified.

PY 321
SLO 1

PY 222

Align SLO to course APA 4 writing

PY 455
SLO 3

PY 361
SLO 2

PY 460
SLO 3

Create a research sequence

PY 350
SLO 4

PY 350
SLO 4

PY 375

PY 465W

PY 000 Exit

Student graduates

PY 415
SLO 3

PY 344
SLO 4

Tracks for research courses

PY 442
SLO 4

PY 302
SLO 3

Research experience w/ data management in lab

Create course for career readiness

SLO I-4 measured

PY (EL) 385
SLO 1
SLO 2

PY 424
SLO 2

Additional space for lecture – ask about

Send faculty member to development conference

Explore a different to teach writing

Align SLOs & assessment w/ core courses

Simplicity: Implement tool for tracking experiential learning

Ask John M. if Canvas can aggregate data from text question?

Re-valuate Link the measurements to new SLOs & courses

As a result of this conversation, the faculty produced the following action item list, which would begin implementation immediately. These changes can also be incorporated into the department's annual report; thus, creating evidence of continuous improvement for the program. Changes made should be reevaluated each cycle to complete the loop of assessment.

Action Item	Status
Re-evaluate Program Learning Outcomes	
Link the New Learning Outcomes to the course in which the content is being taught	
Discuss advising criteria given to students-NACADA	
Combine sections of 201 for each faculty. Faculty will teach 4th course as a research lab	
Create research lab sequence for content	
Align new SLO to PY 222 course APA #4	
Create tracks for research sequence courses. Research experience with data management in lab	
Create course for career readiness	
Send faculty members to development conference	
Explore a different way to teach writing	
Align SLOs and assessment with core courses	
Explore Simplicity implementation to track research and experiential learning	
Ask John McGee about if Canvas can aggregate data from test questions	

Results and Analysis: The results of this case study yielded numerous action items and positive changes to the program. Learning outcomes will be updated and measurements will be re-evaluated in order to ensure compliant assessment of learning outcomes. The program will be able to identify specific learning outcomes that need improvement and also pinpoint exactly where those learning outcomes are addressed within the students' progress through the program. Where program learning outcomes have been outdated and measurements have not been addressed in the past, positive and aggressive movement is underway to implement relevant learning outcomes. The use of these tools created a positive conversation around change and growth in the program. Also, these tools created a safe space for conversation and brainstorming that facilitated change within the program as well.
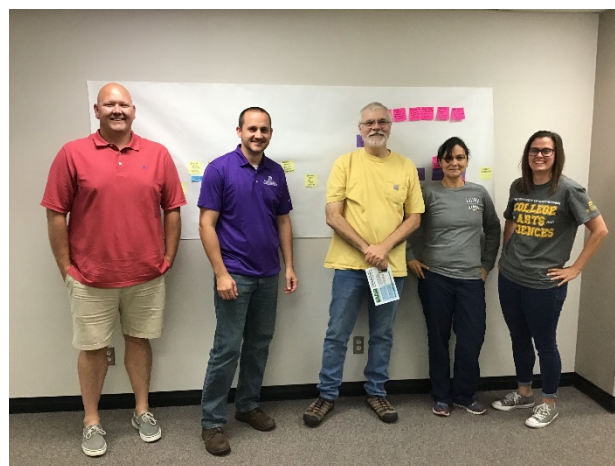
Practical implications: This department will be able to demonstrate compliance with the Institutional Effectiveness standard 8.2 in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges by reporting the assessment results and changes for continuous improvement within their annual report.

Participants: Dr. Ryan Zayac, Dr. Larry Bates, Dr. Karly Cochran, Dr. Christopher Klein, Dr. Gabriela Carrasco, Ms. Joy Kelly

Facilitators: Janyce Fadden; Bliss Adkison;