



## RELEVANT LEARNING OUTCOMES For My Statistics for Psychologists Course



**Abstract:** This document outlines the relevant American Psychological Association learning outcomes for my statistics course. Along with the learning outcomes, this document briefly identifies where in the course these outcomes are taught or addressed, how they are directly assessed, and how students receive feedback about their achievement. Students are strongly encouraged to examine these outcomes.

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### Overview of Learning Outcomes

#### Learning Outcomes for My Statistics Course

In 2007, the American Psychological Association (APA) officially published a list of student learning outcomes for all psychology curricula. These guidelines are useful in that they identify a common set of potential goals for instructors to use in their teaching. These learning outcomes are important because they provide an essential set of building blocks for both curriculum and assessment.

APA recommends that instructors identify a set of objectives for each course and assess the extent to which students meet these objectives. Thus, I have chosen the following set of learning outcomes for my Statistics for Psychologists course. Students completing this course should be able to effectively:

- Explain different research methods used by psychologists. (APA Objective 2.2)
- Evaluate the appropriateness of conclusions derived from psychological research. (APA Objective 2.3)
- Use appropriate software to produce understandable reports of statistical analyses in APA style. (APA Objective 6.2)
- Demonstrate effective writing skills in various formats and for various purposes. (APA Objective 7.1)

#### ***How the Learning Outcomes are Addressed in My Courses***

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, 2007).

In Table 1 (whose format is adapted from Fink, 2003), I have outlined how my statistics course is designed around these learning outcomes. The table briefly describes the learning experiences and assessment techniques that are directly relevant to each outcome. In general, I encourage all of my students to be familiar with this information because it explains why and how the various portions of the course are important.

### References

- American Psychological Association. (2007). *APA guidelines for the undergraduate psychology major*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved July 7, 2008 from [www.apa.org/ed/resources.html](http://www.apa.org/ed/resources.html)
- Fink, D.L. (2003). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Wendorf, C. A. (2007). *The grading rubric explanation for all of my courses*. Available for download at [http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/cw/portfolio/Wendorf\\_GradingRubricExplanation.pdf](http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/cw/portfolio/Wendorf_GradingRubricExplanation.pdf)

**Table 1: Explicit and Assessed Learning Outcomes for PSYC 300 (Statistics for Psychologists)**

<b>Learning Outcomes</b> What specific learning outcome is explicitly addressed in this learning experience?	<b>Course/Unit/Experience Design</b> What do students specifically do to address the learning outcome during this learning experience?	<b>Assessment Context</b> What is the assessment method and its context/setting for this learning experience?	<b>Formal Feedback</b> What formal feedback do students receive about their representation of learning in this experience?
2.2: Explain different research methods used by psychologists.	As preparation for each type of statistical analysis, students work on in-class worksheets and homework assignments that address elements of research design.	Both homework assignments and in-class exams test students' knowledge of research terms and concepts.	Homework and exams are quickly graded (and relevant comments are made) and returned the next day. For each exam, students are required to re-do the entire exam, incorporating explanations.
2.3: Evaluate the appropriateness of conclusions derived from psychological research.	This is essentially a statistics learning outcome. Students work on in-class worksheets and homework assignments that require them to calculate and interpret basic statistics.	Both homework assignments and in-class exams test students' ability to calculate and interpret basic statistics.	Homework and exams are quickly graded (and relevant comments are made) and returned the next day. For each exam, students are required to re-do the entire exam, incorporating explanations.
6.2: Use appropriate software to produce understandable reports of statistical analyses in APA style.	For all homework assignments, students calculate an "answer key" in SPSS. They must describe their results in APA style.	In addition to the graded homework assignments, in-class exams require students to view SPSS output and draw relevant conclusions.	Homework and exams are quickly graded (and relevant comments are made) and returned the next day. For each exam, students are required to re-do the entire exam, incorporating explanations.
7.1: Demonstrate effective writing skills in various formats and for various purposes	In addition to describing results in APA style, students answer conceptual essay questions on weekly homework assignments.	In addition to the graded homework assignments, in-class exams also test students' ability to describe results in APA style and to describe conceptual interpretations.	Homework and exams are quickly graded (and relevant comments are made) and returned the next day. For each exam, students are required to re-do the entire exam, incorporating explanations.