DIRECT STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

- STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY A HYPOTHESIS FROM A RESEARCH QUESTION (ABSTRACT).
- STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLE(S) IMPLICIT IN THE HYPOTHESIS #1.
- STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO ANSWER: WHAT WOULD YOU EXPECT TO SEE IF THE HYPOTHESIS WAS SUPPORTED?

COMPONENTS OF THE OUTCOME:

- HYPOTHESIS
- INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLE
- EXPECTED OUTCOMES

ASSESSMENT DATA:

When did the assessment take place?

Assessment was completed in April 2011 (Spring 2011) in two sections of online Introduction to Research Methods and one section of campus-based Introduction to Research Methods course.
**How many students participated in the assessment process?**

The Department decided to stay with last year’s process for one more round of measurement to get a larger data set. Next year we intend to deliver the assessment in our Senior Seminar class and then compare results.

Eighty two (82) students participated in the assessment process by completing the class assignment in three sections of Introduction to Research Methods classes. One section of campus-based and two sections of online research courses were included in this assessment.

**Please report student performance scores:**

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Not Evident</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
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**What percentage of students obtained the desired level of performance?**

While our goal is that every student meet at least “Competent” levels, we have determined that a 75% Competent level or above indicates the program has been effective in bringing about the desired outcome.

Mastery: all information provided is correct.

Competent: 75% of all information provided is correct.

Emerging: 60% of all information provided is correct.

Not Evident: less than 60% of all information provided is correct.

**Student Scores:**

The highest percentage of student performance occurred for question 1 in which 64 out of 82 (78%) performed at the competent level or better.

The lowest percentage of student performance occurred for question 3 in which 45 out of 82 (54.8%) performed at the competent level or better.

For question 2, the percentage was 67% (55 out of 82).

For question 4, the percentage was 62% (51 out of 82).

**Does the percentage of students who obtained the desired level of performance meet the program’s stated benchmark?**

With students performing at a 75% competent level or better only on question 1, we have to say that students are not meeting the desired level of performance established in our departmental benchmark. This outcome created discussion among the faculty about how to help students master these analytical skills. We believe that this will create other learning opportunities in other classes so that students have another chance to learn these skills.
**INTERPRETATION:**

*Discuss how the data provides evidence that the desired level of performance on the stated learning outcome is or is not being achieved by students.*

The Assessment Questions moves students beyond a mere regurgitation of course material into an application-based exercise. The questions used in this assessment process tell us that we are not yet achieving our goal. We need to spend more time practicing these application-based exercises with our students in our Introduction to Research Methods classes, but also our other upper division criminal justice courses. In discussion with other faculty, it is clear that these are important skills that students should have so that they can better understand the research literature they are bound to encounter in other upper division criminal justice courses.

The weakest area of performance was in the third learning outcome: “identify the dependent variable in the hypothesis.” In last year’s assessment the weakest area of performance was in the last learning outcome: “write about expectations if hypothesis was supported.” There was a definite deficit in the student’s ability to articulate expected outcomes. They have improved their performance in indentifying the hypothesis in this year’s assessment but we have acknowledged our limitation in this part of teaching and will make every effort to build more application oriented exercises into our classes. Assessment findings indicate a need for increased learning of dependent variables and the intended outcome.

Also, we have realized that students would perform much better in this assessment if our instructions and questions were more clearly articulated.

*Discuss how the data provides meaningful information/evidence to the program that can be used in decision-making and structuring of future learning opportunities.*

Data provides meaningful information and there is always a room for improvement in our teaching style and pedagogy. Discussion among faculty will take place this semester and we will develop ways to offer students more opportunities to practice the skills they need when reviewing research literature.

**FACULTY DISCUSSION & IMPACT:**

*When did your faculty have a discussion about the results of your assessment?*

The 2011 assessment results have been discussed with some faculty who have implemented additional exercises in their courses to improve the students’ learning of hypotheses and variables. In our next meeting, November 2011, the faculty will discuss the needs for improvement and repetition of similar assessment in our senior level criminal justice course. The previous time the undergraduate committee met was in April to discuss the 2010 assessment.

*What issues did your faculty discuss in relation to the results of your assessment?*

One of the faculty members, Dr. Joan Crowley, has implemented the article review assignment in her course this year and we are planning to discuss about the results in our next undergraduate committee meeting. The following issues will be discussed at our meeting: needs for improvement, repeating similar assessment in our senior level criminal justice course next year and see if there are signs of improvement or decrease in student's learning.

*Did the data you collected really answer the question you had about the intended outcome? If not, why?*

We believe that this assessment really did address the question we had about the intended outcomes. By repeating the same exercise it is difficult to say that the one measure we used is the only one that matters, or the most important. Questions 1, 2, and 3, were particularly focused on explicitly addressing the intended outcome. While results were similar to last year’s assessment and not the at the level we hoped, it did give us a clear indication of what needs to improve in our classes when dealing with learning about hypotheses and their various components. By assessing the same learning outcomes in our senior classes we believe to get a better understanding of students' learning.
IF data indicates a need for increased learning of the intended outcome, what steps will be taken by the program to foster increased learning of the outcome?

Our introduction to research methods course is offering multiple opportunities to foster increased learning of the outcomes and we will work with other faculty who will offer more opportunities to students to read and interpret research.

If interventions are implemented, when will you reassess these outcomes to determine whether or not interventions were affective?

This still needs to be discussed with the faculty. Preliminary discussions with our department head have focused on moving the assessment to the senior seminar course that all students must take in their senior year.

IF data indicates students are achieving the desired performance level on the intended outcome, is there anything that faculty in the program learned about the intended outcome? Will any changes be made?

Our intent is to monitor student’s learning longitudinally. The faculty will spend time discussing these results in detail and the assessment tool to see if the match with our curriculum is optimal. We think that this skill is important enough for us to continue to emphasize its teaching. As more faculty include it in their classes, we can look to the senior seminar class as a better measure that our students are learning. Once we see that the outcome is positive, then we can focus on assessing a different component.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS:

How effective was your assessment process?

It gave us a closer look at how our students are grasping a very important skill: reading academic research.

How will what you found this year affect what you do in assessment next year?

The Department Undergraduate Curriculum Committee will discuss new ways to incorporate research concepts into all criminal justice courses.

How have your assessment findings been communicated to the students in your program?

Findings have been discussed in our classes. All findings will be shared in aggregate form through our departmental website.

Are your assessment Phase Reports or another form of reporting on your assessment activities available to your constituents? How?

We will be discussing this issue with our subcommittee, our department colleagues, and our department head during this academic year.

If on the internet, please provide website:

All findings will be shared in aggregate form through our departmental website: http://www.nmsu.edu/~crimjust/ug-academic-program-asse.html

BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR REPORT - Please attach copies of any/each rubric to be used.