

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan
HES – B.S. in Human Development and Family Sciences
June 2018

1. **Contact Name: Timothy S. Killian, Ph.D.**
Assistant Director
School of Human Environmental Sciences
Associate Professor
Human Development and Family Sciences
University of Arkansas
HOEC 118
Fayetteville, AR 72701
Phone: 479-575-7214
Fax: 479-575-7171

2. **Department Mission:** The mission of the HDFS undergraduate program is to provide educational experiences that (1) provide students with accurate and evidence-based knowledge of the bio-ecological context of human development, (2) develop students' appreciation for the diversity in the lived experiences of individuals and families, (3) give students the cognitive tools to critically evaluate theory and research in HDFS, (4) provide students with a cognitive framework to understand and affect positive change in the lives of individuals, families, and social systems, and (5) develop students' professional skills in regard to writing, making oral presentations, and evaluating social service programs and social contexts.

3. **Program Goals:** HDFS students are expected to
 1. identify and describe accurate and evidence-based knowledge of the bio-ecological context of human development to include being knowledgeable and accepting of the diversity in the lived experiences of individuals and families.
 2. demonstrate the ability to identify and address complex social problems by forming solutions that are contextually appropriate and feasible.
 3. critically analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information, ideas, and beliefs in the process of forming conclusions and solutions to complex social issues and problems.
 4. be proficient in writing, making presentations, and evaluating human service programs and/or social contexts.
 5. demonstrate the application of their evidence-based knowledge of diversity, engaging in effective and appropriate interactions across a range of human development. Their behaviors, attitudes, and interactions demonstrate that they have the cultural competency needed to work effectively cross-culturally.
 6. identify ethical issues and dilemmas, reflect on their own core values, and apply them to complex social problems.

4. **Student Learning Outcome 1:** Students will identify and describe accurate and evidence-based knowledge of the bio-ecological context of human development to include being knowledgeable and accepting of the diversity in the lived experiences of individuals and families.
 - A. **Assessment Measures**
 - a. **Direct Measures:** Student learning will be assessed by the change in scores between a pre-test administered in the freshman level Lifespan Development (HDFS 1403) course and the senior level course Critical Approaches to Research in Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS 4773). These

multiple choice items will span the life course and focus on the main ideas in the field of human development and family sciences.

- B. **Acceptable and Ideal Targets:** It is expected that 30% of students will pass the pretest and 90% will pass the post-test with a 70% grade or better which will be a 200% improvement.
- C. **Key Personnel:** Instructors of HDFS 1403 and HDFS 4773.
- D. **Summary of Findings.**

In Spring 2018, students in Lifespan Development (HDFS 1403) were given the same knowledge assessment as those in Critical Approaches to Research in HDFS II (HDFS 4773). The mean score for students in the lower division course was 48% and the mean score for students in the upper division course was 64%. In the lower division course 7% of students received a grade of 70% or higher. In the upper division course, 40% received a score of 70% or higher.

Course	Mean Score	Percent of Students 70% or Higher
Lifespan Development	48%	7%
Critical Apps to Research	64%	40%

Student Learning Outcome 2: Students will formulate contextually appropriate and feasible policy solutions addressing complex social problems.

A. Assessment Measures

- a. Direct Measures: The *Problem Solving Rubric* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities will be used to assess students' policy proposal project in the senior level course Public Policy Advocacy for Children and Families (HESC 4493). This paper requires students to consider a public policy program and to develop feasible solutions and policies to address that problem.

- B. **Acceptable and Ideal Targets:** It is acceptable that 75% of all students and ideal that 85% or more of all students will score an average of 2.5 or higher on the assessment rubric.

- C. **Key Personnel:** Instructor of HDFS 4493.

D. Summary of Findings

Student Learning Outcome 3: Students will be able to critically analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information, ideas, and beliefs in the process of forming conclusions and solutions to complex social issues and problems.

A. Assessment Measures

- a. Direct Measures: The *Critical Thinking Rubric* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities will be used to assess students' final project in the senior level course Critical Approaches to Research in Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS 4773). The final project requires students to assess data relevant to a question in that field and use those data to draw conclusion about persons and families.

- B. **Acceptable and Ideal Targets:** It is acceptable that 75% of all students and ideal that 85% or more of all students will score an average of 2.5 or higher on the assessment rubric.
- C. **Key Personnel:** Instructor of HDFS 4773.
- D. **Summary of Findings:**

Student Learning Outcome 4: Students will be proficient in (a) oral and (b) written communication.

A. Assessment Measures

- a. Direct Measures: The written portion of the *Oral and Written Communications Rubrics* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities will be used to assess students' Lifecourse Interview Paper in the senior level course Gerontology (HDFS 4443). This paper requires students to interview adults and to compare and contrast the life experiences of those adults with the course content.
- b. Direct Measures: The oral portion of the *Oral and Written Communications Rubrics* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities will be used to assess students' policy presentation in the senior level course Public Policy Advocacy for Children and Families (HESC 4493).

- B. **Acceptable and Ideal Targets:** It is acceptable that 75% of all students score an average of 2.5 or higher and ideal that 85% of students score an average of 2.5 or higher on the rubric.
- C. **Key Personnel:** Instructor of HDFS 4443 and 4493.
- D. **Summary of Findings:**

In the Spring 2016 semester, students' written Lifecourse Interview papers assigned in HESC 4443 (Gerontology) were assessed using the rubric. Seventeen randomly selected papers were assessed with the following outcomes:

	Below 2.5	Above 2.5	% Above 2.5
Rubric Scores	4	13	76.5%

In summary, these results indicated students' performance was acceptable, but less than ideal.

Student Learning Outcome 5: Students demonstrate the application of their evidence-based knowledge of diversity, engaging in effective and appropriate interactions across a range of human development. Their behaviors, attitudes, and interactions demonstrate that they have the cultural competency needed to work effectively cross-culturally.

A. Assessment Measures

- c. Direct Measures: The *Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Rubric* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities will be used to assess students' Family Paper in the senior level course Multicultural Families (HDFS 4473). This paper requires students to examine their own cultural backgrounds and write reflectively about how their backgrounds have shaped their identity and lifecourse.

- B. **Acceptable and Ideal Targets:** It is acceptable that 75% of all students and ideal that 85% or more of all students will score an average of 2.5 or higher on the assessment rubric.

C. **Key Personnel:** Instructor of HDFS 4473.

D. **Summary of Findings:**

In the Fall 2016 semester, students completed Assignment 5 in HDFS 4473 (Multicultural Families). Students' papers were scored on the rubric with the following results.

	Score of 2.5 or Higher	Score Below 2.5
Rubric Scores	97% (N = 30)	3% (N = 1)

5. Recommendations for Assessed Student Outcomes

The assessment of Student Learning Outcome 1 indicated that students knowledge improved dramatically as a result of their HDFS program. At the same time, students' performances on the post-test remained quite low indicating that more can be done to improve students' content knowledge in the field.

The assessment indicated that students' written communication skills were marginally adequate. This indicated that students are learning written skills and, at the same time, the faculty should take steps to increase students' writing competencies. In that regard, the faculty proposes three recommendations. First, the assignment that is assessed needs clearer recommendations for students that emphasize the integration of persons' lifecourse experiences with course content. Second, the faculty should consider whether or not this assignment in the curriculum is the key assignment to be used as an assessment of students' written communication skills. The assessment raised questions about whether or not this assignment is appropriate to address discipline specific writing conventions as required by the rubric. Because students are reporting on interviews with individuals, their use of language might be more informal than ordinarily required by the discipline. Finally, the faculty proposes to inventory students' key writing experiences in the program and determine whether or not students are receiving proper feedback to enhance their development.

6. Overall Recommendations

This schedule for assessing student learning outcomes is below. Overall recommendations include completing the entire assessment in the following academic years. Completing the entire assessment will enable the faculty to examine the program holistically to address gaps in student learning. In addition, as the faculty gain experience in assessment, it is clear that the assessment tools will be refined and gain greater specificity so that they better reflect a quality undergraduate program and an effective measurement of quality.

7. Action Plan

To address students' written communication skills, the assignment will be modified to more clearly explain the requirement of integrating persons' lived experiences with the academic concepts in class. Students will be required to reflect on the lived experiences of interviewees and compare and contrast their lifecourses with the core concepts in the class. The timeline for implementing these changes will be making the changes to the assignment in the weeks before the class begins in the fall. The class syllabus will reflect the changes for the Fall, 2016 semester.

Second, the faculty will again examine the syllabi of course programs to determine whether or not this is the key and appropriate assignment for assessing writing skills within the discipline. The assessment requires students to demonstrate discipline specific usage of language and conventions. However, the assignment requires students to report on individuals' particular life experiences. The faculty will consider the question of whether or not this assignment is able to be used to address discipline specific writing style which is more formalized than the language that students might use when writing interview results.

Also, students' communication skills will be addressed by examining other courses and assignments wherein students write and receive feedback. The faculty will provide input on those assignments so that they are implemented in a way that is likely to improve students' written communication skills. The examination of these assignments will take

place in the Fall semester of 2016 and syllabi suggestions will be offered for courses beginning in the Spring, 2017 semester.

More in-depth analyses of the topics on knowledge assessments given in the Lifespan and Critical Approaches to Research II courses are needed to identify students' gaps in content knowledge. Although the faculty are pleased at student improvements, the faculty are also concerned about the low performance of students in the upper division course.

Student Learning Outcomes Two and Four will be assessed in the following year.

8. Supporting Attachments

NOTES:

Schedule for Assessment

The student learning outcomes will be assessed on a three-year cycle as demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Schedule for Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)	2016/ 2017	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	2021 /22
<i>SLO 1:</i> Identify and describe accurate and evidence-based knowledge of the bio-ecological context of human development to include being knowledgeable and accepting of the diversity in the lived experiences of individuals and families.		X			X	
<i>SLO 2:</i> Demonstrate the ability to identify and address complex social problems by forming solutions that are contextually appropriate and feasible.			X			X
<i>SLO 3:</i> Critically analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information, ideas, and beliefs in the process of forming conclusions and solutions to complex social issues and problems.	X			X		
<i>SLO 4:</i> Be proficient in writing, making presentations, and evaluating human service programs and/or social contexts.			X			X
<i>SLO 5:</i> Demonstrate the application of their evidence-based knowledge of diversity, engaging in effective and appropriate interactions across a range of human development. Their behaviors, attitudes, and interactions demonstrate that they have the cultural competency needed to work effectively cross-culturally.	X			X		