

# Crafton Hills College - Outcomes Assessment Report

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**Course:** PSYCH-100

**Term:** Spring 2012

**Date:** 8/10/12

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## *1. Learning Outcomes Statement*

Students will be able to explain what an experiment is and why an experiment is superior for causal inference.

## *2. Means of Assessment (Measurement Method)*

Students completed an out of class essay which was emailed to the instructor, and graded according to the norms for course assignments (100 points possible). ASSIGNED SLO ESSAY: This was similar to last semester's except that this time students had to come up with a specific example, related to a specific topic, and did not just have to write in generalities about the superiority of experiments over surveys. The topic is whether emotions accumulate if they are not expressed. Select ONE of these emotions: anger, fear, happiness, or sadness (and put that one word as the title of your essay). PARAGRAPH ONE: Describe a population and how you will select your sample. PARAGRAPH TWO: Describe the dependent variable and its operational definition. What are some considerations about validity and reliability? PARAGRAPH THREE: How will you measure or manipulate whether the emotion has been stored? How does this make your research a survey or an experiment? Could there be any spurious correlations with this design?

## *3. Criteria for Success (Benchmark)*

No benchmark exists since there is no external rationale for one. In the absence of a benchmark, we simply want students to score well.

## *4. Summary of Evidence*

ANALYSIS: The assignment was an optional component of the students' grades, and could count up to 10%. Each essay was examined in terms of mastery of concepts and English writing (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation). Each essay was scored on a scale of 100 points possible. 30 STUDENTS COMPLETED GRADABLE ESSAYS compared to 29 last semester. 74 MEDIAN SCORE compared to 82 last semester. This was not significant according to a Mann-Whitney test. 20 MINIMUM SCORE compared to 50 last semester; some students really missed the boat this time. 96 MAXIMUM SCORE compared to 95 last time. Students who did well on this SLO essay tended to be the same ones who did well on other graded components, quizzes and projects. Therefore, it is doubtful that any new insights were provided by the SLO exercise. Indeed, this exercise provided less valuable feedback than classroom discussion which took place right after specific lessons.

*5. Use of Results (Implications for Program Improvement & Planning)*

Perhaps the most valuable use of these data would be that they strengthen the case for requiring (as pre-requisites, not merely as recommendations) both English and math. The students who did poorly on these essays lacked the grammatical skills to express themselves clearly in writing. They were also the same students who stumbled in class when discussing decimal numbers.