

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program: **MA Leadership and Organizational**

Department:

Development, Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Organizational Development, Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Organizational Leadership, Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Ethical, Evidence-Based Decision Making

Degree or Certificate Level: **Master of Arts, Post-Baccalaureate Certificate**

College/School: **School for Professional Studies**

Date (Month/Year): **May 2020**

Primary Assessment Contact: **Steven Winton PhD**

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? **2019**

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? **2018**

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

The MA LOD program has the following set of learning outcomes (LO's):

- LO1: Graduates will be able to apply program-specific knowledge to address practical problems using an ethical, evidence-based framework.
- LO2: Graduates will be able to utilize argumentation skills appropriate for a given problem or context.
- LO3: Graduates will be able to apply organizational development theory in intervention design.
- LO4: Graduates will be able to apply leadership competencies appropriate for a given situation or context.

LO1 and LO2 are associated with the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Evidence-Based Decision Making (PBC EBDM), LO3 is associated with the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Organizational Development(PBC OD), and LO4 is associated with the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Organizational Leadership (PBC OL). Additionally, the program instituted an assessment process whereby we analyze/review the data for all four LO's each year. We select one or two LO's to focus our efforts. This year we directed our attention on LO3.

2. Assessment Methods: Student Artifacts

Which student artifacts were used to determine if students achieved this outcome? Please identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

Our new assessment protocol integrates data from three sources to evaluate student learning:

1. Instructors complete a formative assessment through a survey at the end of each course. Through the survey, instructors are asked to describe specific artifacts that are related to each LO that is mapped to that course. Instructors then assess competency in this area, as well as potential opportunities for improvement. It is important to note that this process is meant to gather data that is independent of grades given.
2. Faculty mentors complete a summative assessment on each student at the conclusion of their capstone. Mentor's assess the student's performance for each of the learning outcomes.

3. A student assessment of learning outcomes is also completed by students at the end of their degree. This indirect measure asks students to rate the extent they learned and developed on each LO. They also indicate what specific competencies they developed and which they feel they need additional development.
**If we have a Madrid student in the program, then they would be fully admitted into the program.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the student artifacts, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

We pulled raw survey data from each of the three surveys administered in Qualtrics. We then tabulated the quantitative data to provide a high-level overview, as well as content analyzed the qualitative data to identify key themes for each LO.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcomes? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

Overall we learned that 85% of our students are satisfied with the quality of the program, 100% feel challenged, and 100% would recommend the program to a friend. Furthermore, 100% of the students feel they developed significantly in each of the four learning outcomes (i.e., rated learning on each LO to a great or moderate extent). A higher percentage of students indicated they learned each of the learning outcomes to a greater extent than the previous year; however, 30% rated learning on LO2 (argumentation skills) at only a moderate level. On the formative survey, instructors rated that only 45% of students demonstrated full achievement of this LO, while on the summative survey instructors noted that 61% of students attained this LO at a high degree of mastery (the highest of all other LOs). Some evidence instructors gave for students who struggled with this LO include: lack of coherence and logic in arguments; poor organization; lack of support/citing their claims.

While 95% of students indicated that they learned a great extent for LO4 (apply leadership competencies), instructors somewhat agreed. On the formative survey, instructors noted that only 52% of students demonstrated full achievement of this LO, although it should be noted that 36% of students partially demonstrated it. Instructors also noted that 15% of students met LO4 at a low degree of mastery in the summative assessment.

The LO rated the lowest among instructors in the summative report was LO3 (OD theory), with 46% of students demonstrating a high degree of mastery and 23% demonstrating a low degree of mastery; whereas the lowest rated LO in the formative assessment was LO1 (utilizing evidence), with 31% demonstrating full achievement and 59% demonstrating partial achievement.

Some evidence instructors gave for students who struggled with these LOs include: LO3-struggle to grasp OD tools and make connections to topics; lack of clarity and application; and LO1-failure to effectively apply course material; lack of logical flow; failure to recognize own biases and fallacious thinking when it came to argument construction.

Please see attached appendix for executive summary of results.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

Overall, the results tell us that students self-report that they are learning a great extent on each LO. Furthermore, students are satisfied with their experiences in the program. Faculty generally agree that students are a majority of students are demonstrating full achievement of LOs, but there are a percentage of students only partially

demonstrating learning or a low degree of learning. Most weaknesses relate to student writing abilities and APA knowledge, applying OD tools, utilizing sources and instructor feedback, and forming logical arguments.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

Each year a complete report is distributed among key faculty and administrators associated with the program for feedback. Recommendations and action items are discussed, shared, and implemented.

B. How specifically have you decided to use findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Student artifacts collected
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of the findings.

We continually work to improve the curriculum. Regarding writing we have:

- Revamped our statistical and research method courses
- Added two new courses around, ORLD 5050 Ethical, Evidence-Based Decision Making and ORLD 5700 Advanced, Evidence-Based Decision Making
- Embedded a graduate certificate in Evidence-Based Decision Making
- SPS purchased the online tutorial platform, SmartThinking. SmartThinking is a resource available to every student, in every class. It gives students immediate access to a qualified writing tutor to improve their writing and argumentation.
- Developing a required orientation/graduate preparation course to be taken prior to enrolling in the first course. This course will have a module on graduate-level writing basics.

Regarding OD we have :

- Added a new course focused specifically on consultation skills: ORLD 5550 Consulting and Facilitation Skills
- Provided more emphasis on an introduction to OD in ORLD 5000 Organizational Dynamics
- Started a separate Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Organizational Development

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

Past analyses of assessment data were used to inform recent curricular changes, some of which were made to directly influence student learning in LO3. Furthermore, based on this data we intend to make additional

changes to improve student learning in each LO.

LO3: Graduates will be able to apply organizational development theory in intervention design.

- Added a new course focused specifically on consultation skills: ORLD 5550 Consulting and Facilitation Skills
- Provided more emphasis on an introduction to OD in ORLD 5000 Organizational Dynamics
- Started a separate Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Organizational Development

We continue to “close the loop” on past assessment work. For example, as noted above, our new course on consulting skills was driven by student and faculty feedback

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

It is difficult to comparatively assess how much these changes are impacting student learning as the changes are recent (e.g., most students finishing their capstone had not taken the class).

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

Formative data suggests, there may be more opportunity to improve upon this LO. One possible improvement is to have students take ORLD 5550 prior to starting MRP 2 (the method portion of their capstone proposal).

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

We take a holistic approach to assessment. The plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the program’s needs. If a given learning outcome indicated areas in need of focused assessment, especially as it relates to one or more courses within the program or a foundational competency, then the schedule may be altered as needed, but this alteration will be temporary rather than permanent. As SPS programs continually evolve to meet changing market needs, this assessment plan is to be considered dynamic and subject to change as the program evolves and new programs are offered.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.

Executive Summary
School for Professional Studies
MA Leadership and Organizational Development Program
Post-Baccalaureate Certificates in OD, OL, and EBDM
Assessment of Learning Outcomes

This report provides insight into the achievement of the four learning outcomes for the Leadership and Organizational Development program at the School for Professional Studies:

1. Graduates will be able to apply program-specific knowledge to address practical problems using an ethical, evidence-based framework.
2. Graduates will be able to utilize argumentation skills appropriate for a given problem or context.
3. Graduates will be able to apply organizational development theory in intervention design.
4. Graduates will be able to apply leadership competencies appropriate for a given situation or context.

Three reports detail information from faculty and student perspectives (See pages 5-8 for more detail).

- The Instructor Summative Assessment includes the percentage of students’ degree of mastery for each learning objective, and also details the strengths and weaknesses students displayed for each outcome from the instructor’s perspective.

- The Instructor Formative Assessment includes identification of a course artifact related to each outcome, strengths and weaknesses in student performance associated with the identified artifact, and suggestions for improving student learning toward the program-level outcome. This report concludes with overall recommendations from faculty for improving student learning in their course and the program overall.
- The Student Assessment includes demographics of students, their ratings of various factors that attracted them to SPS, descriptions of their personal and professional development since joining the program, ratings of competencies that were most useful for their personal and professional goals, and their satisfaction ratings of various program artifacts.

Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

For the Instructor Assessments, some overall conclusions and recommendations for enhancing student learning include:
Overall Conclusions:

- Most weaknesses relate to student writing abilities and APA knowledge, applying OD tools, utilizing sources and instructor feedback, and forming logical arguments.
- Many instructors ask for pre-course training in writing or some sort of writing service, an orientation course, and funding for additional faculty resources.

Recommendations:

- Better align coursework to lay the groundwork for the capstone.
- Provide additional support to implement live sessions or panel discussions.
- Reinforce and practice the use of APA format.
- Better define expectations for course and assignments.
- Find and utilize OD mentors to improve analysis and intervention skills.
- Subscribe SPS to professional research organizations to utilize case studies.
- Implement more case studies and experiential projects to aid in thinking as a scientist-practitioner, balance organizational goals, and assess evidence.
- Bring in more guest speakers or previous students to share lessons learned.
- Emphasize students to incorporate and utilize instructor feedback.

Instructor Summative Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Learning Objective	High degree of mastery (2018, 2019)	Moderate degree of mastery (2018, 2019)	Low degree of mastery (2018, 2019)
<i>Apply organizational development theory in intervention design. (N=13)</i>	41%, 46%	59%, 31%	0, 23%
<i>Apply leadership competencies appropriate for a given situation or context. (N=13)</i>	52%, 54%	48%, 31%	0, 15%
<i>Apply program-specific knowledge to address practical problems using an ethical, evidence-based framework. (N=13)</i>	55%, 54%	30%, 38%	15%, 8%
<i>Utilize argumentation skills appropriate for a given problem or context. (N=13)</i>	58%, 61%	36%, 31%	6%, 8%

Learning Objective: *Apply organizational development theory in intervention design*

Strengths:

- Worked with key stakeholders/leadership (8)
- Students were able to understand and apply the OD approach (3)
- Understood role as consultant (2)

Weaknesses:

- Struggled to see role as consultant (4)
- Struggled to remain neutral and keep biases out of project (2)
- Struggled to get key stakeholders involved (2)

- Encountered obstacles out of one’s control (e.g., turnover, lack of support and mistrust from leadership) (2)

Learning Objective: *Apply leadership competencies appropriate for a given situation or context.*

Strengths:

- Students were competent in applying leadership competencies, consulting competencies, and/or engaging key stakeholders (7)
- Used findings to make recommendations/spark ideas (2)

Weaknesses:

- More tactical than strategic (1); Struggled to see big picture (1)
- Lacked grasp of basic leadership concepts (1)
- Not prepared to navigate internal politics (1)

Learning Objective: *Apply program-specific knowledge to address practical problems using an ethical, evidence-based framework.*

Strengths:

- Utilized focus group with qualitative data analysis (7)
- Developed surveys based on valid measures; ran statistics to analyze data (7)
- Demonstrated mastery in connecting results to recommendations (5)
- Used mixed methods to interpret data and successfully draw conclusions (3)
- Behaved ethically (1)

Weaknesses

- Struggled with analyzing and reporting survey data (4)
- Struggled to connect analysis with recommendations (3)

Learning Objective: *Utilize effective discipline-specific argumentation skills.*

Strengths:

- Presents well (8); Paper was well written (6)
- Accepts feedback (2)

Weaknesses:

- Difficulty organizing/writing the paper or reporting results (5)
- Difficulty building concise argument (3)
- Struggled with format of presentation (2)

Instructor Formative Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Learning Objective	Strengths (% of students who demonstrated <i>full</i> achievement of this outcome)	Weaknesses (% of students who demonstrated <i>partial</i> or <i>no</i> achievement of this outcome)	Ideas for Improvement
<i>Apply organizational development theory in intervention design.</i> (2018: N=143; 2019: N=73)	Demonstrated use of OD tools and concepts; ability to write substantive responses; used logical design and strong application of course materials; (2018: 56%; 2019: 59%).	Failed to grasp OD tools and could not make connections to topic; lack of clarity and application; submissions missing required components; numerous errors; (2018: 29%; 2019: 40% / 2018: 13%; 2019: 1%).	Give students more exposure to basic OD topics; provide more feedback on the proposal and improve the feedback process; emphasize the importance of linking practitioner tools and research.
<i>Apply leadership competencies appropriate for a given situation or context.</i> (2018: N=117; 2019: N=44)	Developed thoughtful, well-supported models; clearly articulated how leadership competencies would be leveraged for the purposes of the needs assessment; applied competencies to	Developed models not well-supported; failed to refer to any actual leadership competencies outside of generic discussions; did not think critically;	Student motivation, focus, and priorities are key; ensure students are demonstrating learning in lead-up assignments to ensure success on final assignment.

	own experiences (2018: 64%; 2019: 52%).	(2018: 21%; 2019: 36% / 2018: 14%; 2019: 11%).	
<i>Apply program-specific knowledge to address practical problems using an ethical, evidence-based framework.</i> (2018: N=118; 2019: 32)	Effective application of course material relating to both ethics and evidence; sound argumentation and logical flow; recognition of some of the possible issues/pitfalls in completing the project; (2018: 50%; 2019: 31%).	Failure to effectively apply course material; lack of logical flow/choppy sections that didn't hang well together; failure to recognize his/her own biases and fallacious thinking when it came to argument construction; (2018: 35%; 2019: 59% / 2018: 14%; 2019: 0%).	Writing continues to pose a challenge for some. Require students to use SmartThinking for one or more assignments.
<i>Utilize argumentation skills appropriate for a given problem or context.</i> (2018: N=260; 2019: 97)	Utilized evidence to support claims and draw conclusions; developed sound arguments with support; well-organized sections; strong APA (2018: 57%; 2019: 45%).	Lack of coherence and logic in arguments; struggled with organization of sections, providing support, and citing their claims; (2018: 29%; 2019: 46% / 2018: 13%; 2019: 8%).	Ask students to directly address how they support their recommendations with evidence; more writing support focused on building an argument and APA; offer a tool for argument mapping; ensure understanding of a literature review.

Student Assessment of Learning Outcomes

To What Extent Students Learned

Learning Objective	To a great extent (2018, 2019)	To a moderate extent (2018, 2019)
<i>Apply organizational development theory in intervention design.</i> (N=20)	73%, 75%	27%, 25%
<i>Apply leadership competencies appropriate for a given situation or context.</i> (N=20)	87%, 95%	13%, 5%
<i>Apply program-specific knowledge to address practical problems using an ethical, evidence-based framework.</i>	86%, 90%	14%, 10%
<i>Utilize argumentation skills appropriate for a given problem or context.</i> (2018: N=260; 2019: 97) (N=20)	59%, 70%	41%, 30%

Student Satisfaction

Factors	Very satisfied (2018, 2019)	Somewhat satisfied (2018, 2019)	Moderately satisfied (2018, 2019)	Not at all satisfied (2018, 2019)
The structure of the program (N=20)	73%, 90%	20%, 5%	67%, 5%	0, 0
The subject matter expertise of instructors (N=20)	90%, 95%	6%, 0	4%, 5%	0, 0
The application of course material to your work (N=20)	79%, 85%	21%, 0	0%, 15%	0, 0
Opportunities for professional development (N=20)	62%, 75%	31%, 5%	7%, 20%	0, 0
Overall sense of community (N=20)	28%, 50%	55%, 10%	17%, 35%	0, 5%
Student-to-student interaction in SPS graduate classes (N=20)	72%, 50%	14%, 0	14%, 45%	0, 5%
Faculty-to-student interaction in SPS graduate classes (N=20)	53%, 65%	40%, 10%	7%, 25%	0, 0
Communication with (i.e. availability and responsiveness of) the Program Director. (N=20)	97%, 90%	0%, 5%	3%, 5%	0, 0
The quality of academic advice from the Program Director. (N=20)	97%, 90%	0%, 5%	3%, 5%	0, 0
Your understanding of Saint Louis University's Jesuit mission (N=20)	68%, 50%	26%, 15%	6%, 35%	0, 0
Rigor of graduate classes at SPS (N=20)	67%, 80%	30%, 0	3%, 20%	0, 0
Overall graduate experience at the School for Professional Studies (N=20)	83.33%, 85%	13.33%, 0	3.33%, 15%	0, 0

Overall quality of graduate education at the School for Professional Studies (N=30)	67%, 85%	30%, 0	3%, 15%	0, 0
	Strongly agree (2018, 2019)	Agree (2018, 2019)	Neither agree nor disagree (2018, 2019)	
My graduate degree from SPS has/will help me advance my career (N=20)	50%, 70%	40%, 30%	10%, 0	
Generally, my graduate courses challenged me (N=19)	40%, 74%	56%, 26%	4%, 0	
I would recommend this program to a friend or colleague (N=20)	70%, 90%	23%, 10%	7%, 0	