What *should* be the aims of UG psychology education?

Jacquelyn Cranney
What should be the aims of UG psychology education?

**Current aims:**

Australia and UK = preparation for professional psychology and research training. Scientist-practitioner model.

USA = liberal arts and sciences education.

Some other countries (South American, Scandinavian) = professional psychology training.
What are some of the issues with our UG education?

- Psychology major (Years 1-3)

- Psychology Honours/Year 4
Psychology Majors

Less than 50% of UG majors go on to further psychology education and training.

What happens to the rest?

What kind of careers do they develop?

What do they think of their education?
Should we care about what happens to this 50+%?

No:
--Liberal arts and sciences education--their choices.
--Many choose to do psych as a second major, so not our concern.

Do we have the data?

http://www.webstockpro.com/Fancy/42-28442757.Teacher-and-students-Photo/
Some data on current psych major students

- 184 from 6 uni’s
- 62% first in family; 16% from minority groups
- 26% Bachelor of Psychology

In one sentence, please indicate why you are studying psychology?
-I find it really interesting and want it to be my career, either in a clinical or research setting.

To date, what is the single most important thing you have learnt in your UG psychology degree?
- How to critically think about any evidence presented to me
- It is hard, competitive and time consuming
- We are all human
- Statistics
Some data on current psych major students

To date, does your experience of the UG psychology degree meet the expectations that you had prior to commencing the degree?

47% = yes
Each subject is so interesting. It's better than I had expected.

17% = no

36% = somewhat
- I thought there would be more practical application throughout the undergraduate course, not just theory.
- Very research focussed. Little real world application taught
- very competitive, no support
Some data on current psych major students

What is your current career goal/aspiration? (n=184)
119 = professional psychologist (mostly clinical, but also forensic, counselling, org, child/educational, health, sports)
19 = research
18 = “unsure”

For non-first-year psych students only: Has this career goal/aspiration changed since first year?
Yes = 49%
- Initially wanted to be a clinical psychologist, changed because it seems unobtainable in regards to grades and workload
- too stupid to get into honours so changed idea
- I now know about a lot more options
Some data on current psych major students

If you are in your 1st, 2nd or 3rd year of psychology, do you intend to undertake a fourth year program in psychology (e.g., honours, postgrad diploma)?

**Yes** = 79%
No = 9%
Don’t know = 13%

IF YES, what do you think the **chances (%)** are that you will get into such a program?

66.00%
Should we care about what happens to this 50+%?

No:
--Liberal arts and sciences education--their choices.
--Many choose to do psych as a second major, so not our concern.

_Do we have the data? Not enough_.

Yes:

b. Emphasis on _employability_ (TEQSA, UK).
c. Ambassadors for _psychology_.
d. Giving psychology away.

One answer to b-d = _Psychological literacy._
What is psychological literacy?

= graduate attributes wrt UG psych education

= adaptive application of psychology to achieve personal and societal goals.

- Domains of application = self & close others; local; global.

= Pragmatic taxonomy wrt to UG education: scientific literacy, employability, global citizenship.

Can provide answer to b-d above (50%: employability, ambassadors, giving psychology away)
How can we change the curriculum to maximise development of psychological literacy?

Explicit development throughout the three years.

**First year** = potential for broad impact:
1. Explicitly introduce the concept
2. Focus on:
   - critical thinking/ *scientific literacy*
   - psychological perspectives on *diversity* (beginnings of global citizenship)
   - primary domain: *self and close others*; but also touch on local (employment settings) and global (global citizenship) domains.
Explicit development throughout the 3 years

Emphasis on *application* of psychological principles to everyday life.

Application = “successful application of psychological knowledge, skills and professional dispositions (graduate attributes) to new problems and in new situations, whether this be in educational, personal, professional or community contexts” (Cranney & some TLaPIG members, 2011, p. 147).

Range of LT&A strategies (*eg Guidelines on Learning that Inform Teaching*). From passive transmission to experiential learning *eg*

- orange bus
- essay on application of motivational theories to self
- service learning/internships/work-integrated learning
- see Cranney et al., 2011: examples for each GA.
Key strategies

Final year **capstone experience**

STP (APAdiv2). **Purpose** of capstone unit:
- integrative experience and demonstration of learning
- preparation for the future (eg job, grad school)
- program and student assessment

**Most common types**: advanced topics seminar, research project, history & systems, practicum

Barriers, solutions eg space in curriculum…

**Suggest**: make a capstone experience an APAC standard.

Helps to meet b, c and d  (50%: employability, ambassadors, giving psychology away)
Key strategies

GA/Psychological literacy portfolio

STP project findings. Different purposes/types:
- Outcome documentation—collection of work over time
- Process portfolio—documents the learning process;; eg student reflection
- Showcase portfolio—summative, best work.

Barriers, solutions eg marking load…

Suggest: Highly recommended guideline to Standard.

Helps to meet b, c and d (50%: employability, ambassadors, giving psychology away)
Additional SPECIFIC knowledge & skills training

Strongly suggested or *core/standard?

-- *Cultural awareness/competence
-- Interpersonal skill training (APEN meetings)
-- Assessment (EuroPsy Tunings)
-- Interviewing skills (EuroPsy Tunings)
-- Test and questionnaire construction (EuroPsy Tunings)

-- *Leadership training.

Issue: need low-cost LT&A resources… share existing!

Will help to make psych majors more competitively employable, better ambassadors for psychology, better give psychology away = psychological literacy
Honours/Year 4

Less than 50% of Year 4 graduates enter PG psychology courses.

What happens to the rest?

What kind of careers do they develop? 4+2?

What do they think of their education?
Some data on current psych major students

If you are intending or already undertaking a Year 4 in psychology, do you intend to undertake postgraduate study (professional and/or research) in psychology?

Yes = 75%
No = 6% \((1/8 = 4+2)\)
Don’t know = 18%

IF YES, what do you think the chances (%) are that you will get into such a program?

59.15%
Honours/Year 4

Why should we care what happens to this 50%?

a. moral obligation to students
b. moral obligation to the public
c. need for more ‘health’ & other professional psychs
   -- most are capable of undertaking PG psych training
e. employability, ambassadors, giving psych away
d. need more leaders in psychological literacy.
Year 4

Suggest more explicit emphasis on:

**Scientist-practitioner model**

1. Research thesis
   APAC Standard: minimum = 33%
   suggested maximum = 67%.

Usual issues?
Human resourcing: Need to *share existing* innovative practice.
Some changes *eg* more student reflection on the process.
Scientist-practitioner model:

(2) Beginning of pre-professional training
Suggested APAC Standard: minimum = 33%

Foundational generic skills across most professional PG psychology training programs.

Begin in Year 4 = actual practice in:
assessment, intervention, and evaluation
(see EuroPsy Tunings)

Issue:
Need low-cost LT&A strategies; share existing practice!
Conclusion and Response:

What should be the aims of UG psychology education?

Psychology Major = psychological literacy
- includes ‘application’ in broad sense: scientific literacy, employability, global citizenship

Year 4/Honours = scientist-practitioner training
- includes ‘application’ wrt research and practice

Mick Hunter (Chair of the Heads of Departments and Schools of Psychology Association): The University Perspective
Iain Montgomery (Chair of the Program Development Advisory Committee): The Accreditation Perspective
Leigh Mellish (professional PG psychology student): The Student/Graduate Perspective
Simon Crowe (President, APS): The Professional Society Perspective

And you!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My UG psychology program prepares me well for a career in professional</td>
<td>3.25 (1.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychology, if that is what I choose to do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My UG psychology program prepares me well for a research career in</td>
<td>3.98 (0.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychology, if that is what I choose to do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My UG psychology program prepares me well for working in a variety of</td>
<td>3.25 (1.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work settings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My UG psychology program prepares me well for working in a multicultural</td>
<td>3.20 (1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>global economy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My UG psychology program prepares me well for having a successful life,</td>
<td>3.42 (1.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both personally and professionally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My UG psychology program includes career development support and advice</td>
<td>3.03 (1.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My UG psychology program includes work experience</td>
<td>1.86 (1.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td>Overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 183/184</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>