



**Annual Assessment Plan  
For Undergraduate & Graduate Degree Programs  
AY 2007-08**

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**Name of Program:** Human Development Program **College:** College of Arts & Sciences

**Prepared by:** Fernando Soriano & Eliza Bigham **Date:** November 4, 2007  
*Department Chair/Program Coordinator*

**Email** [fsoriano@csusm.edu](mailto:fsoriano@csusm.edu) or  
**Address:** [ebigham@csusm.edu](mailto:ebigham@csusm.edu) **Extension:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) **What are the student learning outcomes for your program? If these have been revised over the past year, please describe.**

The Student Learning Outcomes for the Human Development Program are on the attached sheet (Learning Outcomes: Human Development Major). These have not been revised since they were written on 5/10/99, but after a careful review they are considered still current. A curriculum map is attached (Learning Objectives and Performance Standards: Human Development Major).

- 2) **How do you plan to communicate these learning outcomes to students in your program?**

The student learning outcomes are listed in the syllabi for most of the courses. Starting with Spring 2008, instructors will all be asked to tie in their courses to specific learning outcomes. In addition, the Student Learning Outcomes will be posted on the Program website and in the 2008/2010 university catalog along with the description of the Human Development major.

- 3) **Please identify one or two student learning outcomes that your program will focus on for assessment this year. Briefly describe the rationale for selecting these specific outcomes for investigation this year.**

Focus Area: Critical Thinking  
The curriculum of the Human Development Program was originally designed to prepare students for careers in human services and, as such, strive to “prepare undergraduates to succeed in an increasingly diverse cultural, ethnic, economic, and political environment” (HD Program Statement). Critical thinking is integrated into the curriculum to help students gain an understanding of biased, distorted, and uninformed behavior and to foster respect for differences in the context of social services settings. As such, the learning objective of critical thinking is essential to the Program, however, this outcome has not been assessed since the Program’s inception. As the primary focus area for our periodic review, we will focus on critical thinking as it is addressed in two required upper division Human Development courses (HD301 and HD490). While most of the required courses include elements of critical thinking, these two courses were chosen because they are often the first and last, respectively, courses that students take in their upper division curriculum.

**4) What specific assessment activities will you conduct this year in order to measure program student learning in these areas?**

As Human Development is an interdisciplinary program, accounting for the students' outcomes must also be an interdisciplinary task. Our goal of this assessment will be to obtain empirical data to assess the levels of knowledge, attitude, and skills in critical thinking; to assess levels of knowledge, attitude, and skills change as students progress through their upper-division coursework; to assess the similarity in change and progression across students in the different emphasis areas; and to determine which if any components of critical thinking need to be further infused into the curriculum. An assessment measure will be designed to obtain data quantifying the level of knowledge, attitude, and skill of critical thinking. To assess both critical thinking and progressions in change over time and curriculum, students in HD 301—who are typically just beginning to take courses for the major--will serve as the baseline group where their knowledge, attitudes and skills related to critical thinking will be compared to those in taking HD490 the capstone course who by then will have taken most courses for the major. A semi-quantitative assessment measure will include multiple choice, fill in the blank, and essay type items and will be given in all sections of HD301 (3 sections) and HD490 (3 sections). Specifically, the goals of the assessment will be examine pre/post student ability to:

- Apply knowledge of scientific research methods (i.e., design and analysis) to assess the merits of existing basic and applied research in human development
- Describe limits of research findings, understand extent to which they can be generalized, and understand problems related to the confounding of age, cohort, and historical period of measurement in developmental studies
- Design a new investigation of at least one developmental process and/or outcome
- Formulate a research question that can be subjected to empirical evaluation and identify appropriate sampling, measurement, and analysis protocols to investigate a research question
- Apply developmental research findings to problems in applied settings
- Extrapolate from basic and applied research findings to come up with implications and applications of the findings within human services settings.

In addition to the quantitative assessment measure, essays and project papers from HD301, threaded online discussions from HD490, group presentation outlines and handouts from HD490, capstone project papers from HD490, and related coursework may be used to reach these assessment goals.

**5) What new or additional resources/support might your program need in order to conduct these assessment activities this year? (Please provide specific information regarding your needs and related costs)**

Funding will be important to pay for a research assistant who will help with coordination, transcription and analysis of the data. The creation of the assessment of Critical Thinking will be done in concert with the existing Program advisory committee, which is interdisciplinary and includes faculty representatives from the allied disciplines of biology, psychology, anthropology and sociology. Faculty teaching courses contributing to Human Development curriculum will also be queried and invited to participate by providing current syllabi, narratives asking for their assessments on how their courses address the student learning outcomes of the Human Development Program. Interdisciplinary instructors will also be asked

to provide curricular examples that serve as evidence of reaching toward the end of achieving the Program's learning outcomes. For this year's assessment, the faculty will be asked to pay particular attention to the student learning outcomes and to be cognizant of how these outcomes and critical thinking are achieved and reflected within their curriculum. This interdisciplinary effort is necessary to create an assessment measure that accounts for parts of curriculum residing in other departments and fully addresses the critical thinking student learning outcomes across the curriculum map. The existing interdisciplinary HD Advisory Committee will serve the important function of helping to review evaluation plans and give feedback on the findings coming from the evaluation. As the Human Development Program has over 325 students and only one tenure-track faculty member, it is necessary to appoint a lecturer as Coordinator for this review. This can easily be done by reassigning one of Dr. Eliza Bigham's non-teaching units to this task.