

ASSESSMENT REPORT TEMPLATE

HYPOTHETICAL EXEMPLAR

Survival Studies, BS

Since the show *Survivor* launched in 2000, there has been a renewed fascination with survival skills. More recently, survival situations are often depicted in popular books and television in post-apocalyptic worlds. Popularity aside, the art of survival has been present throughout the history of mankind.

The Survival Studies, BS program is relatively new, with the first programmatic survival courses (i.e., courses with the prefix SURV) being offered in 2006. There are six full-time SURV faculty and about 30 students graduate from this intensive program every year.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Below are the current set of student learning outcomes.

Students graduating from the Survival Studies, BS program will:

- 1- Describe the essential survival skills needed by humans since their early history, noting how these skills have evolved
- 2- Articulate the fundamental theoretical perspectives, historical trends, and major concepts in psychology
- 3- Write field notes in a clear and concise manner considering potential audiences who may discover them
- 4- Identify edible plants in the wilderness
- 5- Create a fire without the aid of lighter fluid
- 6- Identify farming techniques to create a sustainable food production system
- 7- Create a shelter that can withstand water and 20mph winds
- 8- Articulate the value of Survival Skills in the 21st century

2. Comprehensive Outcomes

The outcomes listed above are comprehensive (i.e., they reflect the breadth, depth, and scope of our program). The core faculty (i.e., the six SURV faculty members) drafted an earlier version of these outcomes during a faculty off-campus retreat during the summer of 2013. During the Fall 2013 semester we shared the outcomes with our colleagues in Psychology and Agriculture and received great feedback. After several iterations among our colleagues we were able to finalize the above set of outcomes by Spring 2014. Though “final” now, the outcomes undergo annual review and may slightly shift over time.

3. Communicating Outcomes

The above list of student learning outcomes is discussed at our annual summer faculty retreat. Again, only the SURV faculty participate in this retreat. We also include the student learning outcomes list on the home page of our website. Beginning this past summer, we held a 2-hour Orientation to the Major Session. All incoming students were required to participate and all faculty members were invited. During this session, we displayed and explained the student learning outcomes to students. In general,

we have found that employers do not understand how our discipline can apply to a variety of contexts, so we are working to help students articulate their abilities in relation to survival and beyond.

Curriculum Map

4. Below is a curriculum map that visualizes the alignment between our student learning outcomes and the required courses/experiences in our program. Generally, it's important to us that students have indoor courses to acquire foundational knowledge prior to moving into outdoor (applied) courses.

We would like to point out that the capstone course is worth 8 credit hours and occurs within one semester (the student's final semester). During the first half of the semester, the student reviews foundational knowledge and many of our knowledge-based assessments occur here (SURV 440-Part 1). During the second half of the semester, the students participate in a faculty guided field experience (SURV 440-Part 2). There are two weeks when students are in the "field" finalizing their practice of applied student learning outcomes with faculty guidance. The last 5 weeks of the semester, the students are divided into teams of four with a backpack of supplies and their task is to 'survive'. A faculty member is on-site to assist in case of an emergency, however, the faculty member does not assist or give advice unless an emergency is warranted. SURV 450 is the last class, which helps students to integrate their knowledge after experiencing SURV 440-Part 2.

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Measurement

All assessment data collection efforts occur in SURV 440- Part 1 , SURV 440- Part 2, or SURV 450. Because our student learning outcomes are focused on graduating seniors, we wanted to be sure that we captured assessment data close to this point (i.e., at the end of the program).

Measure	Outcome(s) Assessed	Frequency	Type	Data Collection	Desired Results
Assignment – Final Project Essay in SURV 450 (measured using Rubric 1 below)	1, 8	SURV 450 is offered every semester. Assessment data collected every semester.	Direct measure	Course Embedded	All students should average a 2.0 or higher on the rubric used in SURV 450.
ETS® Major Field Test for Psychology	2	SURV 450 is offered every semester. Assessment data collected every semester.	Direct Measure	Course Embedded	All students should score in the 80 th percentile compared to the national sample.
Field Note Evaluation (measured with Rubric 2 below)	3	SURV 440- Part 2 is only offered in the spring semester, due to the weather. All students assessed at this point prior to graduation.	Direct Measure	Course Embedded	All students should average a 2.0 or higher on the rubric used in SURV 440 Part 2.
Exam	4,6	Students are given an exam early in SURV 440-Part 1. If they do not score 100% the faculty member will spend more time on this topic prior to SURV 440- Part 2.	Direct Measure	Course Embedded	All students must score 100% on this exam by the end of the semester. Ideally, students will score at least 90% on their first attempt.
Skill Application (measured with Rubric 3 in SURV 440- Part 2)	5,7	SURV 440- Part 2 is offered in the Spring. All students must take this course and are thus assessed at this time.	Direct Measure	Course Embedded	All students must individually build a fire successfully. As a team, they must successfully build a shelter.

Rubric used in SURV 450

SURV 450 was designed to help students integrate their knowledge and skills after completing all other required coursework and the SURV 440 Part 1 and Part 2 courses in particular. At the end of SURV 450, we ask students to write an essay that 1) explains the essential survival skills needed by humans since their early history, noting how these skills have evolved and 2) articulates the value of survival skills in the 21st century. The first part of the assignment directly aligns to outcome #1 and the second part directly aligns to outcome #2. The rubric used to measure this essay is below. This rubric was initially drafted by the instructor of SURV 450 and edited by the program faculty after they used it once. The instructor of the course uses this rubric to assign scores during the course. All students in the course

complete this assignment. A grade is assigned to the assignment that is worth 50% of the student's course grade, so motivation to do well is high.

Rubric 1:

	Developing (1)	Mature (2)	Excellent (3)
Explains the essential survival skills needed by humans since their early history, noting how these skills have evolved	Student describes the essential survival skills needed by humans since their early history, but does not adequately describe the evolution of these skills.	Student describes the essential survival skills needed by humans since their early history, AND adequately describe the evolution of these skills.	Student describes the essential survival skills needed by humans since their early history, and adequately describe the evolution of these skills. FURTHER , the student makes a compelling case for the study of survival skills as a discipline.
Articulates the value of survival skills in the 21st century	Student presents a case for the study of survival skills in the 21 st century, but the case is bland.	Student presents a case for the study of survival skills in the 21 st century, which is accurate though not compelling.	Student presents a case for the study of survival skills in the 21 st century, which is accurate AND compelling.

ETS® Major Field Test for Psychology

The Survival Skills faculty recognize the importance of psychology and are very familiar with it. However, we do not consider ourselves experts in the discipline and are not comfortable developing a measure to assess this critical knowledge. Thus, we purchase the ETS® Major Field Test for Psychology which measures the aspects within our Student Learning Outcome #2. Because it is a commercial test, there is ample test reliability and validity evidence available in the test manual online. Further, we receive our total scores and benchmark data that allows us to compare our majors to other students who take the test across the country.

The Major Field Test is administered at mid-term during SURV 450. The score received on this assessment makes up 10% of the student's grade; thus all students take the assessment. Although the score is not worth a large portion of the grade, students want to do well (in particular, they want to score higher than students at other universities). We all give the students a "pep talk" about the importance of this test relative to our program prior to administering it. We think it helps with motivation!

Field Note Evaluation

During SURV 440- Part 2, students are required to take field notes throughout the experience. At the end of SURV 440- Part 2, students submit their field notebooks to the faculty. A week after the experience, the program faculty hold a day long retreat where they assess the learning outcomes measured in SURV 440- Part 2 (i.e., outcomes 3, 5, and 7). During this retreat they measure the field notebooks in the morning (Outcome 3), have lunch, and rate video footage of students creating fire (Outcome 5) and shelter (Outcome 7) in the afternoon. The event is collegial and the faculty enjoy seeing the students' work.

To rate the field notes, two different faculty members rate a set of field notebooks using the rubric below:

For assessment assistance, please email the Office of Academic Assessment (assess1@auburn.edu)

Rubric 2:

	Developing (1)	Mature (2)	Excellent (3)
Clarity and Conciseness	Field notes are lengthy and hard to follow. Also, point of notes are unclear.	Field notes are clear and concise.	Field notes are clear and concise AND the purpose of the notes are clear.
Consideration of Audience	It is unclear who the audience of the field notes is intended to be.	The student only considered one or two audiences; however, the focus on these audiences is consistent.	It is clear that the student considered a variety of audiences' discovering the notes (e.g., members of the group, external people, medics).

Exam

SURV 440- Part 1 is the students' last chance to brush up on their survival skills with the guidance of a faculty member prior to Part 2 (survival portion). One week into SURV 440- Part 1 students are given an exam with 50 items. Twenty-five of these items depict plants and students are asked to identify the plant and note if it is edible. The other twenty-five items measure various aspects of farming technique applications.

The exam was created in 2012. The Office of Academic Assessment guided the faculty through an item-writing workshop over the course of a day. Each faculty member drafted 10-20 items around their subject area of expertise (i.e., either plant edibility or farming techniques). The resulting test had 85 items and was piloted on juniors and seniors. From this pilot, the test was refined to have 50 items. The Office of Academic Assessment also provided us with initial reliability evidence, suggesting both subscales had a high degree of reliability of scores (i.e., "Cronbach's alpha" was greater than 0.75).

The first iteration of this test is worth 75% of the students' grade for the course. Whatever areas the students are struggling with, the instructor will spend time getting the students up to speed before Part 2. The week before Part 2, the test is administered again. Our hope is that students score at least 90% on the test on the first try and they must score 100% before entering Part 2.

Rubric used during SURV 440- Part 2

A faculty supervisor oversees SURV 440 and is available in the event of an emergency. Video cameras are also in place, monitoring the students. Each student must independently create their own fire during the experience. The professor keeps a checklist of student progress throughout the experience. The shelter can be created as a group and the professor monitors progress and fills out the rubric over time. If there is a point of concern (e.g., did Susan complete a fire on her own?) then the video footage will be consulted with a faculty group to verify or deny the question.

Rubric 3:

	Not Proficient	Proficient
Fire Creation	Fire was NOT independently created without the aid of a lighter or lighter fluid.	Fire was independently created without the aid of a lighter or lighter fluid.
Shelter Creation	Shelter was not created. OR, shelter was created, but was poorly done and did not keep humans out of the elements.	Shelter was created. Shelter was able to shield humans from the elements (e.g., rain).

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Results

Outcome	Measure	Results	Desired Result	Interpretation
#1- Survival Skills Over History	Final Project Essay in SURV 450 (Rubric 1)	All 28 graduating seniors submitted an essay in SURV 450. The faculty member in this course used Rubric 1 to grade the essays. The first row on Rubric 1 aligns to Outcome 1. On average, students scored a 2.5. Of note, 8 students scored a “2.0”, our minimum threshold. However, no students scored below 2.0.	All students must score a 2.0 or higher on the rubric.	Overall, the faculty are happy with the results. Students seem to struggle a bit making a compelling case for the study of survival skills. However, as a group, we struggled to define what “compelling” means. Perhaps the students ARE making compelling arguments and the instructor of the course does not personally think so. We are considering recruiting multiple faculty raters to evaluate these essays instead of just the instructor.
#2- Psychology	ETS ® Major Field Test for Psychology	All 28 graduating seniors took this assessment during SURV 450. As a cohort, the group scored in the 82 nd percentile. Unfortunately, almost half of our students were less than the 82 nd percentile.	All students should score in the 80 th percentile compared to the national average	We do not teach the psychology courses. We will share these results with the psychology faculty members to have a better understanding of these results. Perhaps our students are not engaged? Perhaps our bar (80 th percentile nationally) is too high? We need to investigate this result further.
#3- Field Notes	Rubric 2 from SURV 440- Part 2, used to evaluate field notebooks	All 28 graduating seniors kept a field notebook during SURV 440-Part 2. Pairs of faculty raters evaluated each field notebook using the same rubric. When there was a disagreement on ratings greater than a point, the raters discussed their scores and adjudicated. On average, students scored a 2.1 on “Clarity and Conciseness” and a 1.4. on “Consideration of Audience.”	All students must score a 2.0 or higher on the rubric.	The faculty discussed the results and we are disappointed in students’ field notes. Generally, it seemed like students didn’t know who they were writing the field notes for. Also, the notes were clear and concise, but it was unclear what the purpose of the notes were. Indeed, the notes seemed all over the place ranging from personal diaries to chronicling of the survival experience (e.g., noting the materials used to build a shelter).

Outcome	Measure	Results	Desired Result	Interpretation
#4- Edible Plants	Exam early in SURV 440-Part 1	All 28 graduating seniors took the 50-item exam in SURV 440-Part 1. Half of the items were focused on plant edibility. Subscale scores were calculated for these items; of note, the scores were found to have high reliability. On average, students scored 86% on their first attempt. The instructor had to spend a lot of time on this material before the next test, where all students achieved 100%.	All students must score 100% on this exam by the end of the semester. Ideally, students will score at least 90% on the first attempt.	The faculty were disappointed with this result. Through an intense discussion, we discovered that students leave AGRI 300 very knowledgeable of this area; however, by the time they reach SURV 440 Part 1, they have forgotten a great deal of this information.
#5 – Fire Creation	Skill Application Rubric	All 28 graduating seniors participated in SURV 440-Part 2, where they were observed for their individual abilities to create a fire. All students were able to do this (100%).	All students must individually build a fire	We were happy to see that all students were able to build a fire. This is a fundamental survival skill.
#6- Farming Techniques	Exam early in SURV 440-Part 1	All 28 graduating seniors took the 50-item exam in SURV 440-Part 1. Half of the items were focused on farming techniques. Subscale scores were calculated for these items; of note, the scores were found to have high reliability. On average, students scored 89% on their first attempt. The instructor had to spend a bit of time on farming in different climates before the next test, where all students achieved 100%.	All students must score 100% on this exam by the end of the semester. Ideally, students will score at least 90% on the first attempt.	The faculty are generally not concerned with these scores. We don't expect all students to score 100% on the first try and an 89% is reasonable. Also, most errors were about farming in different climates, so student misunderstanding was not vast, but localized to this particular area.
#7 – Shelter Creation	Skill Application Rubric	All 28 graduating seniors participated in SURV 440-Part 2, where they were observed for their group abilities to create a shelter. All student groups were able to do this (100%).	All student groups must create a suitable shelter.	We were happy to see that the groups all created a suitable shelter that sustained the weather.
#8 – Articulate Value	Final Project Essay in SURV 450	All 28 graduating seniors submitted an essay in SURV 450. The faculty member in this course used Rubric 1 to grade the essays. The second row on Rubric 1 aligns to Outcome 8. On average, students scored a 2.8. Of note, 2 students scored a "2.0", our minimum threshold.	All students must score a 2.0 or higher on the rubric	The faculty were very impressed with student work in this area. We feel it's critical that students can articulate the value of this discipline and their degree and they did a great job in this area.

Use of Results

Purposeful Reflection and Action Plan

The SURV faculty hold two retreats each year. The first retreat is a day-long retreat in early May after graduation where we rate student work. The second retreat is a two-day off-campus retreat held in August before the semester begins. One of the two days at the “August Retreat” is dedicated to reflecting on the efficacy of our program; during this day, we discuss assessment results and create plans for change.

We haven’t held the August Retreat yet, but we have a plan for discussion of assessment. Specifically, we’re present the assessment results to all faculty members and focus our energy on discussing possible changes to the curriculum surrounding Outcomes #3 (field notes) and Outcome #4 (plant edibility). We’ve already started informal discussions about these areas, where students did not perform as expected. Of note, we might reconsider if Outcome 3 is essential or needs to be changed. Likewise, we’ve started to discuss the possibility of creating a new course to help students better gain knowledge of plant edibility. Or, perhaps a new pedagogical approach is needed in AGRI 300. These issues will be discussed at length in the August retreat and we will leave the retreat with a concrete action plan.