

Assessment Report
Sociology Program, 2006-2007
October 31, 2007

I. Brief Summary of the Sociology Program Assessment Plan

The IUK sociology program goals were adapted by the IUK resident sociology faculty from the "Learning Goals for the Sociology Major" developed by the American Sociological Association Task Force on the Undergraduate Major. These goals are attached as Appendix A: Learning Goals for the Sociology Program. In 2005, the IUK resident sociology faculty agreed the program assessment focus for the 2006-2007 academic year would be upon Goal #5 as it relates to the S100 Introduction to Sociology course. This course is required for all sociology majors, but it is also taken by many students each semester who either have not declared a major field of study or who have declared a major other than sociology. We know from experience that most IUK students do not declare sociology as a major until after the freshman year. Thus, our assessment of S100 will necessarily involve collecting data from *all* S100 students in order to ensure that we have outcome measures for those students who will eventually become sociology majors. This report describes the assessment activities which will take place in all sections of the S100 taught by resident faculty in 2006-2007. This report summarizes the data collected relating to Goal #5 of our assessment plan only as these features and activities relate to the S100 course in the 2006-2007 academic year. Goal #5 specifies several areas of content that faculty agree are important to the discipline of sociology and are usually, but not always, introduced in the introductory course.

II. Assessment Methods

Embedded test items were used for each component. Because both lectures and reading coverage from the textbook vary from instructor to instructor, each instructor was free to select questions that s/he deemed appropriate for their class. While some of the embedded questions used were the same or similar, often they were not. Therefore the various questions are not included in this summary but are available if needed for review. In the plan for this report we arbitrarily agreed on benchmarks of 70% for each item.

Test items were administered in all introductory sociology, SOC S100, classes taught by resident faculty in the fall of 2006. The test items were administered as a part of regularly scheduled exams for each instructor's course at various times during the semester. These questions were included as a part of the scored test items.

During the spring and summer of 2007, data from each instructor were collected by the sociology coordinator and aggregated for each component of the learning objectives as presented in this report. Students from all classes were pooled to create the total number of students answering that item on a particular test. In some cases, only two instructors assessed a particular item so the number of students participating will be lower than when all three collected data. The pooled percentage of students who answered the questions for that component correctly was then calculated for each component. Please note that the n size (number of students answering a given question) varies from component to component due to changes in class size and attendance during the semester for each class. Percentages were rounded to nearest whole number.

III. Description of the Assessment Results

The pooled student responses to each measure of a component are presented below:

Goal #5: Students graduating with a sociology degree will be able to articulate basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental interrelations.

A. Outcome #1: Explain the meaning of culture and the importance of the basic features of culture to social behavior.

1. C #1: Define the meaning of culture. **146 correct answers/228 students = 64%**
2. C #2: Demonstrate understanding of the basic features of culture. **207 correct answers/228 students = 91%**
3. C #3: Demonstrate understanding of the importance of the basic features of culture to social behavior. **184 correct answers/228 students = 81%**

B. Outcome #2: Explain the meaning of social change, the Functionalist and Conflict views of social change, and factors associated with resistance to social change. (Note that only two classes cover this material in S100 therefore only two instructors submitted data for these components.)

1. C #1: Define the meaning of social change. **99 correct/135 students = 67%**
2. C #2: Demonstrate understanding of the Functionalist and Conflict views of social change. **92 correct/135 students = 68%**
3. C #3: Demonstrate understanding of factors associated with resistance to social change. **52 correct/61 students = 85%**

C. Outcome #3: Explain the meaning of socialization, the self and socialization, and the agents of socialization.

1. C #1: Define the meaning of socialization. **186 correct/222 students = 84%**
2. C #2: Demonstrate understanding of sociological approaches to the self and socialization. **159 correct/228 students = 69%**
3. C #3: Demonstrate understanding of the agents of socialization. **205 correct/222 students = 92%**

D. Outcome #4: Explain the meaning of stratification, how it relates to the unequal possession of economic resources, and its influence on people's "life chances."

1. Component #1: Define the meaning of stratification. **150 correct/206 students = 73%**
2. Component #2: Demonstrate understanding of how stratification relates to the unequal possession of economic resources in our society. **98 correct/132 students = 74%**
3. Component #3: Demonstrate understanding of the influence of stratification on people's "life chances." **190 correct/206 students = 92%**

E. Outcome #5: Explain the basic features of social structure and social institutions.

1. C #1: Define the meaning of social structure. **160 correct/214 students = 75%**
2. C #2: Demonstrate understanding of social structure. **161 correct/214 students = 75%**
3. C #3: Define the meaning of social institutions. **166 correct/214 students = 78%**
4. C #4: Demonstrate understanding of social institutions. **97 correct/135 students = 72%**

F. Outcome #6: Explain differentiations that occur among people in societies by the social characteristics of: race/ethnicity, gender, age, and class.

1. **C #1:** Define the meaning of race and ethnicity. **188 correct/206 students = 91%**
2. **C #2:** Define the meaning of gender roles. **183 correct/206 students = 89%**
3. **C #3:** Define the meaning of ageism. **123 correct/132 students = 93%**
4. **C #4:** Demonstrate understanding of the U.S. social class system. **168 correct/206 students = 82%**

Faculty interpretation of Results

Our interpretation of these findings suggests that overall students are doing a very good job of demonstrating sociological knowledge and understanding about these content areas. Expectations (70%) were reached for all but four of the 20 components. Percentages for each of these four components were 64%, 67%, 68%, and 69% and were quite close to the 70% benchmark. Differences in embedded test items used to measure each component by instructors may have contributed lower score in these cases. This was especially true for Learning Objective #1, Component #1 where very different questions were used to measure students' ability to define culture.

IV. Using Assessment for Program Assessment

The results of this assessment report do not indicate any needed changes in the program or in pedagogy. It would be helpful if in the future faculty could use the same embedded test items for each component, but we found that the differences in course emphasis and instructor pedagogy made this very difficult to reach consensus about. Moreover, given these differences, it is clear that allowing each faculty to teach in ways that maximize their own strengths appears to be working. Overall these data indicate that students in S100 are learning the sociological concepts at an introductory level. Based on these findings, we it is likely that students who take introductory sociology courses at IU Kokomo will have ample opportunity to learn needed content (as measured here) that will prepare them for upper level work in sociology.

If any changes are made in future assessment plans they will be related to two issues: First, 20 components are too many to try to assess in any given semester, and secondly we have decided that the ASA Learning Goals that we adapted years ago were not written with the current IU Kokomo system of assessment in mind. We are working on breaking down these goals into more useful assessment elements for future assessment as needed.

VI. Dissemination of Results

The results of this report will be distributed to all sociology faculty. The report will be made available on the IU Kokomo website in summary form with link to the entire report. Students, staff and interested members of the community will have access to this report. We will consider any comments or feedback that we receive for the improvement of this program.

Appendix A: Learning Goals for the Sociology Major

The sociology major should study, review, and *demonstrate understanding of the following:**

1. The discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of social reality, such that the student will be able to: (a) describe how sociology differs from and is similar to other social sciences and give examples of these differences; (b) describe how sociology contributes to a liberal arts understanding of social reality; and (c) apply the sociological imagination, sociological principles, and concepts to her/his own life.
2. The role of theory in sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) define theory and describe its role in building sociological knowledge; (b) compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations; (c) show how theories reflect the historical context of the times and cultures in which they were developed; and (d) describe and apply some basic theories or theoretical orientations in at least one area of social reality.
3. The role of evidence and qualitative and quantitative methods in sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) identify basic methodological approaches and describe the general role of methods in building sociological knowledge; (b) compare and contrast the basic methodological approaches for gathering data; (c) design a research study in an area of choice and explain why various decisions were made; and (d) critically assess a published research report and explain how the study could have been improved.
4. The technical skills involved in retrieving information and data from the Internet and using computers appropriately for data analysis. The major should also be able to do (social) scientific technical writing that accurately conveys data findings and to show an understanding and application of ethical practice as a sociologist.
5. Basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental theoretical interrelations, such that the student will be able to define, give examples, and demonstrate the relevance of culture; social change; socialization; stratification; social structure; institutions; and differentiations by race/ethnicity, gender, age, and class.
6. How culture and social institutions operate, such that the student will be able to: (a) show how institutions interlink in their effects on each other and on individuals; (b) demonstrate how social change factors such as population or urbanization affect social structures and individuals; (c) demonstrate how and social structure vary across time and place and the effects of such variations; and (d) identify examples of specific policy implications using reasoning about social-structural effects.
7. Reciprocal relationships between individuals and society, such that the student will be able to: (a) explain how the self develops sociologically; (b) demonstrate how social and cultural factors influence individual behavior and the self's development; (c) demonstrate how social interaction and the self influence society and social structure; and (d) distinguish sociological approaches to analyzing the self from psychological, economic, and other approaches.
8. The macro/micro distinction, such that the student will be able to: (a) compare and contrast theories at one level with those at another; (b) summarize some research documenting connections between the two; and (c) develop a list of research or analytical issues that should be pursued to more fully understand the connections between the two.
9. In depth at least two specialty areas within sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) summarize basic questions and issues in the areas; (b) compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations and middle range theories in the areas; (c) show how sociology helps understand the area; (d) summarize current research in the areas; and (e) develop specific policy implications of research and theories in the areas.
10. The internal diversity of American society and its place in the international context, such that the student will be able to describe: (a) the significance of variations by race, class, gender, and age; and (b) will know how to appropriately generalize or resist generalizations across groups.

Two more generic goals that should be pursued in sociology are:

11. To think critically, such that the student will be able to: (a) move easily from recall analysis and application to synthesis and evaluation; (b) identify underlying (assumptions in particular theoretical orientations or arguments; (c) identify underlying assumptions in particular methodological approaches to an issue; (d) show how patterns of thought and knowledge are directly influenced by political-economic social structures; (e) present opposing viewpoints and alternative hypotheses on various issues; and (f) engage in teamwork where many or different viewpoints are presented.

12. To develop values, such that the student will see: (a) the utility of the sociological perspective as one of several perspectives on social reality; and (b) the importance of reducing the negative effects of social inequality.

*Demonstrate means that the student will be able to show or document appropriate mastery of the material and/or skills, and thus that this mastery can be assessed (with an exam, a presentation, by a portfolio, and so forth).

(Source: *Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major Updated: Meeting the Challenge of Teaching Sociology in the Twenty-First Century*. 2004. Kathleen McKinney, Carla B. Howery, Kerry J. Strand, Edward L. Kain, and Catherine White Berheide. "A Report of the ASA Task Force on the Undergraduate Major." American Sociological Association, 1307 New York Avenue NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C.)