Assessment Overview

Discipline/Program Name: Sociology  Assessment Year: 2009 - 2010

Program / Discipline Assessment Report

Program/Discipline: Sociology  
Responsibility: John Ratliff, Ph.D.

Sociology Department Mission Statement
In a continuously assessed learning-centered environment, it is our Department’s mission is to offer transfer level courses, including professional preparation course work that enable students to achieve their academic and personal goals.

Program / Discipline Assessment History Questions:

By using the assessment process as an evaluative technique, how has it previously affected your program's curricula and/or teaching strategies?
There has only been a full time instructor of sociology for three years. Since taking over assessment responsibilities, I have utilized data to clarify teaching strategies, find more effective ways to impart cognitive skills, and reevaluated assessment tools, sharing these results with adjuncts in sociology.

By using the assessment process as an evaluative technique, what changes to student learning have been noted?
Comparing results from the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 academic years, while data is not totally comparable, in that outcomes were somewhat adjusted, there has been a marked improvement in outcomes, with pre-post test results going from being statistically insignificant to being statistically significant.

What unintended consequences, if any, have occurred because of the assessment process?
Consistent assessment approaches have not been in place long enough to note meaningful unintended consequences.

Who receives information about your department's assessment and why? (Please note if you plan on altering either of these items for the coming year.)
Assessment results have only been shared with Lori Tigner, the other full time instructor active in teaching sociology, and Preston Driggers, the adjunct assisting in evaluation, as well as Cheyne Bamford, the Assessment Committee member in charge of evaluating the program assessment. A copy of this report will be forwarded to all sociology adjuncts.

Part 1: Previous Academic Year Assessment Summary

Previous Academic Year: 2009-2010
**Outcome #: 1**

**Outcome Title:** “Demonstrate the ability to more clearly see social and cultural processes in the world and in the student’s own life.”

**Outcome Type (choose by bolding): Program**

**Outcome Description:** In terms of the basic goals of Sociology, this outcome is, by definition, at the heart of what is called the “Sociological Imagination,” i.e., being able to perceive the social component of human behavior.

**Benchmark for success**

1) Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark.
2) What is the rationale for choosing this measure?

For the objective tests of student performance, SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and post-test means for each intended learning outcome. The present study employed a repeated-measures design, and a statistically significant improvement ($p < .05$) in student performance across the pre and post-tests for each learning outcome was predicted. This result would confirm that the students’ comprehension of Sociology concepts improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.

**Description of assessment process:**

1) What assessment methods were used to measure this outcome (i.e., pre/post test, portfolio review, etc.)?
2) How do these methods show students are learning?
3) What frequency is this outcome being measured (i.e.: each semester, yearly, every other year, etc.) and why?
4) How many students made up the sample size?

1. The ’09-’10 Assessment Plan called for the analysis of this learning outcome with only one distinct method, the objective measurement of student performance based on a pre and post test of student learning. This year assessment data was collected from students in SOC 101 (General Sociology).
2. A significant improvement in student performance across the pre and post-test would confirm that the students’ comprehension of concepts related to the scientific method improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.
3. For the last three years, this learning outcome has been measured yearly. However, the first of those years the three outcomes were not divided out from each other. Two years ago was the first year that this outcome has been explicitly measured. However, individual outcomes were not measured longitudinally until last year. For the foreseeable future, this outcome will be measured in what amounts to an efficient research cycle, with data collected in the spring and analyzed in the fall.
4. 57 students from SOC 101 completed both the pre- and post-test.

**Results**

What were the results of the assessment process? (List results for each method, if more than one were used.)

SPSS for Windows was used to compare Learning Objective 1 pre- and posttest means of student performance in a repeated-measures design. Scores were included for analysis only if student scores for both tests were available. Scores for both the pre-test and the post-test were collected for 57 students.

For student learning outcome 1 (noted as “A” in figure below), the mean score of the post-test ($M = 3.44$) was significantly greater than the mean score of the pre-test ($M = 2.93$), $F(1,56) = 5.65$, $p < .05$. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPSS for Windows was used to compare Learning Objective 1 pre- and posttest means of student performance in a repeated-measures design. Scores were included for analysis only if student scores for both tests were available. Scores for both the pre-test and the post-test were collected for 57 students. For student learning outcome 1 (noted as “A” in figure below), the mean score of the post-test ($M = 3.44$) was significantly greater than the mean score of the pre-test ($M = 2.93$), $F(1,56) = 5.65$, $p &lt; .05$.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### What did the department learn?

1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

1) A statistically significant improvement in demonstrating the ability to more clearly see social and cultural processes in the world and in the student’s own life was observed this year on the objective assessment, with significant improvement in demonstrated ability in this area across the semester.
2) While results were not quite as impressive as last year, results were in the same general vicinity on a percentage basis.
3) The objective measures both supported the conclusion that there was significant improvement.

### Student performance summary

1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods?

1) Objective measurements indicated strong student performance in demonstrating the ability to more clearly see social and cultural processes in the world and in the student’s own life.
2) While these results are heartening, it’s important to make sure adjuncts that were not part of this survey are acquainted with the results and encouraged to address this outcome as a priority in their teaching of SOC 101. Also, by continuing and expanding this approach over several years, more meaningful longitudinal data will be generated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome #: 2</th>
<th><strong>Outcome Title</strong>: Demonstrate the ability to understand the nature of modern American society and culture, as well as diverse societies and cultures.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome Type: Program</strong></td>
<td><strong>Outcome Description</strong>: Again, demonstration of this ability was chosen as central to the basic goal of cultivating the sociological perspective. This outcome includes examining the student’s understanding of the difference between society and culture, the particular characteristics of contemporary American society and culture, and the general issue of cultural diversity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Benchmark for success** | 1) Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark.  
2) What is the rationale for choosing this measure? |
| For the objective tests of student performance, SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and post-test means for each intended learning outcome. The present study employed a repeated-measures design, and a statistically significant improvement (p < .05) in student performance across the pre and post-tests for each learning outcome was predicted. This result would confirm that the students’ comprehension of Sociology concepts improved after receiving instruction in those concepts. |
| **Description of assessment process:** | 1) What assessment methods were used to measure this outcome (i.e. pre/post test, portfolio review, etc.)?  
2) How do these methods show students are learning?  
3) What frequency is this outcome being measured (i.e.: each semester, yearly, every other year, etc.) and why?  
4) How many students made up the sample size? |
| 1. The '09-'10 Assessment Plan called for the analysis of this learning outcome with only one distinct method, the objective measurement of student performance based on a pre and post test of student learning. This year assessment data was collected from students in SOC 101 (General Sociology).  
2. A significant improvement in student performance across the pre and post-test would confirm that the students’ comprehension of concepts related to the scientific method improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.  
3. For the last three years, this learning outcome has been measured yearly. However, the first of those years the three outcomes were not divided out from each other. Two years ago was the first year that this outcome has been explicitly measured. However, individual outcomes were not measured longitudinally until last year. For the foreseeable future, this outcome will be measured in what amounts to an efficient research cycle, with data collected in the spring and analyzed in the fall.  
4. 57 students from SOC 101 completed both the pre- and post-test. |
| **Results** | **SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and posttest means of student performance in a repeated-measures design. Scores were included for analysis only if student scores for both tests were available. Scores for both the pre-test and the post-test were collected for 57 students.**  
For student learning outcome 2 (labeled "B" in figure below), the mean score of the post-test (M = 3.40) did not significantly differ (p > .05) from the mean score of the pre-test (M = 3.14). |
### What did the department learn?
1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

### Student performance summary
1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOC Learning Outcome B</th>
<th>Pre-Test</th>
<th>Post-Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1) While improvement was not statistically significant, a notable improvement in the ability to understand the nature of modern American society and culture, as well as diverse societies and cultures was observed this year on the objective assessment, with notable improvement in demonstrated ability in this area across the semester.

2) While results were not as impressive as last year, results were in the same general vicinity on a percentage basis.

3) The objective measures did not support the conclusion that there was significant improvement.

1) Measurements indicated strong student performance in demonstrating the ability to understand the nature of modern American society and culture, as well as diverse societies and cultures.

2) While these results are not as heartening as last year, it’s important to make sure adjuncts that were not part of this survey are acquainted with the results and encouraged to address this outcome as a priority in their teaching of SOC 101. Also, by continuing and expanding this approach over several years, more meaningful longitudinal data will be generated.

1) Measurements indicated strong student performance in demonstrating the ability to understand the nature of modern American society and culture, as well as diverse societies and cultures.

2) While these results are not as heartening as last year, it’s important to make sure adjuncts that were not part of this survey are acquainted with the results and encouraged to address this outcome as a priority in their teaching of SOC 101. Also, by continuing and expanding this approach over several years, more meaningful longitudinal data will be generated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome #: 3</th>
<th>Outcome Title: Increase respect for diversity and global awareness.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome Type: General Ed</td>
<td>Outcome Description: This General Education outcome is a perfect fit for one of the basic goals of Introductory Sociology, which is to move students from an ethnocentric orientation to one of greater cultural relativism and respect and understanding for cultures, races and ethnicities different from their own.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Benchmark for success
1. Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark.
2. What is the rationale for choosing this measure?

### Description of assessment process:
1. What assessment methods were used to measure this outcome (i.e. pre/post test, portfolio review, etc.)?
2. How do these methods show students are learning?
3. What frequency is this outcome being measured (i.e.: each semester, yearly, every other year, etc.) and why?
4. How many students made up the sample size?

1. The '09-'10 Assessment Plan called for the analysis of this learning outcome with only one distinct method, the objective measurement of student performance based on a pre and post test of student learning. This year assessment data was collected from students in SOC 101 (General Sociology).
2. A significant improvement in student performance across the pre and post-test would confirm that the students’ comprehension of concepts related to the scientific method improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.
3. For the last three years, this learning outcome has been measured yearly. However, the first of those years the three outcomes were not divided out from each other. Two years ago was the first year that this outcome has been explicitly measured. However, individual outcomes were not measured longitudinally until last year. For the foreseeable future, this outcome will be measured in what amounts to an efficient research cycle, with data collected in the spring and analyzed in the fall.
4. 57 students from SOC 101 completed both the pre- and post-test.

### Results
What were the results of the assessment process? (List results for each method, if more than one were used.)

SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and posttest means of student performance in a repeated-measures design. Scores were included for analysis only if student scores for both tests were available. Scores for both the pre-test and the post-test were collected for 57 students. For Outcome 3, (labeled "C" in graph below), the mean score of the post-test (M = 2.84) was significantly greater than the mean score of the pre-test (M = 2.49), F(1,56) = 4.85, p < .05.
### What did the department learn?

1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?
4) A statistically significant improvement in respect for diversity and global awareness was observed this year on the objective assessment, with significant improvement in demonstrated ability in this area across the semester.
5) While results were not quite as impressive as last year, results were in the same general vicinity on a percentage basis.
6) The objective measures supported the conclusion that there was significant improvement.

### Student performance summary

1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods?
3) While these results are heartening, it’s important to make sure adjuncts that were not part of this survey are acquainted with the results and encouraged to address this outcome as a priority in their teaching of SOC 101. Also, by continuing and expanding this approach over several years, more meaningful longitudinal data will be generated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome # 4</th>
<th>Outcome Title: Demonstrate critical thinking.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome Type: General Ed</strong></td>
<td><strong>Outcome Description:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If General Education Outcome: Diversity and Global Awareness</td>
<td>This General Education outcome was added this year for the first time and certainly is a reasonable goal for introductory sociology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benchmark for success</strong></td>
<td>For the objective tests of student performance, SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and posttest means for each intended learning outcome. The present study employed a repeated-measures design, and a statistically significant improvement (p &lt; .05) in student performance across the pre and post-tests for each learning outcome was predicted. This result would confirm that the students’ comprehension of Sociology concepts improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark.</td>
<td>1. The ’09-’10 Assessment Plan called for the analysis of this learning outcome with only one distinct method, the objective measurement of student performance based on a pre and post test of student learning. This year assessment data was collected from students in SOC 101 (General Sociology).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) What is the rationale for choosing this measure?</td>
<td>2. A significant improvement in student performance across the pre and post-test would confirm that the students’ comprehension of concepts related to the scientific method improved after receiving instruction in those concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of assessment process:</strong></td>
<td>3. This was the first year this outcome was measured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) What assessment methods were used to measure this outcome (i.e. pre/post test, portfolio review, etc.)?</td>
<td>4. 57 students from SOC 101 completed both the pre- and post-test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) How do these methods show students are learning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) What frequency is this outcome being measured (i.e.: each semester, yearly, every other year, etc.) and why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) How many students made up the sample size?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results</strong></td>
<td>SPSS for Windows was used to compare pre- and posttest means of student performance in a repeated-measures design. Scores were included for analysis only if student scores for both tests were available. Scores for both the pre-test and the post-test were collected for 57 students. For Outcome 4, (labeled outcome &quot;D&quot; in graph below), the mean score of the post-test (M = 2.61) did not significantly differ (p &gt; .05) from the mean score of the pre-test (M = 2.40).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### What did the department learn?
1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

7) While improvement was not statistically significant, a notable improvement in the ability to understand the nature of modern American society and culture, as well as diverse societies and cultures was observed this year on the objective assessment, with notable improvement in demonstrated ability in this area across the semester.

8) While results were not as impressive as last year, results were in the same general vicinity on a percentage basis.

9) The objective measures did not support the conclusion that there was significant improvement.

### Student performance summary
1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods?

3) Measurements still indicate strong student performance in increased ability in critical thinking.

4) While these results are not so heartening as last year, it’s important to make sure adjuncts that were not part of this survey are acquainted with the results and encouraged to address this outcome as a priority in their teaching of SOC 101. Also, by continuing and expanding this approach over several years, more meaningful longitudinal data will be generated.
Part 2: Current Academic Year Assessment Plan

Current Academic Year: 2010-2011

Intended Learning Outcomes (only include if they differ from those noted in Part 1)
The four outcomes tested in the previous year will be continued.

Assessment Method(s) (only include if they differ from those noted in Part 1)
The pre-post test method will be used for all learning outcomes in basically the same way done this year. A greater effort will be made to broaden the number of SOC 101 sections where the tests will be administered.

Benchmarks (only include if they differ from those noted in Part 1)
1. The same method used in the previous year, statistically significant improvement across the pre-post tests, will be utilized. It will also be possible to compare this year’s results with last year’s.

Have you submitted a separate budget worksheet? (Choose by bolding; for information about this worksheet, please refer to the specific budgeting e-mail sent by the committee chairperson.)
   Yes  No

Please submit this report (including both last year's summary and this year's plan) in a Word document to the Program Assessment committee chairperson.