

Sociology Major Assessment Report AY 2016-17

Submitted to Department Chair for Department Approval: 10/6/17

Approved by Department: 10/11/17

Approved by HSS LOAC:

Learning Objectives Assessed:

This report covers the learning goals that were assessed in SOC 101: Introduction to Sociology, which is a required course in the sociology major usually taken in the student's first year in the major. Students are expected to have a beginning level of competency on all six learning goals for the major in sociology:

Critical Thinking: Students will be able to abstract general propositions from textual, observational, and quantitative evidence; identify logical relations among general propositions, and test the applicability of these propositions against new evidence

Concepts and Paradigms: Students will be able to explain sociological understanding of culture, social structure, and social processes using the functionalist, conflict and interactionist perspectives in the context of the United States and other societies.

Application: Students will be able to connect sociology to their public and private lives-as members of families and organizations and as citizens of local, national, and global communities

Social Research Methods: Students will be able to explain causality and to posit interesting and important sociological research questions, analyze quantitative and qualitative data, interpret their findings and effectively communicate their results to appropriate audiences

Communication: Students will be able to demonstrate an ability to write and speak logically and cogently, to convey ideas and research findings to large audiences and small groups, to listen to others and respond constructively, and to demonstrate leadership skills and collaboration skills

Information Literacy: Students will be able to distinguish between scientifically-grounded observation, logical proposition, anecdote, and opinion.

Methods:

Sample: there were nine sections of SOC 101 offered in Fall 2016, taught by five different instructors. After classes had ended but before the final exam (i.e., during the reading period), there were a total of 281 students registered in SOC 101. The sample includes 198 students who chose to take the assessment for extra credit (70.46% of SOC101 students). No students from one instructor's class completed the assessment, indicating that there was likely a communication problem between the instructor and her students about completing the assessment. Consequently, the sample represents 79.52% of the 249 students who definitely received an invitation to participate from their SOC 101 instructor. A total of 176 individuals provided complete surveys (70.68% of 249).

Our focus is on sociology majors, but because many others take SOC 101 for liberal learning, we asked students to divide themselves into six categories: sociology major (n = 8), sociology major and

Sociology Major Assessment Report AY 2016-17

a second major ($n = 11$), not a sociology major but considering adding one ($n = 7$), sociology minors ($n = 3$), not a sociology minor but considering adding one ($n = 14$), and liberal learning students who were not sociology majors and did not intend to add a sociology major or minor ($n = 133$).

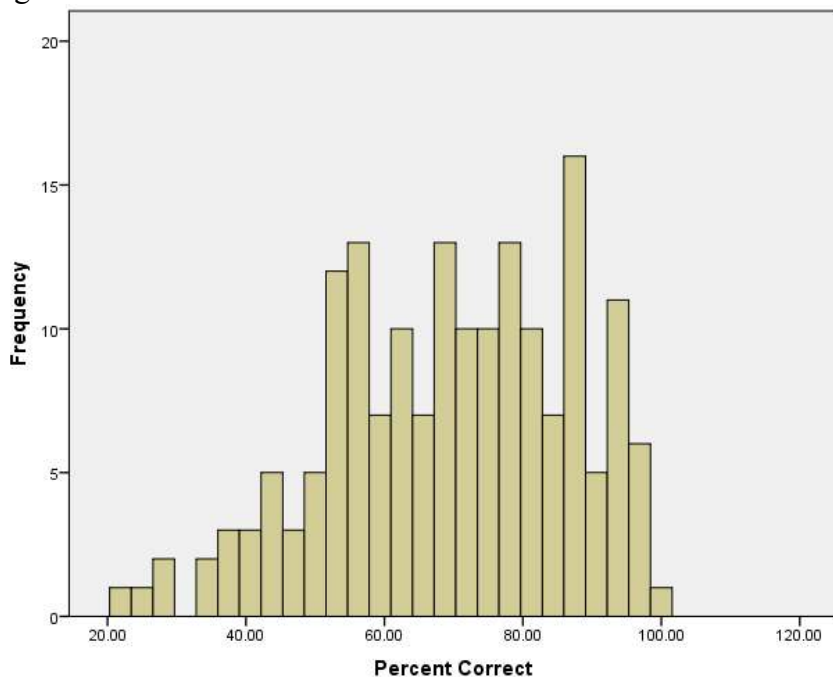
Measurement: The assessment instrument contained questions that part of the CLEP 2016 Practice Exam for Sociology 101¹. This exam is used internationally to earn test credit (AP credit) for the content in SOC 101. Questions included were selected by a team of three tenured faculty members who teach SOC 101 on a regular basis. If any of the three faculty members had doubts that SOC 101 students should know the answer to the question by the end of the semester, the question was eliminated. Then questions were pared further to remove those that duplicated the content of remaining questions. In the end, 32 questions were part of the assessment instrument. These questions addressed learning goals involving Concepts and Paradigms; Application, and Social Research Methods.

Administration: Students completed an online, Qualtrics survey at a time of their own convenience.

Findings

The arithmetic mean for percent correct of the 32 questions was 69.50 for the entire sample (See Figure 1). The percent correct for individual questions ranged from 34.43% (“Which of the following would most likely be an agent of involuntary resocialization?”) to 96.76% correct (“The process by which an individual learns how to live in his or her social surroundings is known as:”).

Figure 1: Distribution of Percent Correct



¹ College Board. 2016. *CLEP Official Study Guide 2016*. New York: The College Board.

Sociology Major Assessment Report AY 2016-17

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) models found no differences between in mean scores between students who self-identified as majors, double majors, prospective majors, minors, prospective minors, or liberal learning students ($F = .823$, $p = .535$).

Likewise, liberal learning students were not different from students with a current/ prospective sociology major/minor ($F = .003$, $p = .956$).

Likewise, current sociology majors/double majors were not different from students with other current majors ($F = .138$, $p = .710$).

Likewise, current sociology majors/double majors/minors were not different from other students ($F = .018$, $p = .894$).

Likewise, prospective majors/minors were not different from other students ($F = .018$, $p = .894$).

Discussion

Considering that high school students only need to score 50% on the CLEP test to earn college credit for SOC 101 (although we do not accept this for students at TCNJ), our students do seem to be doing well (the average was nearly 70%). We were pleased to determine that sociology majors/minors were not worse than liberal learning students, particularly since sociology majors have statistically lower standardized entrance scores to TCNJ. We also noted that variation between sections was reasonable and expected.

We also noted that we had also originally hoped to assess the learning goals on Critical Thinking, Communication, and Information Literacy in SOC 101, but the method we chose for assessment made this unrealistic. In the future, we will determine how appropriate it is to attempt to assess these at an introductory level.

Sociology Major Assessment Report AY 2016-17

Appendix 1: Learning Objectives for the Sociology Major Approved by LOAC 12.03.12

Critical Thinking: Students will be able to abstract general propositions from textual, observational, and quantitative evidence; identify logical relations among general propositions, and test the applicability of these propositions against new evidence

Assessed in SOC 101, 302, 499

Concepts and Paradigms: Students will be able to explain sociological understanding of culture, social structure, and social processes using the functionalist, conflict and interactionist perspectives in the context of the United States and other societies.

Assessed in SOC 101, 301, 499

Application: Students will be able to connect sociology to their public and private lives-as members of families and organizations and as citizens of local, national, and global communities

Assessed in SOC 101, 301, 499

Social Research Methods: Students will be able to explain causality and to posit interesting and important sociological research questions, analyze quantitative and qualitative data, interpret their findings and effectively communicate their results to appropriate audiences

Assessed in SOC 101, 302, 499

Communication: Students will be able to demonstrate an ability to write and speak logically and cogently, to convey ideas and research findings to large audiences and small groups, to listen to others and respond constructively, and to demonstrate leadership skills and collaboration skills

Assessed in SOC 101, 301, 302, 499

Information Literacy: Students will be able to distinguish between scientifically-grounded observation, logical proposition, anecdote, and opinion.

Assessed in SOC 101, 499

Annual Assessment Plans:

Year	Course Focus	Learning Goals Assessed
2013-14	SOC 301	Intermediate Levels: Concepts and Paradigms Application Written Communication
2014-15	SOC 302	Intermediate Levels: Critical Thinking Social Research Methods Written Communication
2015-16	SOC 499	Advanced Level: All
2016-17	SOC 101	Introductory Level: All
2017-18	SOC 101 SOC 301 SOC 302 SOC 499	All Levels: Oral Communication

Sociology Major Assessment Report AY 2016-17

Appendix 2: Sociology Major Assessment Plan Matrix

Learning Objectives	Assessed in	Assessment Strategy	Cycle
<u>Critical Thinking</u> : Students will be able to abstract general propositions from textual, observational, and quantitative evidence; identify logical relations among general propositions, and test the applicability of these propositions against new evidence.	101 (Introductory level) 302 (Intermediate level) 499 (Advanced level)	Portfolio analysis of research papers in 302, & 499; syllabus review in 101 Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision for each level during planned year of assessment.	SOC 101: AY 2016-17 SOC 302: AY 2014-15 SOC 499: AY 2015-16
<u>Concepts and Paradigms</u> : Students will be able to explain sociological understanding of culture, social structure, and social processes using the functionalist, conflict and interactionist perspectives in the context of the United States and other societies.	101 (Introductory level) 301 (Intermediate level) 499 (Advanced level)	Portfolio analysis of conceptual assignments in SOC 101, 301, & 499; Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision for each level during planned year of assessment.	SOC 101: AY 2016-17 SOC 301: AY 2013-14 SOC 499: AY 2015-16
<u>Application</u> : Students will be able to connect sociology to their public and private lives-as members of families and organizations and as citizens of local, national, and global communities.	101 (Introductory level) 301 (Intermediate level) 499 (Advanced level)	Portfolio analysis of application assignments in SOC 101, 301, & 499; Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision; Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision for each level during planned year of assessment.	SOC 101: AY 2016-17 SOC 301: AY 2013-14 SOC 499: AY 2015-16
<u>Social Research Methods</u> : Students will be able to explain causality and to posit interesting and important sociological research questions, analyze quantitative and qualitative data, interpret their findings and effectively communicate their results to appropriate audiences	101 (Introductory level) 302 (Intermediate level) 499 (Advanced level)	Portfolio analysis of research papers in 302 & 499; syllabus review in 101 Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision for each level during planned year of assessment.	SOC 101: AY 2016-17 SOC 302: AY 2014-15 SOC 499: AY 2015-16
<u>Communication</u> : Students will be able to demonstrate an ability to write and speak logically and cogently, to convey ideas and research findings to large audiences and small groups, to listen to others and respond constructively, and to demonstrate leadership skills and collaboration skills.	101 (Introductory level) 301/2 (Intermediate level) 499 (Advanced level)	Oral communication skill will be assessed by (1) collecting baseline data in SOC 101; (2) observation of SOC 302 research presentations; and (3) observation of student presentations in SOC 499 capstone. Writing skill will be assessed by (1) collecting baseline data by analyzing written assignment from a random sample of SOC 101 students; (2) analysis of the papers in SOC 301 & 302; (3) analysis of final paper in SOC 499 Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision for each level during planned year of assessment.	Written Communication SOC 101: AY 2016-17 SOC 301: AY 2013-14 SOC 302: AY 2014-15 SOC 499: AY 2015-16 Oral Communication assessment will be developed and implemented in AY 2017-18
<u>Information Literacy</u> : Students will be able to distinguish between scientifically-grounded observation, logical proposition, anecdote, and opinion.	101 (Introductory level) 499 (Advanced level)	Common assignment to be developed across SOC 101, portfolio analysis in 499 Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision for each level during planned year of assessment.	SOC 101: AY 2016-17 SOC 499: AY 2015-16