

Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2014 - 2015

Sociology BA/BS

Goal	1. Achieve Sociological Competency: Entry Level 🔑 Students who take introductory sociology classes will gain basic knowledge of social life, social change, and the causes and consequences of human behavior as they acquire the sociological perspective.
Objective (L)	1. Demonstrate Sociological Competency: Entry Level 🔑 Students who take introductory sociology classes that are included in the SHSU Core Curriculum will be able to demonstrate their understanding of the basic core concepts of the discipline and the sociological perspective.
Indicator	Comprehension Of Basic Core Concepts 🔑🔑 A sample of students enrolled in all of the three introduction-level sociology courses in the SHSU Core Curriculum (SOCI2319 in Component Area IV: Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts; and, SOCI1301 and SOCI1306 in Component Area V: Social and Behavioral Sciences) is chosen in the Spring semester for evaluation. Employing an extra credit opportunity format, students responded to a five question evaluation instrument for the Component Area V courses (see Attachment #1) and a ten question evaluation for the Component Area IV course (see Attachment #2) to measure their understanding of basic core concepts in Sociology. The selection of these indicators conforms to disciplinary standards for sociological research. This assessment was developed by the Department Undergraduate Committee and approved by the entire faculty.
Criterion	Desired Result: Comprehension Of Basic Core Concepts 🔑 At least 85% of participating students should have at least 3 correct answers out of the 5 questions.
Finding	Results: Comprehension Of Basic Core Concepts 🔑🔑 Component Area IV: Out of 847 participating students in 24 sections, 95.7% of the students performed satisfactorily (see Attachment #3). Component Area V: Out of 352 participating students in 9 sections, 93.1% of students performed satisfactorily (see Attachment #3).
Action	Comprehend Basic Core Concepts 🔑 The data indicate the desired result is exceeded regarding both component areas. The department will continue to ensure that entry level students understand the basic core concepts of sociology.

Goal **2. Sociological Competency: Mid-level** 🔑

Students who complete the mid-level assessment course, SOCI2399: Writing in Sociology, will gain knowledge and skills in writing sociologically.

Objective (L)	Demonstrate Sociological Competency: Mid-level 🔑 Sociology majors will be able to demonstrate the ability to write sociologically.
Indicator	Sociological Mid-level Papers 🔑 The SOCI 2399: Writing in Sociology is required as a mid-level course to achieve the BA/BS in Sociology.
Criterion	Desired Results: Mid-Level Sociological Papers 🔑 At least 75% of papers should be rated 3 or better on average for the three core areas.
Finding	Mid-Level Paper Findings 🔑 The initial evaluation method employed a pre- and post-format for student papers. This method was found lacking in several areas and needs to be reworked to better align the pre- and post-evaluation criteria with the respective assignments.
Action	Demonstrate Sociology Writing 🔑 The Departmental Undergraduate Studies Committee and the OATDB Coordinator will meet with the instructors for the SOCI2399: Writing in Sociology class and further evaluate the criteria and protocol for this mid-level assessment at the beginning of the Fall 2015 semester. As an outcome of this meeting, a revised protocol, including assessment rubrics, will be developed and implemented during the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 classes.

Goal	3. Sociological Competency: Exit Level 🔑 Students who complete the Sociology Program will have an advanced understanding of the core concepts of the discipline and the sociological perspective.
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Objective (L)	Demonstrate Sociological Competency: Exit Level 🔑 Sociology majors will be able to demonstrate and apply advanced sociological knowledge and scientific skills to critically analyze social phenomenon through a capstone research paper.
Indicator	Sociological Papers 🔑 🔑 The SOCI4399: Senior Seminar class is a required capstone course to achieve the BA/BS in Sociology. A sociological research paper is a requirement of the class. A random sample of twenty-five percent of student research papers are selected from SOCI4399: Senior Seminar class in the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 semesters for assessment of

their advanced sociological knowledge and scientific skills to critically analyze social phenomenon.

The Undergraduate Committee reviews the selected papers at the end of the Spring semester based on three core criteria in the discipline of Sociology: sociological theory; sociological methods; and sociological perspective. The selection of these criteria conforms to disciplinary standards for sociological research. The evaluation rubric was developed by the Undergraduate Committee and approved by the entire faculty (see Attachment #1).

Each paper is evaluated by three undergraduate committee members (two faculty members and the Director) using the evaluation rubric, where a score from 1 to 5 (1 is "no mastery" and 5 is "excellent mastery") is assigned in each of the three core areas. Note: The Undergraduate Committee is composed of four faculty members plus the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Each paper is evaluated two faculty members and the Director.

Criterion

Desired Result: Sociological Papers

At least 75% of papers should be rated 3 or better on average for the three core areas.

Finding

Sociological Papers

83.3% of the students' papers meet the minimum requirement. Attachment #1 includes the summary table of results. Attachment #2 includes two examples of graded rubrics. Attachment #3 includes two examples of "pass" papers. Attachment #4 includes two examples of "fail" papers.

Action

Apply Sociological Perspective, Theory, And Methods

The data indicate that the desired result is exceeded. Those students who did not perform satisfactorily did not meet the minimum evaluative criteria regarding use of the sociological perspective, demonstrate understanding of sociological theory, and apply appropriate sociological methods. The department will continue to make efforts in curricula and teaching to reduce the percentage of students who do not meet the minimum criteria.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

Regarding the entry level assessment, while in the 2014-2015 cycle we will maintain the desired criteria of the 2013-2014 cycle (minimum of 85%), the Sociology Department Undergraduate Program will put more effort on improving the learning outcomes of online students. The department has experienced a rapid increase in the number of students taking online classes. Online classes tend to exhibit more pedagogical challenges. To improve overall student learning outcomes, it is important to elevate the learning outcomes of online students. The Undergraduate Committee will develop instructional recommendations to improve students' learning outcomes by coordinating with the Department-level performance objectives regarding the undergraduate program.

Regarding the exit level assessment, the outcome of the exit-level evaluation met the desired criteria in the 2013-2014 cycle. To stabilize this successful pattern of student learning

outcomes, we will maintain the same criteria (minimum of 75%) for the 2014-2015 cycle, but continue to invest our effort on improvement of student learning outcomes. As part of this effort, the major challenges for students in the SOCI4399 class regarding the three core areas (theory, methods, and sociological perspective) will be identified and a plan for appropriate interventions will be discussed and suggestions for improvement provided by the undergraduate committee.

As a new component of continuous improvement, the SOCI2399: Writing in Sociology course will be included as a mid-level assessment for all sociology majors in the 2014-2015 cycle. To better prepare Sociology majors for writing in all upper-level courses, the SOCI2399 course was added to the Sociology major core requirements in Fall 2013. To develop the proposed mid-level assessment, a pilot evaluation protocol was created, implemented, and revised during the SOCI2399 course in Spring 2014.

In the 2014-2015 academic year, this course will be provided in the Fall and Spring semesters. The Undergraduate Committee will meet in early Fall 2014 and establish achievable criteria to measure mid-level student success toward the learning objectives. As a potential procedure, twenty-five percent of the students enrolled in each class will be randomly selected for assessment in both semesters. The Undergraduate Committee will review the papers at the end of the Spring semester based on the revised evaluation protocol.

Please detail the elements of your previous "Plan for Continuous Improvement" that were implemented. If elements were not implemented please explain why, along with any contextual challenges you may have faced that prevented their implementation.

Regarding Goal 1 to improve the outcomes of student learning in entry-level courses, the Department hosted a workshop by our highest rated online instructor to enhance online pedagogy and student learning outcomes.

The Department added a new goal regarding mid-level assessment. A pilot assessment was carried out in the Spring semester but due to major administrative and personnel changes in the department, this goal was not realized during this evaluation period, but will be re-engaged during the 2015-2016 evaluation period to further adjust and optimize the protocol for this assessment level.

Analysis of the exit-level data revealed the deficiency in performance level was primarily in area of the theory. The instructors for this course were informed of this finding and agreed to adjust the pedagogy accordingly.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2014 - 2015 Cycle Findings.

Regarding the entry-level assessment, the Undergraduate Committee will work with SHSU Online to standardize the delivery system in each class for the assessment of the learning comprehension for basic core concepts in Sociology. This will allow the Department to identify strengths and weaknesses item by item, as well as differentiate potential differences in online and in-person delivery systems related to core concept comprehension. The Department will maintain the existing criterion (85%) for the percentage of students meeting the minimum requirement for the desired learning outcome for the 2015-2016 assessment period.

Regarding the mid-level assessment, the Undergraduate Committee and OATDB Coordinator will work with the two instructors for the SOCI2399: Writing in Sociology course to evaluate the challenges faced in 2014-2015 in developing an assessment protocol for that course. A new pilot evaluation protocol will be created and implement during the 2015-2016 assessment cycle. The Department will maintain the proposed criterion (75%) for students meeting the minimum requirement for the desired learning outcome in the 2015-2016 cycle.

Regarding the exit-level assessment, the Undergraduate Committee will work with the two professors who teach this course to adjust the evaluation rubric to allow for enhanced inter-item analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the three criteria: theory, methods, and sociological perspective. The Department will maintain the existing criterion (75%) for students meeting the minimum requirement for the desired learning outcome in the 2015-2016 cycle.
