Central Washington University
Assessment of Student Learning
Department and Program Report

Please enter the appropriate information concerning your student learning assessment activities for this year.

Academic Year of Report: _2012_____ College: _COTS_______________
Department _Sociology______________ Program: ______________________

1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?
In answering this question, please identify the specific student learning outcomes you assessed this year, reasons for assessing these outcomes, with the outcomes written in clear, measurable terms, and note how the outcomes are linked to department, college and university mission and goals.

We were asked to assess reading skills this year, in terms of how effectively our students read course material, examine how clear the course material is in the minds of our students, and measure how well our students can summarize and demonstrate their understanding of what they read. The assessment of this goal was to occur with two types of courses: a) those courses that are part of the CWU General Education Program (GEP) and are designed to meet student learning outcomes related to reading and b) majors courses designed to assess the same goal. The courses selected were SOC 101 (general education – Social Problems), SOC 107 (general education and basic entry class into the major – Principles of Sociology), and SOC 489 (Senior Seminar for graduating majors). It had been suggested to use SOC 307 (American Society) in the reading assessment, but as it is only taught as an online class, the assessment cannot be given in a controlled classroom environment; therefore it is not included in our assessment.

Learning outcomes for our major and general education classes that are relevant to this assessment include: 1) the ability to demonstrate knowledge of how social conditions shape individual behavior and 2) apply the sociological perspective in analyzing social reality. The rubric that we were given included an assessment of two items that are directly associated with our departmental learning outcomes: 1) ability to summarize with details, 2) ability to use discipline specific vocabulary.

2. How were they assessed?
In answering these questions, please concisely describe the specific methods used in assessing student learning. Please also specify the population assessed, when the assessment took place, and the standard of mastery (criterion) against which you will compare your assessment results. If appropriate, please list survey or questionnaire response rate from total population.

A) What methods were used? We were given a reading rubric and specific instructions to use across the classes. A reading was selected directly from an introductory Sociology textbook and was used for all three (SOC 101, 107 and 489) class assessments. We followed the directions that were given to us for all classes, where we timed students to read for one minute and circle the last word that they read, and then asked them to summarize in 3 minutes what they had just read. The standard of mastery was to assess what students had written about the reading. We assessed whether they were able to include details from the reading, whether they were able to summarize the author’s intent, and whether they were able to demonstrate basic working knowledge of sociological terminology in their descriptions.

B) Who was assessed? As indicated in the assessment protocol, we were specifically asked to assess undergraduate students who were enrolled in our general education classes (SOC 101 and 107) and undergraduate students who were enrolled in major courses (SOC 107 and 489).
C) When was it assessed? Assessments in SOC 101, 107 and 489 classes were made in the fall quarter, as requested.

3. What was learned?
In answering this question, please report results in specific qualitative or quantitative terms, with the results linked to the outcomes you assessed, and compared to the standard of mastery (criterion) you noted above. Please also include a concise interpretation or analysis of the results.

SOC 489 (Senior Seminar)
- Represents Senior Sociology majors
- In terms of assessing rate of reading, 85% passed (between 190-200 wpm), 15% failed (under 190 wpm); 23% of the students read above 300 wpm
- In terms of assessing level of reading comprehension, 100% of student's summaries contained details, 85% used discipline specific vocabulary in their descriptions, and 100% communicated the author's intent.

SOC 107 (Principles of Sociology)
- Represents General Education Program and an entry class into the Sociology major
- Students are mostly Freshmen, mix of non-majors and newly declared majors
- In terms of assessing rate of reading, 88% passed (between 190-300 wpm), 12% failed (under 190 wpm); 50% of the students read above 300 wpm
- In terms of assessing level of reading comprehension, 88% of student's summaries contained details and had discipline specific vocabulary in their descriptions, and 100% communicated the author's intent.

SOC 101 (Social Problems)
- Represents General Education Program
- Students are mostly Freshmen and Sophomores, mix of non-majors and Sociology minors
- In terms of assessing rate of reading, 81% passed (between 190-300 wpm), 19% failed (under 190 wpm); 35% of the students read above 300 wpm
- In terms of assessing level of reading comprehension, 94% of students' provided summaries with details; 81% used discipline specific vocabulary in their descriptions, and 90% were able to communicate the author's intent.

Our findings indicate that the major and general education students who take our classes have proficient reading comprehension skills and good writing skills (as 87% passed all three areas of assessment), and can read between 190 and 300 wpm (as 84% passed the assessment and over 1/3 (38%) of all students could read above 300 wpm).

4. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?
In answering this question, please note specific changes to your program as they affect student learning, and as they are related to results from the assessment process. If no changes are planned, please describe why no changes are needed. In addition, how will the department report the results and changes to internal and external constituents (e.g., advisory groups, newsletters, forums, etc.).

We have not identified any specific changes to our program, as we do appear to be on point with our assessment on specific learning outcomes for the major and general education classes. We were concerned primarily with the assessments that addressed two departmental learning outcomes: 1) ability to summarize with details, 2) ability to use discipline specific vocabulary. We strongly feel that students have demonstrated those outcomes and do not feel at this time that we need to make changes or develop reports for constituents.

5. What did the department or program do in response to the assessment information?
In answering this question, please describe any changes that have been made to improve student learning based on previous assessment results. Please also discuss any changes you have made to your assessment plan or assessment methods.
In our general education classes, we do suggest that students examine the Reading across the Curriculum website to improve their reading comprehension skills, in order to adapt to college expectations. The assessment does not give us much to work with for improvement, as students do appear to be quite successful in their reading and writing skills. Regarding the writing component of this assessment (as our courses are writing intensive), we are able to identify students early on and suggest they visit programs such as the writing center/learning commons on campus for additional assistance.

6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning at Central Washington University:

Students stated that this test was a waste of valuable class time, as they had been assessed in this manner throughout grade school, middle school, and high school and did not feel it was beneficial to their university education. Students also stated that they had already taken the assessment in another class. In our opinion, we wonder whether some of the students who had failed the reading assessment were English as Second Language learners, as there are international students enrolled in our classes. It is also possible that students who failed may already be identified as at-risk, who are enrolled in university programs designed to help them succeed. Based on our assessment, it would appear that it would be more beneficial for specific programs that serve special populations to assess and address reading comprehension skills. It is in our opinion that these types of assessments may best be suited for students when they initially enter the university in order to identify students who may be at-risk.