1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?

Our department chose to assess two learning outcomes this year:

1. Students will demonstrate competence in the application of the sociological perspective. This relates to CWU’s strategic outcome 1.1.1 “Students will achieve programmatic learning outcomes.” This goal was chosen because our department faculty wanted to know if we needed to increase the number and type of mechanisms by which we assess this student learning outcome.

2. Students will demonstrate competence in sociological theory. This relates to CWU’s Strategic outcome 1.1.1 “Students will achieve programmatic learning outcomes.” We chose this goal because the Sociology faculty are interested in the extent to which students understand the basic theoretical underpinnings of Sociology, which include contemporary theorists.

2. How were the student learning outcomes assessed?

A) What methods were used?

Outcome 1, “students will demonstrate competence in the application of the sociological perspective,” was assessed in SOC 489, the Capstone seminar course using a student essay. The essays were reviewed using a rubric which identified competence in several areas, including the application of the sociological perspective. This essay requires students to integrate the knowledge and skills that they have acquired during their coursework in the major and is a direct measure of learning and performance. The minimal level of mastery is 90% of students met at the minimum average competence levels rating for the question that requires them to apply a sociological perspective to a current social issue.

Outcome 2, “students will demonstrate competence in describing the role of theory in building sociological knowledge” was assessed in SOC 489, the Capstone seminar course using a student essay. The essays were reviewed using a rubric which identified competence in several areas, including the application of the sociological perspective. This essay requires students to integrate the knowledge and skills that pertains to their demonstration of theoretical understanding that they have acquired during their coursework in the major and is a direct measure of learning and performance. The minimal level of mastery is 90% of students earn at the minimum, met competence levels rating the question that addressed their demonstrated knowledge of sociological theory, including the context in which theory is framed.
B) Who was assessed?

Outcome 1 was assessed in SOC 489 spring quarter. Twenty six students were assessed in the course. All 26 students answered the question that asked them to apply the sociological perspective to a current event.

Outcome 2 was assessed in SOC 489 spring quarter. Twenty six students were assessed in the course. All 26 students answered the question that asked them to identify aspects of sociological theories.

C) When was it assessed?

Both outcomes were assessed in SOC 489, Spring Quarter 2015.

3. What was learned?

Students demonstrated mastery in Outcome 1. Ninety percent of students met the minimum criteria when answering the essay question that asked them to apply the sociological perspective to a current event. Students were well prepared in applying the sociological perspective, which is focused on in the majority of their coursework.

Students demonstrated mastery in Outcome 2. Ninety percent of students met the minimum criteria when answering a essay question that asked them to identify the major theoretical orientation in Sociology, place them in context and describe how they have built sociological knowledge. Students were well prepared to identify sociological theories and their importance in the field.

4. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?

1. The goal identified by Outcome 1 fits well within our current major and is an important element in graduating as a Sociology major. The department faculty decided that in this instance we are not changing what appears to be effective. Students are able to apply the principles, concepts and sociological imagination in the world in which they live. We discussed these at a faculty meeting and they will be published on the College of the Sciences website and on the Associate Provost website.

2. The goal identified by Outcome 2 fits well within our current major and is an important element and skill that one has to graduate as a Sociology major. Students are learning from their experience the importance of theory and its role in sociological knowledge. We have as a department agreed upon the definition of what a theory is, the key theories students should know and the context in which those theories arose. We will not make any changes to our program. We discussed these at a faculty meeting and they will be published on the College of the Sciences website and on the Associate Provost website.

- In addition, how has/will the department report the results and changes to internal and/or external constituents (e.g., advisory groups, newsletters, forums, etc.)

5. What did the department or program do in response to previous years’ assessment results, and what was the effect of those changes?
We did not receive an assessment of the SLO’s in time to discuss them in a faculty meeting. Sociology does not specifically mention an assessment of attitudes in our Student Learning Outcomes. There is a need for clarification regarding what is meant by “attitudes” and attitudes about what? Does this mean attitudes, values, and habits of mind regarding education? We will have this discussion in the near future and after clarification may include them in our assessment.

6. Questions or suggestions? Contact Tom Henderson (henderst@cwu.edu) or Bret Smith (bpsmith@cwu.edu)