

## Program Assessment: Annual Report

**Program(s):** MA Sociology  
**Department:** Sociology and Anthropology  
**College/School:** Arts and Sciences  
**Date:** July 1, 2018  
**Primary Assessment Contact:** Richard Colignon

1. Which program student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

This is the second year of the assessment process plan as approved in October, 2015. The year 2 goal was to assess the demonstration of methodological skills taught/learned by the MA students through evaluation on these learning outcomes:

- a) Demonstrate appropriate application of research methodologies to their topic.
- b) Demonstrate appropriate analytic techniques for understanding information collected regarding the topic.
- c) Clearly present their research and analysis plan in a manner that demonstrated the viability of the research.
- d) Assess the demonstrated level of sophistication of the mythological plan.
- e) Assess the level of sophistication of the analytical plan of the student.

2. What data/artifacts of student learning were collected for each assessed outcome? Were Madrid student artifacts included?

We assessed these outcomes by reading the thesis of graduating students. In addition, we conducted focus group interviews of our graduate students as our indirect measure of our programs effectiveness in imparting methodological knowledge as well as their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses our program.

3. How did you analyze the assessment data? What was the process? Who was involved?

**NOTE: If you used rubrics as part of your analysis, please include them in an appendix.**

These reviews of the thesis was completed by a committee (Drs. Tomazic, Matsuo, Sandoval and Colignon) and served as a direct measure of our student learning outcomes. In addition, we conducted focus group interviews of our graduate students as our indirect measure of our programs effectiveness in imparting methodological knowledge as well as their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses our program.

4. What did you learn from the data? Summarize the major findings of your analysis for each assessed outcome.

**NOTE: If necessary, include any tables, charts, or graphs in an appendix.**

The committee (Professors Tomazic, Matsuo, Sandoval, and Colignon) reviewed the completed thesis. They graded each of the outcomes using a rubric on a scale of 1-5 (1 = weaker/lower, 3 = adequate, 5 = superior) for each of the learning outcomes and provided qualitative comments when warranted. The committee grading indicated that the student demonstrated proficiency on all dimensions. In particular, the thesis demonstrated a “methodological plan” at or above a master’s level student and an “analytic plan” at a doctoral level (rubric attached).

Our indirect measure of methodological sophistication of teaching and learning was derived from an exit interviews with our 4 graduate students conducted May 8, 2018. Dr. Jennings conducted the focus group. We used a scheduled but unstructured interview script to prompt the students but to allow them to take the topic where they wanted and with as much intensity as they preferred.

Generally, students were comfortable and confident in their knowledge of research methodology. They were most responsive to questions on their experience with “hands-on research experience, noting positive experiences from SOC 5050, Quantitative Analysis, and SOC 6100 and SOC 5600, Regression Analysis and Research Methodology courses as the most helpful courses in building sophistication in research methodology. They were positive about the labs and available facilities. The students also indicated that they had ample opportunity to present their research and “well equipped” from their courses to publicly present their research.

5. How did your analysis inform meaningful change? How did you *use the analyzed data to make or implement recommendations for change* in pedagogy, curriculum design, or your assessment plan?

A discussion for last year was to better publicize our assessment expectations (rubrics) to the students and instructors before assessments are done on completed theses. So the Sigma Xi and instructor evaluations were used, in part, to identify the “Outstanding Graduate Student” award winners. The awardee(s) is/are publicly recognized at our graduation party taking place each year after pre-commencement ceremonies in May. The chair, directors/coordinators/faculty review these Assessment Reports at their retreat and monthly meetings. A few instructors have encouraged out graduate students to present their work at local and regional academic conferences as well as submit their work for professional publications.

In addition, this past year we used our assessment reports to implement curricular change modifying the MA program by reducing the number of credits from 33 to 30 credits to bring it in line with similar programs on campus and with our peer institutions.

This year students expressed interest in better mentoring to communicate the available courses and the certificate in GIS; help in getting their thesis started in the summer between their first and second year.

Student expressed satisfaction with the available course but interest/concern about the absence of the Organizational Theory and a course on Race and Ethnicity.

6. Did you follow up (“close the loop”) on past assessment work? If so, what did you learn? (*For example, has that curriculum change you made two years ago manifested in improved student learning today, as evidenced in your recent assessment data and analysis?*)

Feedback to graduating students was given directly in the exit interviews. Faculty and staff will review assessment results at the annual retreat in August. The final report on the issue of Goal #2 will be distributed to all faculty and graduate students, as well as in the departmental newsletter, which is also distributed to alumni.

***IMPORTANT: Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.***

**Appendix**

Rubrics for the Learning Outcomes Assessment

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Rubric for the evaluation of the final project, of either a “thesis” or “two final papers,” from graduate students in the MA program in sociology, in regards to program learning outcome #2:

Appropriately apply major research methodologies utilized in sociology. (**Knowledge – methods and analysis**)

1. Does the paper/thesis show application of appropriate research methodologies to the topic?

1 Unacceptable	2 Weak	3 Adequate	4 Good	5 Excellent
No functional presentation of a methodological plan is provided.	Inquiry design demonstrates a misunderstanding of the methodology and its application.	Critical elements of the methodology are missing, incorrectly developed or unfocused.	Critical elements of the methodology are appropriately developed ; however, more subtle elements are ignored or left unexplained.	All elements of the methodology are skillfully developed. Appropriate methodologies are applied and/or synthesized from across discipline or subdisciplines.

Comments regarding the application of research methodologies. If there are deficiencies, please describe.

2. Does the paper/thesis show application of appropriate analytical techniques for understanding information collected regarding the topic?

1 Unacceptable	2 Weak	3 Adequate	4 Good	5 Excellent
No functional presentation of an analysis plan is provided.	Analysis plan demonstrates a misunderstanding of the analytical techniques and their application.	Analysis plan listed and adequate but described in a mechanical manner with limited connection	Analysis plan shows a good understanding of the analytical techniques. Rationale for selection is not explicitly or	Analysis plan shows a strong understanding of the analytical techniques, both strengths and limitations. Explicitly describes the compelling rationale for the use of selected analytical techniques.

		to the topic or issue.	adequately described.	
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Comments regarding the application of analytical techniques. If there are deficiencies, please describe.

3. Does the student clearly present his/her research and analysis plan in a manner that demonstrates the viability of the research?

❶ Unacceptable	❷ Weak	❸ Adequate	❹ Good	❺ Excellent
No functional presentation of a literature and/or theoretical review.	Organization and synthesis in the methodological and analytical plans have serious gaps and omissions.	Organization and synthesis in the methodological and analytical plans have some gaps and omissions.	Organizes and synthesizes the methodological and analytical plans but described in a manner that is not easily replicated.	Organizes and synthesizes the methodological and analytical plans such a manner as to easily replicate research.

Comments regarding the communication of methodology and analytical plans. If there are deficiencies, please describe.

4. At what level would you place the methodological plan of this student?

❶ Beginning Undergrad student	❷ Senior Undergrad student	❸ Master's level student	❹ Doctoral level student	❺ Professional level colleague

Comments regarding the student's level of work in the paper. If there are deficiencies, please describe.

5. At what level would you place the analytical plan of this student?

❶ Beginning Undergrad student	❷ Senior Undergrad student	❸ Master's level student	❹ Doctoral level student	❺ Professional level colleague

Comments regarding the student's level of work in the paper. If there are deficiencies, please describe.