AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SOCIOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM AT THE FOUR UNIVERSITIES IN THE EASTERN SEABOARD REGION

by

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   *The field of study*

Higher education in South Africa (S.A.) has been marked by inequality and imbalances at all levels from funding, type of governance and the quality of academic programmes. The South African government has embarked on a massive campaign to transform higher education underpinned by principles of social redress. In February 1995, the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) was appointed to provide the government with a set of policy recommendations that: "... will help to restructure the fragmented higher education sectors in South Africa into a single, coherent, national system" (Singh, 1997:3).

Among the key recommendations in the NCHE Report and the Draft White Paper on Higher Education is the need to develop the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which will fall under the South African Qualifications Association (SAQA) set up under the South African Qualifications Act of 1995.

The NQF is expected to guide and structure the quality of teaching, learning and accreditation at universities. The objectives of the NQF are, according to Singh (1997:3):

*   "... create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;

*   facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and

        career paths;

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* enhance the quality of education and training;

* accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities, and thereby

* contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large."

It is within the context of the objectives of the NQF that an assessment of academic programmes become essential. The Draft White Paper goes on to state that this assessment is provided for by the Higher Education Bill by informing and co-ordinating quality assurance in higher education through a Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). The HEQC would have functions of programme accreditation and institutional auditing. The Bill goes on to state that: "... it should operate within an agreed framework underpinned by:

* the formulation of criteria and procedures in collaboration with higher education institutions;

* a formative notion of quality assurance focused on improvement and development rather than punitive sanction; and

* a mix of institutional self-evaluation and external independent assessment" (Singh, 1997:3).

Quality assurance in higher education has been gaining prominence since the 1980s in Europe, Latin America and to some extent Asia and Africa (Kells, 1993:8). In South Africa the Certificate Council for Technikon Education (SERTEC) has paved the way twelve years ago, followed by the Committee for University Principals (CUP) and the

Quality Promotion Unit (QPU) which is promoting the concepts of Quality Assurance and Quality Audit (Singh, 1997:3).

While individual units and individual universities (UOFS) have been promoting quality assurance audits for some time, it is only now that Kwa-Zulu Natal has reached regional consensus on the importance of quality assurance and the recognition that:

*   "Quality assurance is one of the most important dimensions affecting the transformation of tertiary education;

*   there is increasing evidence of globalization of quality assurance; and

•   there is an urgent need to promote awareness of quality assurance among administrators and academics" (Singh, 1997:3).

Clearly the need for an examination of the university curriculum with regard to social relevance, market needs, standards, quality of work and the quality of undergraduate/post-graduate programmes becomes essential. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine, audit or assess the general university curriculum. However, an assessment of the sociology undergraduate curriculum would serve to:

*   Reassure the university that the quality of academic work is up to standard.

*   Reassure society that they are delivering the services they are paid to deliver.

*   Assure customers, students, employers and grant awarding bodies that their services are up to standard.

*   Examine the market relevance of the course.

*   Contribute to the body of knowledge of quality assurance in higher education.

*   Enhance the present system of assessment and evaluation of academic programmes.

* Stimulate debate and discussion regarding the relevance of the discipline itself.

1.2 *The motivation and rationale of the study*

While higher education in South Africa has high quality courses and programmes, Scott (1994:4) claims that the higher education sector is not in good shape to meet the challenges of the new dispensation. He claims "... there are ample indications that in key respects the formal teaching and learning processes in higher education institutions are failing to cater effectively for the current range of students entering the sector. These indications include:

* Unacceptably low success rates in many undergraduate courses (numerate or science-related courses) at first year level and among black students.

* Poor throughput and graduation rates, it being common that fewer than two-thirds of students in key degree/diploma programmes graduate at all and that fewer than a third graduate in the prescribed time recognized for subsidy purposes.

* Indications of growing dissatisfaction among employers about the quality and appropriateness of higher education output, as well as indications of increasing graduate unemployment, not all of which can be attributable to economic recession.

* Evidence of disturbingly high levels of disaffection and frustration among students and staff, not all of which can be readily or directly attributable to the political factors that have prevailed over the last decade."

Despite the above problems in higher education, little has been done, both institutionally and in national policy, to restructure mainstream degrees and diplomas to accommodate the realities of the output of the secondary system by:

* "Ensuring that curricular and teaching approaches are based on realistic assumptions about the knowledge and skills that students can be expected to bring with them into higher education; and

* Ensuring that curriculum structures are flexible enough to cater fairly for the diversity of educational background and needs in student intake" (Scott, 1994:4).

* Providing some form of assessment and evaluation of the curriculum at an institutional, departmental and discipline level.

* The U.K. and the Australian White Papers on higher education demand the development of systematic procedures for evaluating the quality of higher education, including arrangements for appraising academic staff, obtaining feedback from students, and monitoring student achievements. Presently, there is a dearth of information on assessment of the quality of teaching, courses and institutions.

* A need to examine regional and inter-institutional initiatives in responding to the demands for increased efficiency and effectiveness of institutions to meet national goals of economic growth.

* The ability of the curriculum to respond to the needs of a changing and diverse student population.

The need for transparency, accountability and democracy may therefore force universities to a process of both internal and external monitoring and assessment of its activities.

This is clearly reflected in the draft White Paper on higher education which proposes the creation of a National Quality Assurance System. This is bound to have far-reaching implications for the improvement and maintenance of quality in higher education. Plans are also underway to launch a regional quality-assurance programme through the province's higher education consortium, the Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions [esATI] (McGregor, 1997:9). The current study provides a regional assessment and is therefore useful in that it would:

*   Contribute to the body of knowledge on curriculum development/ assessment;

*   Assess the relevance of the curriculum;

*   Provide suggestions on curriculum development in the discipline of sociology;

*   Create opportunities for debate on regional co-operation; and

*   Provide suggestions on the improvement of the course with regard to content instructional method and assessment practices.

At a personal level, the rationale for a study of this nature is directly linked to the researcher's involvement in sociology, as a student, a tutor and a researcher. The researcher was in a fortunate position of being involved in academic development activities (AD) within sociology as both tutor and researcher. Being involved in AD activities naturally forced the researcher into examining issues related to student, staff and curriculum development. This study is, therefore, an extension of previous research.

1.3   Objectives of the study

With every study, there is a problem statement which informs the objectives of the study. This problem is captured in the statement: "Between this past which struggles to

survive, and this future which fears to be born, lies the nitty-gritty. It is about the legitimacy and governance of the higher education system, as well as about its rectification" (Moulder, 1994:2).

The curriculum survives on the basis of its legitimacy and functions through various mechanisms of governance within higher education. It gains recognition and support through its apparent contribution to socio-economic, political and educational needs. Yet, in spite of the significance of the way knowledge is created within the portals of higher education, there is a glaring lack of evaluatory research on the university curriculum.

Therefore, the objectives of the study are:
Assessing the sociology undergraduate curriculum at the Universities of Durban-Westville (UDW), Zululand (UNIZUL), Natal-Durban (UND)and Natal - Pietermaritzburg (UNP) in terms of:

"... unpacking the curriculum in order to understand the plan" (Jansen and Reddy, 1996:4). In its simplest form it would involve:

*   Unpacking the curriculum into its component parts (eg. learning, teaching, knowledge, society, resources).

*   Evaluate how the parts fit together, in terms of focus and coherence.

*   Check underlying beliefs and assumptions.

*   Seek justification for curriculum choices and assumptions (Jansen and Reddy, 1996:4).

1.4 *Assumptions upon which the study is based*

(i)   An assessment of the sociology undergraduate curriculum forms an essential component of quality assurance within a transforming higher education system.

(ii)   There is a need to justify the existence of the discipline.

(iii)   The sociology undergraduate curriculum needs to assure all stakeholders that the knowledge imparted is largely relevant to social, economic and ideological needs.

(iv)   An audit/assessment of the curriculum would serve to enhance and promote "standards".

(v)   It would contribute towards the debates on social redress.

1.5 *Background studies on curriculum assessment*

The basic notion of a curriculum is what is taught, to whom it is taught, how and why it is taught. Hartman and Warren (1994:6) expand on this definition by explaining that: "... 'what' may be understood as not only encompassing content, but also the skills, procedures and concepts required for mastery in a particular field of knowledge; the 'how' implies the educational philosophy, the methods of teaching and assessment, and the way that a programme is organized; and the 'whom' suggests that cognisance is taken of the backgrounds, learning needs and interests, and study orientations of the students." The above comprehensive definition of the curriculum highlights various crucial aspects of the curriculum that bear relevance on the quality of academic work produced, the process by which it is produced, the actors involved in this production and creation of knowledge and the nature of the relationship between the teacher and the student. Given the scenario, an assessment would include understanding the structure of

a course, in terms of content and sequence, the people who impart this knowledge, the methods used in teaching and the student population as recipients of this knowledge. This concern with the content and relevance of the sociology undergraduate curriculum is one that pertains to other disciplines as well. McGregor (1997:9) expresses this concern when she claims that ten years ago a university degree guaranteed a job. However, today, thousands of graduates are unemployed and she claims: "... there is increasing scepticism about degree standards" (McGregor, 1997:9).

While this judgement about the quality of a degree is based on an economic judgement, one cannot ignore the growing need for some kind of assurance of an entire degree, an entire undergraduate curriculum or even part of it. Saunders (1992:4) had raised a similar concern and warned that: "... some countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, have lost quality in both teaching and research and have lost the capacity to play the crucial developmental role which universities and other institutions should play." Within the context of the current study, the issues that need to be examined are the quality of teaching and research within the discipline of sociology in relation to the developmental role it should be playing. The following discussion further suggests that higher education in South Africa could easily fall into a continuing state of decline. Saunders (1992:4) ascribes the poor quality of teaching and research to a decline in the quality of higher education which is seen as a direct result of:

* inability of universities to cope with large numbers of students, for example, Kenya;

* rapidly diminishing resources together with increasing student numbers leading to a decline in standards and loss of morale;

* short to medium-term overproduction of graduates in the public sector;

*   graduate unemployment and underemployment;

*   inappropriate government involvement in university matters; and

*   the great reduction in research in most Sub-Saharan African universities causing
        damage to post-graduate education particularly in the fields of science and
        education.

The implications of the above for an assessment of the sociology undergraduate
curriculum are the need to:

*   examine the numbers and composition of students at each level;

*   the quality and quantity of resources;

*   the quality of teaching and morale among academic staff;

*   the integration of sociology graduates into the market;

*   the issue of employment, unemployment and the vocational relevance of
        sociology;

*   the role of government and the state in allocating resources and controlling
        curricular;

*   the quality and relevance of research produced. This becomes even more relevant
        when examining the discipline of sociology, since it is meant to fulfil a social and
        ideological need.

Within the context of South African higher education, the need to measure, assess or
evaluate aspects of the university, in this case, the undergraduate curriculum, fall within
the debates related to standards and the widening of admissions policy (social redress)
which together inform, direct and guide curricular changes in South Africa. This debate

forces a search for a new model on the structure of the university curriculum that points towards Africa, Asia and Latin America for guidance.

The World Bank gives recognition to the "remarkable progress" made in Africa after independence but while figures are impressive: "... the only disappointing aspect was that there were 100 000 Africa students studying abroad" (Turok, 1993:4).

This figure further reinforces the need to review what is taught, how it is taught and why it is taught. A comprehensive assessment of the curriculum is bound to indicate the strengths and weaknesses, the gaps, the cost-effectiveness and the relevance of various disciplines.

The World Bank further believes that rapid expansion in Africa has brought the following problems:

*   an abundance of institutions;

*   graduates of low quality; and

*   dubious relevance and escalation of costs (Turok, 1993:4).

Given the regional focus of this study, it would be well worth examining if there is a need to merge various disciplines (in this case sociology) and explore ways of reducing costs while maintaining quality.

The situation in Asia is somewhat different. While India has followed the same path and experienced the same problems, it has a large industrial sector staffed by Indians (not expatriates as in Africa) and is a major exporter of technicians and professionals. Turok

(1993:3) further claims that: "... a government determined to expand educational provision might nevertheless be able to give serious attention to standards, thereby laying the best possible basis for the country's development."

It is evident that an assessment of the curriculum would have to explore the issue of standards, quality and relevance in great detail.

To sum up the debate on standards and entry requirements and its bearing on the assessment of an undergraduate curriculum, Saunders (1992) emphasizes the importance of having adequate entry requirements for university admission if quality is to be achieved. Many western countries have managed to maintain standards through a selective admissions policy. This, however, prejudices disadvantaged students. Moreso in the South African context. Mamdani (993:6-12) criticized how: "... the new post-independent African universities ... stood as custodians of standards in outputs of civilization", resulting in "... the creation of an intelligentsia with little stamina for the process of development whose vanguard we claimed to be".

Sociology is a discipline that is rooted in the everyday happenings of life and society. It has progressed from its philosophical underpinnings to its contemporary concern with explaining social behavior and influencing policy. There is, therefore, clearly a need to assess the ability of the discipline to address these needs and maintain relevance and quality.

1.6   *The national commission on higher education (NCHE) and quality assurance*

A study of this nature would to some extent be informed by the recommendations of the NCHE. A need for a systematic form of quality control or assurance increases with an increase in problems experienced in higher education. While technikons have SERTEC as the auditing body of its curricular, the university does not engage in this form of assessment except for formal accreditation of certain programmes by professional bodies and external examiners (in some cases only). While academic autonomy is highly valued in universities, the time has come for accountability and quality assurance of programmes that would respond to questions of quality of a particular programme and programmes among institutions. To date, the sociology undergraduate programme has not been subjected to an assessment by an external body. This, however, would change with the creation of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) which would operate within the framework of the SAQA Act and act as an umbrella body for quality assurance in higher education with specialist bodies undertaking the external evaluation function.

For legitimacy and acceptance such a system must operate within an agreed framework underpinned by:

*   Formulation of criteria and procedures in consultation with higher education institutions.

*   A focus on improvement rather than sanctions, with quality assurance not directly linked to funding.

*   A combination of instructional self-evaluation and external evaluation.

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Further to this, SERTEC should form the nucleus of the HEQC who would carry out the HEC's statutory authority for accreditation of higher education programmes. Quality promotion activities should be encouraged and monitored by the HEC, but undertaken on an agency basis. The proposed Quality Promotion Unit (QPU) of the CUP could play this role, and its scope could be broadened beyond the university (NCHE, 1997:10-12).

1.7   *The scope of the study*

Higher education plays a key developmental role and the concern with quality and standards has created a wealth of information. Various aspects on higher education are debated in academic and governmental levels. However, there is minimal empirical evidence and research on these issues. The issue of the university curriculum is a significant one since it forms an integral component of the academic programme and the final product - the degree.

Miller (1987:5) provides working definition of the university curriculum as: "... the total planned learning programme for any student." The concept of the university curriculum is broad and comprehensive and therefore includes all disciplines from science, law, theology, commerce, arts, social sciences, dentistry, medicine and health sciences. The scope of this study with regard to the faculty is restricted to the Faculty of Arts with emphasis on the undergraduate (levels 1, 2 and 3) sociology curriculum at the universities in the Eastern Seaboard Region (esATI). It is therefore subject specific and region specific.

A comprehensive assessment of the sociology undergraduate curriculum would be carried out. This regional sample of universities (Zululand, Durban-Westville and Natal-Durban and Pietermaritzburg) is reflective of the nature of the curriculum at universities in South Africa. The sample includes both historically white and historically black universities. This would provide an indication of the differences and similarities within the curriculum as it relates to the historical imbalances of the past, our inheritance thereof and its inevitable influence in shaping the curriculum. This study has the potential to make some kind of value-judgement about the undergraduate curriculum and provide recommendations and suggestions. It does not go beyond that.

1.8 *Restrictions on the present study*

A basic restriction to the study is that the sample does not extend to all universities in South Africa. Therefore, in a sense, views are bound to reflect the topical and popular issues frequently discussed by people working closely together. There is also a sense of how much of co-operation can an outside researcher expect to gain from universities and departments who may not feel compelled to participate. And even if they do participate, it is minimal and resistant.

A limited amount of empirical research in the area of quality assurance in higher education would reduce the empirical and theoretical support required. However, research on curriculum development is abundant and would serve to reinforce and develop ideas already outlined.

Certain terms used in the current study may convey negative meanings. These terms include "disadvantaged", "deprived", "linguistically disadvantaged", and others. However, these concepts are used for want of better words. They do aid in clarifying ideas, events, situations and processes.

This study focuses only on the sociology undergraduate curriculum at these universities. While this is the case, the findings could have some bearing on the post-graduate curriculum as well. But, the assessment does not go beyond the discipline of sociology or the undergraduate curriculum. This assessment does not claim to provide answers and solutions but rather pave the way for critical debate on the sociology curriculum, its relevance, its social and economic value and its claim towards recognition as a discipline and profession. At best, it would make some kind of value-judgement on the nature of the curriculum. Its primary function would be to provide guidelines for implementation of changes through a process of analysis and synthesis.

1.9   Some preliminary considerations

This study is largely motivated and informed by the recommendations of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) and the results should therefore contribute to these findings. This study is also bound to link up with research and investigations of significant organizations (esATI and Tertiary Education Linkages Project (TEL). These factors would have to be considered and attempts be made to link with significant others to further collaborative efforts.

Given the vastness (four institutions) and complexity of the empirical part of the study, it is crucial that the researcher treads with caution. A great deal of tact, diplomacy and tacit appeal would have to be exercised in negotiating with outside universities and departments for permission to carry out an assessment/study of this nature. No one is compelled to participate in this study. Yet, its execution is of the utmost importance. A great deal of interpersonal skill would need to be drawn upon in gaining permission, access, acceptance and recognition as both researcher and student.

This research also entails interacting with a wide and diverse range of stakeholders, all of whose interests could be compromised or sacrificed, depending on the results of the assessment. Again, it becomes imperative to convince significant others of the importance of this study, that it would only serve to enhance and develop existing programmes, it fits into the call for quality assurance and that it would benefit individual departments towards their annual review of courses offered. The researcher has no hidden agenda.

While this assessment focuses specifically on the sociology undergraduate curriculum, it should bear relevance and provide insight on other disciplines as well. It is hoped that the results of this study would be of benefit to as many people as possible.

1.10   Definition of concepts used in the study

Definitions of the following concepts serve to provide clarity and direct conceptual understanding of the study. Other concepts will be defined as they appear in the text.

(i)   **Black:**   include all students who are Indian, African or Coloured.

(ii)   **HWU:**   Historically white universities in South Africa that include:

University of Natal - (Durban (UND)

English medium.

University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg (UNP) - English medium

University of Witwatersrand (Wits) - English medium

University of Cape Town (UCT) - English medium

University of South Africa (UNISA) - Dual medium

University of Stellenbosch - Dual medium

Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) - Afrikaans medium

University of Pretoria - Dual medium

University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) - Dual medium

University of Potchefstroom for CHE – Afrikaans medium

Orange Free State (UOFS) – Dual medium

(iii)   **HBU:**   Historically black universities in South Africa that includes: Medical

University of South Africa (Medunsa) - English medium.

University of the North - English medium

Vista University - English medium

University of Zululand (UNIZUL) - English medium

University of Durban-Westville (UDW) - English medium

University of Western Cape (UWC) - English medium

University of Fort Hare - English medium

University of the Transkei (UNITRA) - English medium

University of Northwest - English medium

(iv) **First World:** are countries which have a developed, free-market economy. These include W. Europe, United States of America (USA) and Japan (Smell and Witherick, 1989:226).

(v) **Third World:** are underdeveloped, free-market economies. These include the very rich like Kuwait, the very poor like Bangladesh, some very complex like Brazil, and some simple economies like Paraguay (Small and Witherick, 1989:226).

(vi) **Curriculum:** "the set of broad inter-related decisions about what is taught that characterize the general framework from within which teaching is planned and learning takes place" (Miller, 1987:6).

(vii) **Programmes:** A coherent set of courses and/or modules which advance knowledge and collectively skill individuals with particular competencies thereby making them more marketable (Parekh, 1998:3).

1.11 *General structure of the present study*

Chapter One outlines the nature of the problem and the focus of the study.

Chapter Two begins with a discussion on the undergraduate curriculum with specific reference to the sociology undergraduate curriculum at the four universities. The rationale is provided for assessing the sociology undergraduate curriculum. Specific

criteria for this assessment are then discussed in detail. This discussion is then linked to the need for quality assurance in higher education with specific reference to the undergraduate curriculum. The need for assessment is then contextualised among models for assessing a curriculum.

The above is then located within the paradigms of modernism and post-modernism with a view to examining its influence on the nature and shape of the contemporary university curriculum. Both schools of thought provide a theoretical framework that is useful for directing the course of this study and understanding the philosophical underpinnings of the undergraduate curriculum. This will be dealt with in Chapter Three.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods would be employed in the empirical study. The starting point would be to examine existing records and interview key informants. Each level of the course would be assessed against an extensive list of criteria, that examine all aspects of a course. At the first level, a course experience questionnaire would be administered to students to ascertain the quality of teaching. This questionnaire method comprised of both open-ended and closed-ended questions that would best serve the purposes of this study. At the second level, lecturers views regarding various aspects of the course would be examined. This will be done against a checklist.

Chapter Four deals with issues of methodology.

Chapter Five will provide an analysis and interpretation of data.

The conclusions, summary and recommendations will be provided in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER TWO

TOWARDS ASSESSING THE SOCIOLOGY

UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

2.1   *Introduction*

There are as many definitions as there are interpretations of the term curriculum. This interpretation ranges from a broad perspective to a narrow specific view. A broad definition of the curriculum is one which is at the heart of the education system (Government Gazette, 1997:1). It can also be defined specifically as " ... a plan of activities deliberately organized so that students will attain, by learning, certain educational ends or objectives" (Hirst, 1974:32). Within the context of higher education, the curriculum can be defined as " ... the total planned learning program for any one student" (Miller, 1986:4). The undergraduate curriculum can be defined as the learning opportunities available to students at the pre-baccalaureate level" (Levine, 1985:536).

Given this wide, complex and diverse descriptions of the curriculum, assessing it can become just as wide, complex and diverse. It would therefore appear that a model of assessment would serve to narrow and focus any attempts at assessment. Unfortunately, there isn't a single model that can fully and completely analyze a curriculum and specifically the undergraduate curriculum. At best, a framework for assessment can be developed. This would be based on various aspects taken from different models and adapted to this specific study.

An examination of the undergraduate curriculum would be followed by a detailed analysis of the curriculum into its component parts as outlined in the objectives in Chapter 1.3. This analysis would then be contextualized within the broad movement of quality assurance and its relevance for this study. An overview of models for assessing curriculum would be presented with a view to identifying specific criteria for assessing the sociology undergraduate curriculum.

2.2   *The undergraduate curriculum*

The undergraduate curriculum focuses on the planned learning experiences for individual students among a number of students enrolled in a common pattern of courses which make up the total curriculum from a range of courses which best suit the students and interests (Guy and Neave, 1994:1524). The educational activities of the university can be further described as " ... a number of separate academic courses which, combined, comprise the requirements for a particular degree" (Frame, 1994:6). Debates on the content of the undergraduate curriculum engage at two levels: "at the level of a particular course (in this case sociology), and at the level of a degree programme" (in this case the Bachelor of Arts degree) (Frame, 1994:6).

The undergraduate degree/curriculum has a particular structure which gives it its distinctive character. First, is the major or concentration, " ... which usually consists of a number of courses in one field or in two or more related fields, is the depth component of the undergraduate curriculum" (Levine, 1985:28). Its aim is to provide students with a body of knowledge, methods of inquiry/study/research and practice appropriate to a specific subject or discipline.

Cowley as cited in Payton (1961:57) identifies three alternative purposes for the major as non-preparatory specialization that involves learning for its own sake rather than preparation for a career, preparatory specialization is professional education leading to medical school, law school, graduate school or the like and occupational specialization leads directly to a career in areas such as education, business or engineering. The study of the discipline/subject sociology includes a combination of both non-preparatory and preparatory specialization. Initially it had emerged as learning for its own sake but has evolved as a discipline that also feeds into specific disciplines like social work, development studies and medical sociology. This concentration in a discipline is called a disciplinary major.

Second, an interdisciplinary major is one that includes a joint major involving a combination of two or more disciplines. It can be defined as " ... any formally established or institutionalized concentration linking two or more disciplines" (Levine, 1985:35). The discipline sociology lends itself well to an interdisciplinary major but the norm at most South African universities is generally a single discipline major. This, however, will be explored later in depth in the assessment. The single discipline major is just part of the wider degree structure.

While the disciplinary and interdisciplinary major aims to develop a specialization in a particular discipline, the purpose of the undergraduate degree is to further the general academic goals of a university. At a university, educational ends or objectives could mean many things, some of which are basic competencies such as predicting, evaluating, understanding, critical thinking, writing, referencing, applying and theorizing. And, in order to ensure that standards are maintained specific mechanisms are built into the

curriculum. This is achieved through a process of assessing student learning. This will be discussed in depth later. But, within the South African context there is the opinion that many students, both black and white, cannot even demonstrate these basic competencies (Jansen, 1995:6). Hence, the need to assess the undergraduate curriculum.

2.2.1   *The South African context*

Higher education in South Africa has undergone some profound changes which will have far-reaching consequences on the undergraduate curriculum in general and on specific disciplines in particular. In light of the governmental imperatives on rationalization and budget cuts universities are forced to examine and review what is taught, how it is taught and why it is taught. It is in this context that the need to examine the purpose and need for teaching sociology exists. While this study makes a separate plea for assessing the sociology undergraduate curriculum, these efforts are neither new nor will they be final.

Efforts at examining the curriculum revolve largely around the widespread concern about standards and relevance at university. Interrogating the curriculum, within South African higher education, has begun with academic development (AD) related activities. AD and standards are basically the same side of the coin. But, Jansen (1995:6) argues that " ... the response to this concern should be met with 'whose standards' and 'what standards'. This response shifts the debate beyond academic development as remediation, to standards of engagement with the mainstream university curriculum" (Jansen, 1995:6). All disciplines, subjects, courses, modules including sociology would have to undergo an intense review of both their undergraduate and post-graduate curriculum within the context of wider social, economic and demographic concerns. At the same time, any

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curriculum changes would have to be carried out in a way that allows it to compare on a global level.

Again and again the issue of standards emerge. But, Jansen (1995:6) is of the opinion that " ... such standards have yet to be achieved by South African universities." Furthermore, he states: "The construct of standards of engagement stand on three legs.

*   The need to review what we teach.

*   The need to review how we teach.

*   The need to review the environment in which we teach" (Jansen, 1995:7). The latter is significant in the light of the large number of underprepared students at university and the subsequent need for an appropriate academic environment.

Therefore, within the South African higher education system, the link between AD and curriculum development/assessment is strong. While AD activities in most South African universities and in most disciplines (including sociology), has, to some extent, succeeded in addressing the problems of articulation between weak secondary schooling and higher education, it has been confined to peripheral, marginal programmes with little impact on the mainstream curriculum. What these activities have indicated is that the performance of underprepared students can be improved through these programmes and the increase in demand for alternatives to the traditional curriculum suggests that the articulation problem is real and can be addressed (Scott, 1994:10).

One of the challenges facing a rapidly changing higher education sector in South Africa is the ever-widening admissions policy and the educational problems created as a result of that. One of the biggest challenges facing higher education is the curriculum as it relates

to every discipline including sociology. Some of the criticisms against present curricular frameworks are that it " ... came into being many decades ago but have not subsequently been fundamentally and systematically reviewed in relation to changing circumstances" (Scott, 1994:9). In fact " ... the 'transformed curriculum' is more easily defined in terms of what it is not, rather than in terms of what it will be" (Frame, 1994:6). Many academics (and others) regard the basic structural elements of degree and diploma programmes as " ... immutable" (Scott, 1994:9). Yet the problems that emanate from rigid curricular frameworks are bound to increase as access is widened and universities admit a great proportion of diverse and underprepared students. Among the problems, quality and equity play a central role. In order to maintain quality it becomes necessary to separate flexibility at entry level from the need to ensure appropriate exit standards. This has largely been addressed by AD activities. Out of these activities has emerged a strong need to review and assess curricular.

The problems of articulation are most evident at first-year where there is a very high failure rate. This has affected black students who come from ex-Department of Education and Training (DET) schools. The most salient features of the kind of educational problems experienced are loss of confidence and motivation, inappropriate study approaches, rote learning, inability to establish sound foundations in a discipline and outright failure. This is largely seen as a result of incorrect assumptions about the curriculum and inappropriate infrastructural provisions. Clearly, there is a need to review and possibly reconstruct the curriculum.

Scott (1994:10) goes on to argue that the need to develop curriculum and course structures is not confined to first-year level. So far, AD initiated activities have forced an

interrogation of the curriculum in terms of " ... content and canon" and " ... the issue of what is taught should be the major focus of attention in higher education in the new dispensation in South Africa" (Scott, 1994:10). Furthermore, the issue of AD may suggest that problems in higher education are specific to South Africa. But this is not the case. There is growing recognition internationally that the following are some of the problems in higher education and specifically the curriculum. These include content overload or jamming, inadequate curriculum coherence in individual subjects as well as across cognate subjects, inadequate provision for students to develop general academic, discipline-specific and transferable skills (Scott, 1994:11) and the issue of language (and second language learners) which is a complex problem and needs to be integrated into developmental work related to teaching and learning.

In particular, Scott (1994:11) outlines specific articulation problems with traditional curriculum structures that affect less prepared students. They are, firstly, inadequate assumptions about students' linguistic, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Secondly, standard workloads with lack of flexibility and modularity. This assumes that all students should be able to progress at the same pace with no regard for differences in educational preparedness. Thirdly, unevenness in the increase in difficulty and volume of work from junior to senior levels. Fourthly, invalid assumptions about students background knowledge and experience at all levels of the degree programme. Fifthly, students, especially second language students need to develop general academic skills. This is not taking place in traditional higher education curricular. Sixthly, despite the increase in research on higher education teaching and learning, not much has been done to apply these findings in traditional undergraduate courses. Scott (1994:11) draws an important conclusion that: " ... successful widening of participation in higher education

will depend considerably on the extent to which these problems are addressed in mainstream courses and delivery methods in future." Implicit in this is the need to review, assess and redefine the curriculum.

2.2.2   *A profile of the sociology undergraduate curriculum at the four universities in the eastern seaboard region*

There are 21 universities in South Africa. All of them offer sociology at both the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. The discipline has come to play an integral role (together with others in the Social Sciences) in both higher education and society. Its social value lies in its ability to influence social policy and developmental issues in all areas of social life. This is largely achieved through empowering students with research skills, critical and creative thinking. While the general trend has been to offer the discipline separately within the parameters of a single department, it would appear that it links up closely with other disciplines in the same faculty (Arts) and across faculties. This means that both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary aspects of the course need to be explored.

An interdisciplinary aspect of the course would be one where the discipline combines with another to provide a particular skill or focused vocational qualification. For example, Industrial Sociology is offered together with Industrial Psychology (from the Department of Industrial Psychology in the Faculty of Commerce) while the Social Work profession accesses and relates to Medical Sociology. These combinations are endless. A multi disciplinary approach is one where different and separate disciplines come together to bear on a problem. For example, the following disciplines would combine in

addressing the problem of AIDS; sociology, psychology, geography, education and the medical profession.

Globally, sociology stands independently as a discipline and offers much in the way of teaching and research. "As a distinctive academic discipline, Sociology is less than 200 years old. Auguste Comte coined the term 'Sociology', and is often considered the father of the discipline. His first major work, **The Course of Positive Philosophy,** published between 1830 and 1842, reflected a strong commitment to the scientific method" (Johnson, 1981:12). The first distinction that Comte made was between the individual and the group, that is the individual level and the level of social reality. It was the scientific method that was to be applied to the discovery of natural laws governing social reality. The second distinction made was that social institutions and social change could only be explained in terms of laws and principles that transcend the individual psychological principles (Johnson, 1981:72). Sociology, therefore, had the potential to explain human behavior within a social context and social behavior within the human context of the collectivity of groups, communities and societies. And the distinctive feature of Comte's theories is the application of the scientific method to the study of social reality.

While current research in sociology has shifted more towards humanism and phenomenology, its scientific orientation is still strong. Together with Adolph Quetelet (also a co-founder of Sociology), Comte brought to the study of social life the theoretical and empirical methods of science. While both independently arrived at the idea of "social physics" to distinguish the scientific study of social life from the physical and biological sciences, Comte changed his "positive philosophy" to "Sociology" and Quetelet

maintained an empirical approach to Sociology (Short, 1992:2163). Driven largely by the theory of probability, Coser (1901) as cited in Short (1992:2163) claims that both " ... represent opposite poles in sociological thinking."

Other sociologists (often philosophers and thinkers) contributed to the body of knowledge of sociology in various ways and their specific contributions can be traced historically and often attempts are made to categorize these sociologists into broad philosophical schools of thought. And as social and environmental changes occur, the discipline changes and adapts to accommodate these challenges. Whereas in the past it was possible to make a clear distinction between sociology and other disciplines, presently the boundaries are becoming less distinct as sociology merges with other disciplines in a complex and dynamic way. This will become evident in 2.2.2.1 and 2.2.24.

The development of sociology as a school of thought closely coincided with increasing industrialization in the west which brought about and still brings about a transformed social order. It is this changing social order that is the main object of concern of sociological analysis. And in the words of Giddens (1992:2): "Sociology has the prime responsibility for charting out the transformations which have taken place in the past, and for grouping the major lines of development taking place today."

Sociologists like Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner have imposed theoretical schema on a grand scale in efforts to explain the nature of society and of social change. Others such as Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Pitrim Sorokin and Talcott Parsons, though more constrained by empirical research, developed general comprehensive

theories. Contemporary general theory continues in this mode, by sociologists such as Jurgen Habermas, Anthony Giddens, Jeffrey C. Alexander, Walter L. Wallace and others (Short, 1992:1963).

The current status of sociology is an internally differentiated discipline, which, it is argued, makes it difficult to be a "competent generalist" (Short, 1992:2164). As a discipline, sociology is a newcomer to the social and behavioral sciences and has in its development inherited a number of areas of inquiry, including a number of social problems ignored by other disciplines. Implicit in this is the fact that sociology lacks an agreed upon core (Short, 1992:2164). This is significant in the current study, since parts of the discipline merges with other disciplines in the social sciences.

The fragmentation and diffuseness of the discipline is reflected in the curriculum itself which tends to address specific areas of social life either independently or within the broader context of sociological theory. However, there is disagreement among scholars around paradigmatic issues. These disagreements and concerns stem around two issues. One is, can sociology be classified a science? The other is to what extent is sociology a learned discipline and/or profession? (Short, 1992:2165). These concerns are not specific to the discipline of sociology but to other disciplines as well.

Sociology's claim to scientific status has always been marked by controversy. The difficulty being in objectifying the subject matter of sociology (societies and social systems). Its initial recognition as a science coincides closely with the election of the first sociologist (Kingsley Davis) to the National Science Foundation (NSF). He was shortly followed by Robert K. Merton. This allowed sociology to gain a foothold in the NSF

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(established in 1950). While there is still resistance to this claim, it has weakened. Its scientific status has been further enhanced by recognition/acknowledgement given to it by funding agencies, the state, higher education and other agencies driven by the need to investigate social problems (Short, 1992:2163).

It is against the above background that the sociology undergraduate curriculum (in most universities) has been constructed. The following is a profile of the sociology undergraduate curriculum at the four universities. It has been taken from the university calendar and departmental prospectus. Its provides a general and brief outline of the course offerings. It also indicates the level at which various courses are offered. At this stage, it must be treated as a preview of the general sociology undergraduate curriculum. There will be no interpretation or assessment at this stage.

For the exception of UNIZUL, the other three universities offer sociology as modules. However, UDW offers modules at first year only. In 1999 the second and third year will be modularized. This is part of the broader modular degree structure at these universities. UNIZUL offers sociology as a year long (for each level) course. The differences between the modular degree structure and the year long cohort degree structure will be assessed. But, essentially the former is meant to accommodate the needs of a changing student population by providing flexibility.

While examining the following course structure one needs to note the following:

*	Content

*	Duration of each course

*	Aims and objectives

* Similarities among the four institutional offerings

* Differences among the four institutional offerings

* Structure of the discipline

* Similarities and differences between the HBUs, the HWUs and between the HBUs and the HWUs.

* Is there a logical and systematic development from levels one to three

* Forms of assessment

* Focus and coherence

* The degree of stratification

* Weighting of units/courses.

2.2.2.1   *The University of Durban-Westville (UDW)*

Table 2.1 : Sociology course outline

Level One		
SOC 105T	Social Theory (Classical)	3cp
SOC 101T	South African Society (History)	3cp
SOC 106T	South African Society (Current Issues)	3cp
SOC 104T	Development Issues (Mainstream)	3cp

Table 2.2 : Sociology two course outline

Sociology Two		
SOC 207T	Contemporary Social Theory	3cp
SOC 208T	Alternative approaches to Development	3cp
Electives		
SOC 201T	Health and Development	3cp
SOC 203T	Gender and Development	3cp
SOC 205T	Labor and Development	3cp
SOC 202T	Social problems and Development	3cp
SOC 204T	Education and Development	3cp
SOC 206T	Race, Ethnicity and Development	3cp

(UDW Calendar, 1998:67)

Note: (i) Electives will be offered according to staff availability.

(ii) Students wishing to specialize in Sociology must pass modules SOC 101T, SOC 103T, SOC 104T before entering level two.

Table 2.3 : Sociology three course outline

Sociology Three		
SOC 301T	Research Methods (Introduction)	3cp
SOC 302T	Research Methods	3cp
Electives		
SOC 303T	Education and Development	3cp
SOC 305T	Gender and Development	3cp
SOC 307T	Health and Development	3cp
SOC 304T	Labor and Development	3cp
SOC 306T	Race, Ethnicity and Development	3cp
SOC 308T	Social problems and Development	3cp

(UDW Calendar, 1998:67)

Note: (i) Electives will be offered according to staff availability.

(ii) Electives taken at Level Two cannot be repeated at level three.

(iii) Students wishing to specialize in Sociology must pass Modules SOC 207T, SOC, 208T and two electives before entering Level three.

Sociology 100

Sociology 110: Introduction to Sociology

This course is designed to introduce you to Sociology and to lay the foundations for further study. We deal with topics such as the sociological perspective, theory, research, culture, socialization, deviance, gender, social institutions and modernity. The course takes a global perspective. The emphasis will be on building a sociological language, using concepts, confronting common sense ideas about society and preparing you for what is to follow.

Sociology 120: Social Structure, Social Change and South African Society

This course builds on Sociology 110. It explores how local and global structures of power shape inequality and how societies change over time. The stratifiers we study are class, race, ethnicity and gender. South Africa, one of the most unequal societies in the world, is frequently drawn upon as a case study, preparing you for Sociology 221.

Sociology 200

Sociology 221: Sociology of Development in South Africa

This course provides an introduction to the field of development studies. It explores the theory and practice of development. Development is a concept which describes a process leading to a desirable state of social existence. There is, however, a lack of consensus regarding the nature and definition of the problem of development. In this course we attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of theoretical approaches to

development and identify sociological development issues and problems. In addition we aim to provide a comprehensive overview of South African society in order to engage critically with the various development strategies currently being discussed and implemented.

Sociology 210:   The Sociological Tradition

This course of 39 lectures is designed to consolidate and broaden your understanding and application of sociological theory. We will explore in more depth the "classical" views of Marx, Weber and Durkheim, identifying the arguments and concepts which have made a considerable impact on sociological theorizing. We will endeavour to show how sociological theory has developed since the "Big Three", and explore some of the current issues and problems facing sociological theorizing.

Sociology 300

Sociology 310: Practical Course in Research Methods

The purpose of this course is to provide students with practical research experience in an area of current interest in Sociology, for the purpose of developing basic research skills.

Objectives of the Course

1.   Identify a research topic.

2.   Develop a statement of aims.

3.   Review literature with a view to delineating the "scope" of your research.

4.   Develop an appropriate methodological approach to research.

5. Decide on the specific research methods and techniques you will be using to collect data (information) for your research topic.

6. Write up a research proposal.

7. Conduct research using specific research techniques.

8. Analyze and interpret the data you have collected in the light of the literature you have read.

9. Draw conclusions and recommendations from the interpretation of the data.

10. Write up a research report.

11. Develop group work skills.

Sociology 322:   Social and Economic Issues in Third World

Development (PSOC3CDI)

This course aims to provide you with a solid basis from which to understand development and poverty in the Third World. Central to this course is an appreciation of Globalisation and the interdependence of the Northern and Southern hemispheres. By the end of the course you should understand common theoretical approaches to development and be able to critically engage with issues of industrialization and poverty in the Third World. Students are expected to participate fully in lectures.

Sociology 380:   Social Studies in Conservation   (PSOC3SCI)

This is a course aimed at bringing together students from both the social and natural sciences in an introduction to an exciting area of multidisciplinary study. The course is a core component of the BSc Wildlife Management and is also an option for students from other faculties. The emphasis will be on the relationship between the natural and social worlds, with a particular focus on wildlife. The historical evolution of contemporary

philosophies, perspectives and practices of nature conservation and wildlife protection are examined. Interestingly, KwaZulu-Natal has been a continental historical trendsetter in this regard. Case studies of other places in Africa and elsewhere which illustrate community management of natural resources are considered.

Sociology 330:   Sociology of Rural South Africa (PSOC3RS2)

This course is aimed at providing students with an understanding of rural society in South Africa, the problems experienced in rural areas and attempts to alleviate these problems through public policy. Central to the course is an understanding of the social construction of needs, and the formulation of public policy to address these needs. Although other areas of public policy will be considered, the major emphasis in this course lies on South Africa's land reform programme.

Sociology 390:   Gender Studies (PSOC3GS2)

Patriarchy and therefore gender inequality is present in all areas of society. This course looks at these inequalities by both examining the various theoretical debates and by applying these theories to a range of phenomenon such as employment, the family and the household, the state, culture, sexuality and violence.

Sociology 371:   Culture, Communication and Development (PSOC3CC2)

This course of 26 lectures aims to explore various dimensions, primarily cultural and developmental of the 'information age'. This will entail an exploration of how the concept of culture is currently used (and abused), the various approaches to the understanding of 'communication' (by studying the audience in particular) and the global fascination for the 'information and entertainment superhighway'.

This exploration will proceed through looking at a range of theories grappling with the contemporary era (critical modernist and post-modernist) as well as the research methodologies associated with them.

2.2.2.3   *University of Zululand (UNIZUL)*

Level One

Origin, scope and methodology of Sociology. Basic concepts and institutions and processes. Founders of the discipline. Social structures looked at historically. Social change, development, poverty or underdevelopment.

History of sociological thought

Social theory of the Enlightenment and 19th century. Classical sociological theory: Marx, Weber, Durkheim.

The French Revolution

Industrialization, capitalism, and sociological theory. Theories of the origins and nature of capitalism. The African Slave Trade, colonialism, African societies. Sociology of race and class.

Research Methodology

Contemporary sociological theory

Modern social problems; trends and problems of Southern African societies.

Sociology 1A will not be offered in 1998. Instead, first level students will be required to take the Social Science Core Course, **Individual, Society and State** (DIDS1IS1). Also recommended is the Humanities Core Course, **Language, Text and Context** (DIDS1LTI).

Sociology IB (DSOC1SY2)

Prerequiste: Nil

Introduction to Sociology

Sociology is a discipline. Sociological concepts applied to South African Society, covering themes such as social change and social movements with their expressions in everyday life as set within the global context.

Sociology 2A (DSOC2SY1)

Classical sociological theory and social stratification

Prerequisites: Core Course and DSOC1SY2.

Sociology, the Enlightenment and Modernity. A Consideration of the Main Classical Theorists in Sociology. A Theoretical and Comparative Study of Race, Class and Gender.

Sociology 2B (DSOC2SY2)

The sociology of development

Prerequisites: Core Course and DSOC1SY2.

Rural Sociology. Urban Sociology. Sociology of Education, or some other special field of the Sociology of Development, at the Department's discretion.

Sociology 3B (DSOC3SY2)

Research methodology and special sociological fields

Prerequisites: DSOC2SY1 and DSOC2SY2

Special Sociological Fields, South Africa in Transition.

Three options chosen from a range of options which will vary from time to time at the discretion of the Department. The courses offered will be drawn from topics such as:

Media Sociology

Sociology of Health

Political Sociology

Women's Studies

Sociology of Deviance

Sociology of Work

Sociology of Language

South Africa in Transition

A Group Research Project is also required

2.3   *"Unpacking the curriculum into its component parts in order*

           to understand plan"

An examination of the above suggests that for an in-depth understanding of the sociology undergraduate curriculum, there is a need to break apart or "unpack" the curriculum into its component parts. These component parts have been identified by Jansen and Reddy

(1996:4) as learning, teaching, knowledge, resources and society. Once this happens, it becomes possible to evaluate how the different parts of the curriculum fit together to give it its specific identify. This identity is largely determined by its particular focus and coherence. Of significance in curriculum development and analysis are underlying beliefs and assumptions in relation to content of curricular. In other words, the questions posed are "why this" and "what assumptions about reality is the course based on?" But more importantly, are the way in which justifications are sought for particular curricular choices. Therefore, an assessment of the sociology undergraduate curriculum would be based on the above. Implicit in any assessment are value-judgements usually defined by concepts like assessment and/or evaluation.

2.3.1   The notion of measurement/assessment/evaluation

The concepts measurement, assessment and evaluation are used interchangeably, depending on who is defining it and the context within which it is situated. Concepts like assurance, assessment, evaluation and analysis contain similar meanings but the finer distinctions need to be highlighted in order to locate the focus of the current study. The concept assessment falls within the ambit of quality assurance and assessment also serves to assure the quality of programmes. Before analyzing the term assessment in some detail, the differences between these concepts, measurement, assessment and evaluation will be discussed - and their interdependence highlighted. These differences inform the kind of decisions made about the worth of something and the impression created.

Measurement is the process of qualitatively determining the features of something and allocating a number or a score to it (Owen and Chamberlain, 1996:4). It concerns scales,

numbers and constructs. It is therefore formal, objective, standardized texts. It is supposedly value-free.

Evaluation involves values, needs, measurement and criteria. It is the process by which evaluators make specific judgements by answering the questions 'how good' or 'how well' McCown et al as cited in Engelbrecht (1997: 2) and has wider implications than measurement. Measurement forms the basis of evaluation since it is through measurement that implied meaning is brought to data through interpretation, analysis and reflection (Engelbrecht, 1997:2).

Assessment falls between measurement and evaluation. According to Routman (1991:92) it is the first step in the evaluation process. It is described by most researchers as a process by which information is systematically gathered concerning a learner's or programme's qualities and characteristics (Engelbrecht, 1997:3). It was largely based on positivist methodology but in the late 1980s there was a shift from positivism to humanism thus changing the method of inquiry (Engelbrecht, 1997:3).

Assessment can be both formative (continuous) and/or summative (once only), criterion referenced or norm referenced. It could aim at an individual, group, programme, event or course. It could focus on either the product of learning or the process by which learning takes place. It can be done either internally or externally (outsider) or both.

2.3.2 *Why assessment?*

Quality in higher education is multifaceted (Green, 1996:108). It is so complex and has so many dimensions that it is difficult to evaluate any one component. It is, therefore, " ... better to consider a 'quality profile' than to give a single measure for quality" (Green, 1996:108). Hence, the need for assessment. This profile might describe a small component, a teacher, a programme, a department or even the whole university (Green, 1996:108). But, Noruwena (1996:33) is of the opinion that assessment should begin at the smallest unit of the programme rather than at institutional level. Therefore, individual departments, units, programmes and specialized facilities should be targeted first.

Furthermore, " ... there is no single definition or way of measuring quality" (Green, 1996:103). Higher education embraces three broad aspects: goals, the process deployed for achieving goals and how far goals are achieved. Given this difficulty, Green (1996:103) is of the opinion that: "the best that can be done is for experienced people to make judgement about each of these three aspects and the interactions between them. The goals, processes and achievements can refer to institutions, to parts of institutions (faculties, departments, course teams) or to individual researchers and teachers. But above all, quality must be about scholarship and learning." Vught (1993:14) supports this idea. This brings into sharp focus the philosophy and purpose behind assessment. While the enhancement of student learning is a justification for assessment other legitimate reasons are a need for public accountability for expenditure of funds, a need for social redress, a need for educational justification, providing judgement of a given programme and providing guidance for making corrections and improvement (Terenzini, 1994:7).

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Given the many challenges facing higher education in determining what and how to assess quality of the various components of the system, it would appear as if assessing individual components would be the best starting point. In this regard, Frame (1994:6) suggests " ... we start with curriculum evaluation." Even with curriculum evaluation " ... there is a problem about where to begin" (Jenkins, 1976:6) since the term is " ... a slippery one, it refers to no single, easily described process, but rather to a number of separable (but sometimes related) activities." While the current study focuses on an assessment of the undergraduate curriculum, the term evaluation would be used to discuss the ideas of various authors.

2.3.3   ***The role of assessment in the current study***

Against the definition of the undergraduate curriculum the following components can be identified:

*   **The discipline itself**: In this case the discipline is sociology. Of significance is "**content and canon**." In other words **what** should be taught and **why**. Questions that arise are, what is it that needs to be taught at levels one, two and three and why it should be so. Does **what** is taught suit the students' needs and interests? How do these levels combine to give the discipline its specialist character that allows it to define itself as major. These are some of the issues.

*   **The discipline as part of the broader undergraduate degree**: Questions that arise are: How does it combine with other majors and disciplines? How does the discipline further the general goals of the university?

*   **The structure of the discipline in terms of:**

    -   objectives,

    -   content,

    -   forms of assessment,

    -   texts used to teach the discipline, and

    -   instructional methods.

*   **Quality of teaching**: This refers to the **how** aspect. In other words, there is a need to examine the methods employed in teaching as this influences the form and method of inquiry. The methods used in teaching also need to be compatible with the nature of the discipline and the needs of students. This will vary from level one to three.

*   **Its relationship with other disciplines**: This means that one needs to examine how, why and to what degree sociology is able to service other disciplines and professions. This will tie up with interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary measures underway in most higher education institutions, nationally and internationally.

The above components are central to any assessment. But, within the context of the university, the concept evaluation is difficult to promote since it means that situations are created where people sit in judgement " ... of the merit or worth of what one does and how well one does it" (Frame, 1994:6). It implies finding the value or worth of something which could instantly put people on the defensive and cause resistance. Assessment, on the other hand, is a simple yet comprehensive profiling of an activity.

2.3.4 *Criteria for assessing the sociology undergraduate curriculum*

The curriculum can be assessed in many ways. It involves unpacking the curriculum in order to understand the plan (Jansen and Reddy, 1994:4). Against the objectives of the current study (Chapter 1.3) an assessment would unpack the curriculum into its component parts. Each one of these component parts will be examined separately in Chapter 2.4. They include:

*   **Knowledge** which refers to content and the what aspect of what is taught in sociology one, two and three. It is generally signalled by objectives.

*   **Teaching** which refers to the method of instruction and to the **how** aspect of imparting knowledge. It also includes the recipients (students) experience of teaching.

*   **Learning** which includes the way in which students explore the discipline and bears closely on the nature and forms of inquiry adopted. It also looks at the kind of inquiry the discipline demands.

*   **Society** which examines the social relevance of the discipline. In other words, what are the links between the discipline sociology and social and market needs. This would be partly descriptive.

*   **Resources** would refer to the kind of institutional support and infrastructure available to sustain the aims and objectives of the discipline.

*   **Beliefs and assumptions** would refer to the **why** aspect of the discipline in terms of **why** certain areas of interest are taught at the expense of others and why they

are pitched at particular levels. This is an important criterion since it determines content of the curriculum and is largely ideologically driven. But more importantly, it is significant to understand the kind of justifications put forth with regard to curriculum choices and assumptions.

*   **Focus and coherence** is the last objective and refers to the evaluation of how the parts fit together with regard to focus and coherence within the course at each level and between the different levels.

An in-depth analysis of the above components that combine to inform the undergraduate curriculum will now be presented.

2.3.4.1   Knowledge-content and canon

On looking at the course offerings at the four universities and the course outline, it is possible to obtain a general idea of the nature of the content covered. The content itself cannot be presented at this stage. It will appear in the assessment in Chapter Five. In comparing the course outline for the four institutions, similarities and differences do exist. While this is normal and acceptable, one has to consider the source of both these differences and similarities. And, in doing so one stumbles into the process of deciding what to teach. Miller (1986:3) is of the opinion that " ... university teachers are usually well qualified in their particular subject/field or discipline and are expected to have special expertise in at least one particular field of study. When faced with the responsibility of developing a new course or teaching program, however, most have little, if any, background in the educational theories of teaching and learning, and many have problems in deciding which subject matter to include in the .... course."

Clearly, there must be some difficulty experienced in deciding the content of what should be taught in sociology. The discipline is vast and rooted in a social reality that is changing rapidly. The demands on the discipline to keep abreast of these changes plus making a plea for its own and independent status as a discipline manifests itself in the formal undergraduate curriculum of the university.

Unlike course design and curriculum development in schools, Sagre (1971:299) states: "Instruction of college and university students is an activity not customarily derived in a deliberate fashion from theories about learning. Most college instructors set about their initial task of teaching courses by using a model derived from their own college experiences; in other words, they try to emulate their professors. The new instructor may spend many hours in selecting a text and other references, in planning what he will say to his/her class of students, in seeing how certain topics will 'fit' a semester of so many weeks. But the question of just what students are going to be doing during these weeks, and how their activities are going to affect their capabilities, is not likely to be given a great deal of thought." This kind of behavior among instructors is typical of an institution of higher learning and reflects the lack of expertise among instructors in designing a course.

The process of deciding what to teach must therefore be a complex and dynamic process. Of significance, is the need to examine how and who decides on the content of the course. One also needs to examine the kinds of texts and materials used at each level together with the objectives and aims for each course. The source of information for an assessment of content would (in this case) be the person teaching the particular course. This assessment of content would have to be done against the following criteria.

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(i)   **A brief description of the course in terms of aims and objectives.** The general nature of the course is derived from the aims and objectives. These aims and objectives generally appear in the university prospectus and departmental workbooks like study guides, manuals and course packs.

Davies (1972:12) defines an aim as " ... a starting point. They are an ideal, an aspiration, a direction in which to go. They are visionary in character, and therefore in a very real sense, unreal." The aim generally describes " ... the intended direction of the course." In relation to this study, the aim of teaching sociology would need to be made explicit.

Objectives, on the other hand, " ... tell the student what the minimum level of acceptance for his or her eventual performance is to be, and under what conditions it will be achieved. To be meaningful, any statement of objectives must specify observable, preferably measurable, changes in the learner's behavior at the end of the course" (Blishen, 1969:42). Within the curriculum, objectives occupy a central role since they guide and determine the content of the curriculum.

(ii)   Text-books and other course material also form an important part of the content of the curriculum. Of importance, would be the need to identify the kinds of texts used and whether they achieve the objectives of the course. For someone assessing a curriculum the most important question is, what should you look for when assessing a curriculum? Posner (1995:30) suggests: "The best way to

answer these questions is by suggesting the kinds of information needed for a curriculum analysis. Ideally, the curriculum documents you would analyze should provide you with the six kinds of information listed in the following table:

Table 2.4: Information provided by Ideal Curriculum Documents

1.	Some clues about the **problem** to which the curriculum was responding and the kinds of **experts** included in the development process.	
2.	A clear idea of **what** students are supposed to learn, i.e., learning objectives; what teachers are supposed to teach, i.e., content; and in **what** order it should taught and learned, i.e., sequence.	
3.	A clear idea about **why** these learning objectives and content are important: i.e., **rationale**, sometimes called the **philosophy**.	
4.	Some guidance, whether in the form of suggestions or prescriptions, as to **how** to teach the objectives and content, i.e., teaching strategies.	
5.	An indication of **how** the curriculum and the students should be or have been **evaluated** and what the results were.	
6.	An indication of whether the curriculum has been **implemented**; if not yet implemented, for **what situations** it would be appropriate; if already implemented, **what** happened when it was.	

(Posner, 1995:31).

(iii)   Many lecturers spend hours deciding on the order in which sections should be taught. This is called sequence, and makes a difference in terms of the way knowledge is imparted, absorbed and reproduced. With regard to the undergraduate curriculum, sequence would refer not only to courses within a particular level but also between levels one, two and three. Equally important, is the need to investigate the process involved in deciding the content of the curriculum and identifying the persons involved in the process.

The above description of the undergraduate curriculum provides a description of **what** is taught without really indicating **why** it is taught. This **why** aspect of the sociology undergraduate curriculum is crucial for understanding the assumptions and beliefs underlying the curriculum.

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2.3.4.2 ***Beliefs and assumptions upon which the sociology undergraduate***

curriculum is based - Why is it taught?

The content of a curriculum is closely tied with the purpose or reasons for teaching it. Posner (1995:85) claims " ... we could teach the same content for many different purposes." While content, subject matter is at the heart of any curriculum, the purpose behind teaching it needs to be examined. Therefore, the beliefs and assumptions underlying the sociology undergraduate curriculum as it relates to content would have to be brought into the open. This would shed light on **why** sociologists deem it necessary to teach particular forms of sociological knowledge.

Posner (1995:91) specifies categories or perspectives that " ... represents a clear sense of what counts as a legitimate purpose, a body of content for a curriculum, and a conception of that content." There are essentially five perspectives that either combine or individually inform the construction of a curriculum.

(i) **Traditional:** This is the first and most basic category. "For proponents of a traditional perspective, the purpose of education is to transmit the cultural heritage. Therefore, the content of the curriculum is selected from that cultural heritage and represents what educators believe to be the most timeless, established and accepted facts, concepts, principles, laws, values and skills known to human kind ... This perspective leads to an emphasis on:

* familiarity with terms and names necessary for communicating with other educated members of society,

* competence in a set of basic skills (for example, reading, writing and computation) necessary for productive membership in the society, and

* acceptance of a set of fundamental values (for example, honesty and respect for authority) necessary for the society to function smoothly" (Posner, 1995:91-92).

In terms of the sociology undergraduate curriculum, one needs to identify to what extent the above manifests itself and exists in the curriculum. But more importantly is the depth and intensity of its particular cultural heritage.

(ii) **Experiential**: This perspective draws on the ideas of Dewey (1938), Sizer (1973) and Hamilton (1980) with the central theme being development as the primary purpose of education. Subject matter would derive from ordinary life experiences, with the purpose of promoting an individual's continuing, general development (Dewey, 1938:46).

The first step in learning would be to relate subject matter to previous experience. The second step is to expose students to a range of experiences " ... that have the promise and potentiality of presenting new problems which by stimulating new ways of observation and judgement will expand the area of further experience" (Dewey, 1938:175). This idea is further developed by Posner (1995:93) who goes on to state: "As experience is expanded, it also becomes more organized, ultimately approximating the organization 'in which subject matter is presented to the skilled mature person." The current study focuses on the teaching of sociology within the context of higher education. This means that learners are primarily adult. This being the case, it would appear, as if experiential learning would serve the academic

interests of both students and the discipline. Furthermore, the nature of underpreparedness among 60% of students demand that this perspective be built into the curriculum.

Sizer (1973) as cited in Posner (1995:93) describes the experiential perspective as developing particular areas in students. He has termed the area agency which is " ... the personal style, assurance and self-control that allow (the individual) to act in both socially acceptable and personally meaningful ways" (Posner, 1995:93).

For Hamilton (1980:191) experiential education aims to " ... increase the competence of youth in such areas as planning, finding and making use of appropriate resources; persistence at a task; coping with new ideas, conflicting opinions, and people who are different, taking responsibility for others welfare; and carrying out commitments to others." Sociology, for example, to the experiential educator is the study of social behaviour, that is, societies, as a means to understanding the complex and dynamic process within a social system rather than as a means of transmitting our cultural heritage.

(iii) **Structure of the discipline**: The primary purpose of education is the development of the intellect (King and Bronwell, 1965 as cited in Posner, 1995:94). This idea is further clarified by Posner (1995:94) who states " ... the disciplines of knowledge constitute the content best suited to the purpose. Each discipline of knowledge has a distinctive structure, and acquiring this plurality of structures is given the highest priority. Subject matter should remain domains of disciplined, systematic inquiry with curriculum for each subject based on:

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* Certain fundamental ideas that function as tacit assumptions or premises guiding inquiry (for example, accepted theories), and

* Certain ways of answering questions and conducting inquiry (for example, what counts as evidence)." Sociology, for example, is a science that largely draws upon scientific methods as forms of inquiry. However, this has been combined with non-scientific and humanist forms of inquiry as well. Both scientific and non-scientific ideas are used to frame research questions. Both these forms of inquiry allows the student of sociology to " ... engage in inquiry that approximates the way scholars conduct their own research" (Posner, 1995:94).

(iv) **Behavioural**: This is a very straightforward assumption upon which a curriculum can be constructed. The content of the curriculum comprises a set of skills, that is, " ... any subject matter can be reduced to a set of discrete behaviours - termed 'skills', 'competencies' or 'processes' - that can be expressed as observable, measurable behaviours. Mastering these behaviours constituted learning the subject matter ... other aspects of content, such as facts and concepts, are either translated into behaviours or are considered only vehicles for teaching and learning the behaviours" (Posner, 1995:94). Within sociology this would translate as being able to recall particular theories, demonstrate practical research skills and display particular forms of attitude.

(v) **Cognitive**: The development of the mind is the central purpose of education. The development of thinking is seen to accomplish this purpose. Thinking requires both content and skill and different cognitive perspectives emphasize either one. Proponents of this perspective believe that subject matter:

* "is a body of knowledge about which to think - for example, the content of a course focusing on current social issues;

* is itself a form of thinking, reasoning, or problem-solving, for example, the purpose behind teaching sociology may be taught with the aim of providing students with a tool to solve social problems;

* may also constitute the tools of thought, for example, writing may be taught as a means of reflective thinking (Posner, 1995:95). Disciplines like sociology require the writing of thoughts, ideas, arguments, debates and other issues. By the very nature of the discipline, scholars are expected to produce their work in written form for other scholars to read and criticize. This exercise incorporates a great deal of reflective thinking which is the bedrock upon which academic work/discourse is written/produced.

The above perspectives form the basis for any curriculum. The beliefs and assumptions underlying the sociology undergraduate curriculum can be located within one or more of the above perspectives. Of significance would be issues that relate to levels at which the purposes are made explicit, aspects of the curriculum intended for training/educational contexts, types of goals that are emphasized and those that are less emphasized.

2.3.4.3   *Instructional methods: "How" is it taught?*

The imparting of knowledge, the exchange of ideas and views, the process of debating and inquiry are all common to the fundamental purpose of higher education. This higher level thinking in an institutionalized form dates back to medieval times where professor and student, mentor and mentee engaged in much stimulating and meaningful discussions

regarding the nature of reality. Over time, this relationship has changed from a small group of scholars to a mass number of scholars bringing with it a change in technology and method of instruction. Whereas in the past the relationship between the educator and student was characterized by close, personal mentoring and tutoring, the present is characterized by large classes of students where lecturing is formal and impersonal. There is also a great deal of reliance on technology to facilitate lecturing.

Sociology as a discipline emerged out of disciplines such as philosophy and early political theories. Much of the knowledge imparted, produced and reproduced emerged out of a sharing and exchange of ideas and views (for example, Engels was a student of Marx) that took place among and between a few individuals. They were generally referred to as thinkers of their time. As the discipline evolved and became formalized in institutions, it was taught in a manner befitting the institutional ethos of higher learning, viz., lecturing.

The current study focuses on assessing the sociology undergraduate curriculum. It views the method of instruction as an integral part of not only the curriculum but the nature of the discipline as well. Therefore, an assessment of the instructional methods employed within the sociology undergraduate curriculum would need to take into account the following:

* The methods employed - lecturing, tutorials, consultation and other methods.

* The methods employed against the objectives of the discipline, in other words, are the two compatible?

* The method in relation to student numbers and the infrastructure of the institution. This means, identifying the forms of technology available to meet the objectives.

*   The methods in relation to student learning. In other words, do these methods promote effective and meaningful learning among students? Do they meet the learning needs of students (especially) in the current context?

*   The above is closely related to quality and standards in higher education (Ashcroft, 1995:39). This needs to be explored in any assessment of the curriculum.

The common forms of imparting knowledge at university are lectures, tutorials, and consultations. A lecture is defined as " ... a teaching session in which the teacher is the principal speaker ... the amount of verbal interaction between teacher and students are minimal ... lecture lasts about fifty minutes and varies between formality and informality" (Miller, 1986:33). Essentially this method of teaching should be suited to achieving the objectives of the discipline. So, against the objectives of sociology one, two and three, is lecturing the most appropriate form of teaching?

Lectures are effectively used for the following purposes:

*   "present factual information and general principles in a cost effective way;

*   survey the themes that unite various topics or aspects of the subject;

*   teach the application of a discipline's basic principles;

*   inform students of recent discoveries or new interpretations in the discipline;

*   demonstrate strategies and skills of problem solving" (Miller, 1986:34).

Lectures are shown to be ineffective in changing attitudes and promoting a deeper understanding of the subject (Miller, 1986:34).

In addition to the lecture, are tutorials " ... a class where the emphasis is on the students' reactions to their readings and any difficulties they may have encountered," whereas a seminar " ... is a class where emphasis is more on the subject matter being discussed" (UTMU, 1976:54). The terms seminars and tutorials can be used interchangeably to refer to discussion groups. The advantages of these tutorial groups are:

* "to promote understanding of a body of knowledge and the relational thinking that it needs;

* to elucidate misunderstanding and sort out students' difficulties;

* to practise skills - intellectual, verbal, social and computational;

* to practice the application of principles to familiar and unfamiliar situations;

* to explore personal and professional attitudes and values;

* as a two-way exchange of information on the teaching learning process" (Cockburn and Ross, 1977:15).

The use of consultation is also a common form of teaching students. It is individualized learning, places emphasis on one student rather than a class, often occurs after a lecture and/or tutorial and is arranged in advance (Miller, 1986:44).

Besides the above methods of teaching, the following are also used depending on time, expertise available and infrastructural support. These include computer assisted learning, distance education, syndicates and group projects, field work, team work, practical experiences and others.

Whatever the method of instruction used, it should promote effective and meaningful student learning. To this end, the subject matter/content/objectives of a course, the

justifications provided for teaching it together with the methods employed for teaching it are all directed towards promoting particular forms of learning among students and sociology has its distinctive brand of thinking, inquiry and learning. This needs to be explored in greater detail.

2.3.4.4 *Learning - The form of enquiry associated with the content*

It is evident (at this stage) that there is a close relationship between content, teaching methods and learning. The quality of student learning is enshrined in the mission statement of a university and within the discipline itself (objectives). Among the indicators of quality learning are an enterprising graduate, a graduate who communicates well, one who adopts appropriate leadership roles and one who can collaborate with others (Foreman-Peck, 1993 as cited in Ashcroft, 1995:49). Learning, within the context of a university curriculum, would have to be discussed in conjunction with teaching methods. This will be explored in detail since: "The effort to improve the quality of instruction begins with increased attention to theories of learning" (Cole, 1992:1).

Before discussing the theories on learning, it is important to highlight that among the four institutions discussed, there have been many changes with regard to student demographics. This has had profound implications on content and teaching methods.

The curriculum has had to adapt (or begin to adapt if it hasn't done so) to the changing needs of students and their particular needs of learning. Among the changes, the following are most significant:

*   Cultural diversity;

*   Underpreparedness;

*   More older students;

*   More female students;

*   More part-time students who already have an occupation;

*   Physically disabled students;

*   Second language students; and

*   Diverse learning styles.

There is no single definition of learning nor a single theory that can accommodate the process of learning since " ... the different definitions of learning result from conflicting assumptions and interpretations" (Cole, 1982:7).

The major learning theories might be classified into five groups:

(i)   Classical mental discipline where learning is viewed as a training of the mind and a gathering of knowledge.

(ii)   Unfoldment theory views learning as a process of individual development.

(iii)   Apperception theory views the mind as a blank slate and learning a means of relating new ideas to old ones. Most authorities view these three as archaic.

(iv)   Behaviourism describes the process of learning in terms of stimuli response behaviour.

(v)   Gestalt field theory explains learning as a development of insights resulting from an interaction with one's environment (Apps, 1979, as cited in Cole, 1982:9).

The implications of the above learning theories for the development of the sociology undergraduate curriculum are the following."

(i)   "learning is enhanced when the student is active rather than passive;

(ii)   learning is improved by practice and feedback;

(iii)   learning is improved when directed toward some goals;

(iv)   learning has both an affective and a cognitive aspect;

(v)   the quantitative and qualitative differences in the learning process are great" (Knapper, 1980; Milton and Associates as cited in Cole, 1982:14). Therefore, an assessment of the curriculum would aim to analyze the extent to which the above is present in the curriculum and whether an awareness of these learning theories and their relationship to teaching played a role in designing various courses within the curriculum.

The issue of student learning occupies a central role in any aspect of university teaching. Learning is the key factor in institutions of higher learning and therefore has attracted much attention and research in the past decade (McKeachie, 1994; Gibbs, 1993; Miller, 1982). Tate (1993:291-292) identifies two factors that influence student learning. These are presented on a continuum and lecturers fall somewhere between these two extremes - teacher-centredress and student-centredress. This is illustrated in the following Table 2.3. The differences between the two indicate how each one would influence student learning. An assessment would have to take into account the degree to which each level exists within the undergraduate curriculum.

The items are intended to represent a continuum of extreme positions between lecturers who are wholly teacher-centred and lecturers who are wholly student-centred.

Table 2.5 : Teacher-centredness versus student-centredness

Teacher-centred	*Versus*	Student-centred
Focus on content		Focus on process
Emphasizes knowing that		Emphasizes knowing how
Students work as individual often in competition with each other		Students work in groups and team, collectively and co-operatively
Students highly dependent		Students work independently
Learning objectives imposed		Objectives negotiated
Assessment by written exams		Assessment varied
Knowledge is handed down from subject to novice		Students actively generate and synthesize knowledge from many sources
Lectures predominate as mode of curriculum delivery		Teaching sessions flexible and not always classroom-based
Teachers role is that of expert		Teacher is facilitator and a resource for students' learning in partnership

(Tate, 1993:291-292).

The significance of this table is that it illustrates the influence that different styles of lecturing has on student learning. For example, a lecturer who focuses more on content rather than the process of learning is more teacher-centred and less student centered. This has obvious implications for meaningful student learning.

The above table also indicates that the process of assessment has a strong relationship with learning and is therefore placed quite strongly within the curriculum. Often ,it occurs at the end of both the curriculum and semester and is the final arbiter of student success. Assessment of student learning needs to be viewed in relation to content, objectives, teaching methods and learning styles.

2.3.4.5 *Method of assessment*

Assessment of student learning should manifest itself in the sociology undergraduate curriculum in the following traditional ways:

* tests;

* examinations;

* projects;

* orals; and

* tutorials.

Essays, short questions, multiple choice questions and true-false questions are common forms of questions. Knight is of the opinion that: "Assessment is a moral activity." In other words, what a lecturer chooses to evaluate shows what s/he values. In assessing particular aspects of sociology in a particular way reveals what a lecturer values in sociology and in higher education in general.

Of significance for the current study, are why particular forms of assessment are used and what is it that the examiner looks for within the disciplinary context of sociology. Knight (1995:84) provides an extensive list of the types of assessment. They include:

* activities putting into perspective a topic or issue;

* case studies and simulations;

* critical reviews of articles. viewpoint and opinions;

* critiques;

* dissertations and theses;

* essay plans;

*   essays - formal and non-traditional;

*   fieldwork, casework and other forms of applied research;

*   laboratory reports and note-books;

*   literature searches (for example, the presentation of annotated

    bibliographies);

*   in-tray exercises

*   oral presentations;

*   poster exhibitions;

*   practical skills and competencies;

*   projects (individual or group);

*   reviews for specific audiences;

*   seen written exams (where learners have the questions in advance);

*   unseen written exams;

*   strategic plans (testing higher order skills).

Knight (1995:17) further identifies the reasons why lecturers assess as:

*   "to provide feedback to learners so they can learn from mistakes and build on

    achievements;

*   to classify or grade student achievement;

*   to enable learners to correct errors and remedy deficiencies;

*   to motivate learners and to focus their sense of achievement;

*   to consolidate student learning;

*   to help learners to apply abstract principles to practical context;

*   to estimate students' potential to progress to other levels or courses;

*   to guide selection or option choice;

*   to give us feedback on how effective we are being at promoting learning;

*   to provide statistics for internal and external agencies."

At this stage a distinction needs to be made between summative and formative assessment. The former occurs at the end of the course in order to determine who should fail or pass and with what symbol. It focuses on the product of learning. The latter focuses on the process of learning and is " ... a really powerful developmental process" (Knight, 1995:77). Since it provides continuous assessment, continuous learning and continuous revision, feedback is frequent and comprehensive. Therefore, against the objectives of the sociology undergraduate curriculum and the learning needs of students, questions regarding appropriate forms of assessment arise.

While the forms of assessment and the reasons for assessment are clear, it is important to identify what within the sociology undergraduate curriculum needs to be assessed. Broadly, one can assess subject knowledge, skills and attitudes. Atkin et al (1993) as cited in Ashcroft (1995:114) provide the following extensive range of categories that guide what can and should be assessed. The current study would identify what within the sociology undergraduate curriculum is assessed.

Its significance lies in the comprehensive list of competencies that any course can test. It further categorizes these abilities into three distinct categories. The cognitive aspect incorporates all the mental processes of learning while the emotional and moral category includes the psychological and social well-being of the learner. The third category of practical competence is equally important since it tests the application of the above.

The following categories of abilities and attitudes of individual students are taken from

Atkins et al (1993) as cited in Ashcroft (1995 : 114)

Table 2.6 : Levels of learning

Cognitive Learning
Verbal skills (e.g. listening, reading, writing);
Quantitative skills (e.g. statistical data or information technology);
Substantive knowledge (e.g. cultural heritage or subject knowledge);
Rationality (e.g. logical thinking, analysis and synthesis);
Intellectual perspective (e.g. appreciation of cultural diversity);
Aesthetic sensibility (e.g. knowledge or responsiveness to the arts);
Creativity (e.g. imagination and originality in formulating hypotheses, ideas or works of art);
Intellectual integrity (e.g. truthfulness, conscientiousness and accuracy in enquiry); and
Lifelong learning (e.g. awareness of value of education, ability to learn independently, ability to locate information).
Emotional and Moral Development
Self-awareness (e.g. knowledge of strengths and weaknesses);
Psychological well-being (e.g. sensitivity and ability to cope with deep feeling, self-confidence, ability to deal with life's difficulties);
Human understanding (e.g. capacity for empathy, compassion and respect for others, ability to cooperate);
Values and morals (e.g. awareness of moral issues and traditions, personal set of moral principles); and
Religion (e.g. awareness and respect for varieties of religious thought).
Practical Competence
Traits of value in practical affairs generally (e.g. ability to apply knowledge and negotiate, motivation, initiative, resourcefulness);
Leadership (e.g. capacity to assume authority and to seek advice);
Citizenship (e.g. commitment to democracy; knowledge of major systems of government; awareness of social issues);
Work and careers (e.g. awareness of needs of workplace; knowledge and ability to make sound career decisions, employability skills);
Family life (e.g. personal qualities relevant to family life);
Leisure (e.g. appropriate balance between work and leisure); and
Health (e.g. understanding basic principles of physical and mental health, participation in physical recreation).

(Ashcroft, 1995:114).

2.3.4.6   *Society*

The university is one of society's most important institutions and the educational goals of the institution and hence the curriculum should be compatible with the needs and goals of society. Two aspects emerge: social relevance and market relevance. This issue of accountability requires that the university curriculum and specifically the sociology undergraduate curriculum respond to:

*   providing relevant education in terms of the broader values held by society;

*   provide vocational training thus allowing graduates to successfully enter the job market;

*   providing basic skills that contribute towards all round development - cognitive, affective, skills, values and attitudes;

*   justify the existence of the discipline to parents, state, students, industry and the general public (Centra, 1979; Cole, 1982; Posner, 1995).

2.3.4.7   *Resources*

An official curriculum is meaningless unless it is translated into an operational curriculum (Posner, 1995:181). In order for this to happen the following factors have to be taken into account. They " ... frame the curriculum, acting as both resources for and constraints on the process of curriculum implementation" (Posner, 1995:181).

(i)   **Temporal frames** refer to the time necessary to teach the curriculum. Three factors would need to be taken into account:

*   quantity of content to be included in the curriculum;

*   the difficulty of the content; and

*   the audience expected to master it (Posner, 1995:184).

(ii)   **Physical frames** refers to the physical space in which lecturers teach including the natural environment surrounding the university, the built environment of the university, lecture halls and laboratories and the equipment and materials provided for teaching and learning. Posner (1995:185) states: "The existing physical frame, regardless of the purposes for which it was intended, makes certain curricular forms likely, others unlikely, and still others impossible." To this end, one needs to examine the conduciveness of the environment in allowing the curriculum to sustain meaningful learning.

(iii)   **Political-legal frames** refer to those state determined policies that influence the design and implementation of the curriculum. These policies are state curricular requirements, state aid for buildings, equipment and fees, state certification requirements and others (Posner, 1995:186).

(iv)   **Organizational frames** refers to the university " ... as the organizational unit that most significantly determines the extent to which a curriculum will flourish or wither" (Posner, 1995:186). Specific factors that exert an influence on the curriculum are administrative, proximal factors and distal factors.

(v)   **Personal or personnel frames** refer to the uniqueness of the university in terms of personal characteristics of the lecturers, students, administrative and support

staff who occupy it. The following personal factors influence the shape of the curriculum:

* characteristics of the student population;

* extent to which students possess academic skills;

* students background knowledge;

* students familiarity with current events;

* student interests and psychological and social needs;

* career aspirations;

* lecturer's subject knowledge, teaching and administrative skills;

* knowledge of the students and what they bring;

* openness to new ideas;

* dedication to teaching;

* willingness to extend themselves; and

* a sense of collegiality (Posner, 1995:188).

(vi) **Economic frames** refers to costs and benefits involving such factors as staff and student morale, student learning, time and effort devoted to teaching - learning - administration and community relations. For example, low staff morale is seen as a cost and high staff morale is a benefit (Posner, 1995:189).

(vii) **Cultural frames** refers to a curriculum as it fits into a culture. In this case, the curriculum depends on two different sets of cultural factors - the culture within the university and the culture of the community in which the university exists (Posner, 1995:189).

2.3.4.8   *Focus and coherence*

The manner in which the objectives, content, teaching methods and assessment practices are ordered/organized within the sociology undergraduate curriculum gives it its focus and coherence. This is referred to as curriculum organization (Posner, 1992:123). A curriculum is generally organized around two dimensions:

(i)   **Vertical dimension**: It uses a chronological approach to organizing a curriculum and uses time as a sequencing principle. For example, events are packaged in terms of the historical moments in which they have occurred.

(ii)   **Horizontal dimension**: It organizes a curriculum around a particular element. For example, a thematic approach to organizing a sociology curriculum might use concepts such as industrialization, alienation and exploitation as a basis for organization.

A curriculum's organization is also influenced by the objectives and the assumptions underlying it (2.3.4.2). These assumptions, discussed as perspectives in 2.3.4.2, serve as organizing principles for any curriculum. They are as follows:

(i)   **Traditional curriculum**: "The focus ... is on content, particularly those facts that every educated person should know, basic skills and traditional values. The facts are typically grouped into topics that form the organizing elements of the curriculum. Content sequence is typically based on the organization of the subject matter itself, where world-related sequencing principles predominate" (Posner, 1992:141).

(ii)   **Structure of the disciplines**: This is the top-down approach. It derives its organization from the structure itself where the central concepts in the discipline serve as the organizing elements of the curriculum with concept - and inquiry-related sequences most typical. Its starting point is the most fundamental ideas of the discipline, deriving the more specific content from these basic ideas and organizing the content around these ideas (Posner, 1992:141).

(iii)   **Experiential**: The curriculum is organized around the experiences students have as " ... they engage in purposeful activities ... content is sequenced according to the way it will be used in dealing with everyday problems, needs and issues" (Posner, 1995:141). For Dewey (1938:142) " ... the curriculum should be organized around only those 'situations' that provide continuing growth of the individuals."

(iv)   **Behavioural**: The curriculum in this case, is organized around behaviors described by writers' objectives. Its starting point for curriculum development is the general from which the particular is then derived indicating the terminal behavior toward which the curriculum is designed to lead. This is the bottom up approach. Unlike the structure of the disciplines approach which teaches "... the most fundamental ideas in increasing degrees of sophistication," the behavioral curriculum builds student skills up from the most elementary, prerequisite ones to terminal ones (Posner, 1995:143).

(v) **Cognitive**: This organizes the curriculum around the dominant cognitive elements. Content is organized around " ... superordinate concepts that subsume other more specific content" (Posner, 1995:142).

The above organizing principles shed light on the way in which the sociology undergraduate curriculum could have been organized in order to give it its focus and coherence. However, it relates to units/courses within the curriculum and at specific levels. For example, sociology at level one could comprise three separate but related units. So each unit would be assessed against these categories and then the entire undergraduate curriculum would be further assessed against these categories.

Since the current study is assessing an entire undergraduate curriculum, the following concepts, as it relates to the "social organization of knowledge" (Young, 1971 as cited in Posner, 1995:148) are useful in highlighting the social and political dimensions of the curriculum. They have been introduced by Young (1971) and Bernstein (1971) as cited in Posner (1995:148) and include:

(i) **Specialization** refers to the narrowness of a subject and the degree to which the scope of the curriculum is restricted. It increases with the age of students and becomes more vocationally oriented.

(ii) **Openness or closedness** refers to the degree to which knowledge areas are related and is of special significance in this study since openness suggests that interdisciplinary studies are likely to occur. This creates opportunities for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary combinations and needs to be explored in detail.

(iii)   **Stratification** refers to the degree to which value is assigned to different kinds of knowledge. In this context, the weighting of a course will indicate its value. It indicates what counts as legitimate knowledge (highly stratified), what does not and the basis for selecting and including curriculum content.

(iv)   **Status** suggests and indicates whether or not academic credit is assigned to a subject, whether a subject is compulsory or an elective, the number of years required of it, attendance and the academic standing of the students who take the subject (Posner, 1995:149).

2.4   *Quality assurance and the sociology undergraduate curriculum*

The assessment of the Sociology undergraduate curriculum is based largely on a "professional judgement" of the whole curriculum against a set of criteria. It is thus laden with concepts of value, worth, subjectivity, merit, relevance, etc. A large part of the assessment can be located within the current movement of quality assurance in higher education with a specific focus on standards.

Therefore, a brief discussion on how, why and where the study links up with quality assurance would serve to highlight important elements of both the study and the process of quality assurance.

The assessment of the quality of the processes and products within higher education has been an important focus of attention (Vught, 1993:3). To this end, stakeholders (both government, universities and society at large) have begun to invest time and resources into establishing the quality of all aspects of the higher education system. Quality assurance is the concept coined to describe attempts made at judging the worth of university activities. Hence, the current study which focuses on one such activity, the sociology undergraduate curriculum.

2.4.1 *The concept quality assurance - its history*

While the application of quality assurance to aspects of the higher education system appears to be a recent phenomenon, its roots can be traced back to medieval higher education. During this period, two extreme models of quality assurance can be identified. One is the French model which vested control in an internal authority and the other is the English model of a self-governing community of fellows. While they may not have used the term quality assurance or assessment of the curriculum, implicit in both were:

*   an authority (the chancellor in the French model and sovereign self-governing communities of fellows in the English model) that had the right to determine the content of what was taught, who taught it and the quality of work produced.

*   accountability where in the French model it was in the hands of an external authority and in the English model it was achieved through peer review (Vught as cited in Craft, 1993:4).

Both dimensions of accountability and authority occupy a central role in higher education and in the present recognition for quality assurance. Vught (1993:4) argues that higher education has both intrinsic (ideals of the search for truth and the disinterested pursuit of knowledge) and extrinsic (services provided by higher education to the society) qualities.

The current study focuses on the latter by focusing on one aspect, viz., the curriculum, within higher education. The process of reviewing and assessing the worth of organizations and in particular the university has developed and evolved into a neat category labelled quality assurance which has strong links with industry. This concept will be dealt with in greater detail in the following discussion.

2.4.1.1   Some definitions of quality assurance

The essence of the term quality assurance has been defined by Ellis (1993:3) as " ... ensuring standards are specified and met consistently for a product or service." The term is derived from both industry and health care. Despite this general understanding of quality assurance, Vught (1992:127) argues that the concept is simultaneously elusive and pervasive. He argues that while it is impossible to agree on a universal definition of quality, people do not find difficulty in recognizing quality. Implicit in this recognition is its ability to expose both strengths and weaknesses of "something." The concept quality is therefore highly political and sensitive since it can be loaded, subjective and value-laden.

Furthermore, it is a multidimensional concept with both extrinsic (utilitarian) and intrinsic (intelligence, competence and creativity) components. This exposes it to all forms of

judgement, thus adding to its elusiveness. Crosby (1979:13) supports the claim that quality is an elusive concept. While the concept shares certain abstract dimensions wherever it is discussed, it lends itself to so many different perspectives, that meaningful dialogue is impossible unless participants agree on a common approach (Hubbard, et al, 1990:25). Collard (1989) as cited in Gorringe and Howison (1972::261) adds a new understanding to the concept quality by emphasizing the importance of attitudes at every level within an organization. Achieving quality standards is not about systems, not about using specific techniques or tools or complying with a quality test of it but, "quality is about the attitude of mind of all the individuals within organizations, it is about winning the hearts and minds not only of them but also of customers who must come to believe that the organization produces goods or services which meet their specific requirements (in this case, the clients are students). Creating an environment and implementing a programme which recognizes the crucial importance of attitudes in an organization is the key to the long term success and profitability of that organization" (Gorringe and Howison, 1992:261). This is a very useful insight on quality within the present context of a transforming higher education system and the need to promote a culture of learning (among both students and academics). This makes a plea for a programme that addresses issues of quality in higher education. The importance of attitude is further reinforced by Seymour (1993:127) who claims: "The ability to cause quality depends upon an attitude that makes 'do-it-right-the first-time service' an integral part of the everyday lives of administrators, staff and faculty (academics) members." Again, quality assurance is seen to judge a service (in this case the sociology undergraduate curriculum) and higher education, by virtue of its extrinsic dimension, does provide a service that is, can and should be assessed. Being a service to all members in a society, higher education is expected to have some level of accountability to those it serves. This is at the core of

a democratic society (Seymour, 1993:189). Therefore, higher education can be compared to any industry or organization within society and customers and students are seen in the same light. Seymour (1993:189) goes on to argue that while a product (in industry) can be assessed for its worth, a service (in industry and more especially in higher education) cannot be assessed objectively since:

*   Services are performances rather than objects (products) which cannot be seen, tasted or touched. For example, a lecture is a performance but a car is a product.

*   Services are produced and consumed at the same time and a product is not. For example, a student listens and learns while the lecturer speaks but a product (car) is produced and then consumed.

*   Services are heterogeneous in that no two lecturers lecture a given topic in the same way. But a tangible product is always produced in the same way with the exact parts.

*   Services are perishable. A lecture, once given , is very likely to be repeated but an unsold car can be restored and readvertised.

Assessing the quality of a service (in this case the curriculum) implies highlighting the positive and negative aspects of the curriculum. Since it depends largely on a professional judgment of the curriculum the elements of subjectivity are bound to be present. But recognizing the positive and negative aspects of quality implies that there is a neutral component to quality as well. Ellis (1993:17) thinks that a neutral interpretation of quality refers to the standards achieved and standards that must be met. He completes the concept quality by adding that: "Assurance then adds the notion that these standards can be ensured or guaranteed" (Ellis, 1993:17). Therefore quality assurance can be described as a process " ... whereby standards are specified for a

product or service and steps are taken to ensure that these standards are consistently met" (Ellis, 1993:17). With regard to the curriculum, standards should be maintained in two ways. One is the assessment of student performance against specific criteria and the other is the assessment and systematic review of the course itself - thereby ensuring standards. In an industry, quality means giving direct satisfaction to a customer. At a university the issue of quality is less clear since students (the customers) are not necessarily in the best position to judge the worth of a programme. The final worth of higher education is judged by society and market - integration. Industry is in a stronger position to judge the worth of academic programmes. Therefore, this requires a clear definition of customer needs on the part of the supplier so that products produced meet these needs adequately. The final test or worth of a product would, therefore, depend on anyone who wants to buy it. The market therefore serves to " ... validate fitness for purpose", which is another criterion against which one can measure quality" (Ellis, 1993:18). Within higher education, the market will measure the economic worth of a degree. The adoption of the term quality assurance has been rapid and pervasive. It is seen as ambiguous since it implies both standards and excellence, which can mean one and the same thing depending on **who** is defining it. Standards are always relative and defined by the recipient (consumer, client, student, patient) operating within a specific social and cultural context. For example, how would one define standards at university? Through customer satisfaction, the students, colleagues, peers, HODs, funding agencies, employers, government or society at large (Spanbauer, 1992; Ellis, 1993).

On the other hand, measuring quality against fitness for purpose (as opposed to standards) would mean that the quality of an academic programme would be determined by its fitness to achieve status purposes, presumably with regard to learning. This would

exist (theoretically) even if customers are unable to appreciate it. Other definitions include conformance to requirements (Crosby, 1984); the predicable degree of uniformity and dependability at low cost and suited to the market. Of all these notions Ellis (1993:4) regards fitness for purpose as the more straightforward and considers customer satisfaction very significant. The above discussion indicates the following factors/aspects in quality assurance, all of which have a bearing on higher education and the current study.

*   values

*   excellence

*   standards

*   subjectivity and objective judgement

*   the need for expertise and competence in making the above

        judgements

*   the need for accountability.

In summary, the term quality assurance has therefore come to refer to the entire process whereby standards are maintained. It subsumes quality control and quality management. Quality control is where by a service (university) is checked against a predetermined standard and rejected or recycled if below standard (Ellis, 1993:5). Quality management is the total process whereby a particular organization is managed to achieve and hence be able to assure quality.

A useful and insightful model for Total Quality Management is provided by Gorringe and Howison (1992:260) who claim that for an institution in higher education a model for total quality could be built from two basic quality improvement precepts: "that the

organization must be managed 'to do things right', and that it must also ensure that it is 'doing the right thing'." This is a useful model since it locates the focus of the current study. Doing things right can be categorized into three levels. Each level can be measured against specific criteria within the educational process:

(i) Inputs which cover the learning environment, staff experience and qualifications, books, material, equipment available.

(ii) Process is the second level and covers the learning modes available, care and concern for the learner.

(iii) Outputs is the third level and covers the achievement of learners, satisfaction, indexes etc. (Gorringe and Howison, 1992:260). All three levels will feature at some point in the study.

Doing the right thing also refers to a compatibility between what is taught and its intended purpose. Regardless of how well a programme is taught, it is ineffective if it does not reach the target group or if the skills and knowledge imparted are no longer useful in relation to market and social needs. Furthermore, the product/service at university is impersonal and psychosocial in nature. This makes it difficult to make objective judgements about the 'product'. The views of students are generally ignored, partly through the absence of a market and partly on the basis of the assured superior knowledge of academics. Quality assurance, can, therefore, make a claim for recognition in higher education. This can be done by the planning, validation and review of courses or the use of feedback of students on the perceived quality of teaching.

2.4.2   *__An overview of global themes in quality assurance__*

An assessment of the sociology undergraduate curriculum has strong links with quality assurance. It has become increasingly clear, that the concern for quality in higher education has been growing and moreso in the last decade. For many developed countries - Australia, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States of America, including South Africa - quality assurance has begun to occupy an increasingly important role in their search for excellence, efficiency, effectiveness and social transformation (Green, 1994:101).

Ironically, there is a commonly held view, perception or presumption that university education was/is quality education. This is a confession made by Swedish academic Laila Mattson (Banta, 1994:5), and generally taken for granted by academics throughout the world. The need for universities to account for what they do appears ridiculous. But the time has come for universities not to presume in the public's trust in the efficacy of what they do (including what they teach). They have to earn it. This is the sentiment expressed by H. Dee, Propst, Chancellor of the University System of Georgia (Terenzini, 1994:5). The rationale for having to earn this kind of trust comes from several stakeholders in higher education. These include:

*   Government: In most countries they are the funders.

*   Tax-paying citizens.

*   Employers of graduates.

*   Students and their parents.

*   Teachers, professor and managers in universities (Green,

         1993:102).

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This scenario is a global trend. There is also an acknowledgement that institutions of higher learning are complex organizations and the application of quality assurance to them are inherently complex processes. It is also universally accepted, that quality assurance and curriculum review is driven by universally agreed notions of what should be learnt in higher education (Green, 1994:105). Each one of the following would feature, at some level, in the curriculum and in particular the sociology undergraduate curriculum.

* Love and respect for scholarship.

* Love and respect for the subject and a desire to see the subject used to help society.

* Desire to know more about the subject.

* Competence in the subject consistent with the course aims.

* Knowing how to learn.

* Knowing the limits of their knowledge and skills.

* Realization that learning is a life-long process.

* Problem solving.

* Knowing how to access and resource libraries and other databases.

* Formulating an argument.

* Integrating knowledge from different fields.

* Communication skills (writing and reading; speaking and listening).

* Critical analysis.

* Working in a team" (Green, 1994:105).

These notions can be used as criteria to measure the quality of the institution and academic programmes.

2.4.3   *Quality assurance in South African universities*

South African universities, unlike universities in Europe, United Kingdom and USA, have enjoyed a large degree of autonomy with little accountability to the state or society (Brink, 1997:2). In particular, the need for quality assurance in the South African higher education system is driven by:

*   Rapid growth and expansion;

*   An increase in the diversity of the student population;

*   An increase in the number of disadvantaged students;

*   An increase in the variety of programmes offered, especially in the social sciences;

*   An increasing number of graduates whose training in specialized areas has " ... little or no visible demand in the market (Brink, 1997:2).

*   The possibility that there is an inverse relationship between quality and quantity of graduates;

*   The need for transparency and accountability to society on exactly what universities are doing and how well they are doing it.

The increased mobility of students and professionals across national boundaries, " ... requires the accreditation of their qualification obtained in their home countries; and this immediately puts the quality of the relevant training in the spotlight" (Brink, 1997:2). The above concerns are clearly articulated in the NCHE's recommendations on a transformed higher education system in South Africa. One of the recommendations is that a quality assurance system is central to a single higher education system. A single

education system is largely driven by a need for social redress. Within the quality assurance movement, in South Africa, the distinction between historically black (HBUs) and historically white (HWUs) has to be taken into account. Moreso, for the current study since the universities of Durban-Westville and Zululand are regarded as HBUs and the universities of Natal-Durban and Pietermaritzburg are regarded as HWUs. A further distinction between English-medium, Afrikaans-medium and historically black universities can also be made (Lategan, 1996:15). HWUs have engaged autonomy on the basis of academic freedom and HBUs on the basis of no parliamentary representation. This fragmented nature of the higher education system has created a variation in academic quality in a manner where some universities can be compared to the best universities abroad while others are hardly acceptable at tertiary level (Lategan, 1996:21). This distinction is present among the universities covered in the current study. Given the historical background to this situation, future attempts at assuring quality are bound to create tension, apprehension and resistance. Since the focus of the current study is on an assessment of the sociology undergraduate curriculum at both HBUs and HWUs, it is worth noting the views of both on quality assurance. HBUs are " ... suspicious and apprehensive about stated motives for the sudden interest in quality assurance" (Noruwana, 1996:25). This could be attributed to an awareness of uncompetitiveness when compared to HWUs, the possibility that rationalization could be part of a process to relegate them to second class institutions and that HBUs could be converted to colleges of education. This is seen as unacceptable as HBUs service the majority of the disadvantaged community (Noruwana, 1996:26). Students themselves, at HBUs demand better service and value for money. In addition, professional bodies demand, irrespective of the quality of student intake at HBUs, higher standards for licensure (du Plessis and Gous, 1993:42). In addition, the high cost to society of

producing graduates who require further training soon after graduating has forced HBUs to think about the quality of their programmes. This is further reinforced by a need to compete, both nationally and internationally, in a modern market-based higher education system (Noruwana, 1996:27). HWUs tend to view quality in an absolute sense (Webbstock, 1994:6). So far, most initiatives and efforts on quality assurance have taken place in HWUs, viz., University of the Orange Free State, Stellenbosch, Natal and Cape Town. The University of Orange Free State has made significant contributions in this regard (Bitzer, 1993:28; Strydom, 1996). They have managed to ensure that quality across HWUs is comparable. This was largely possible because they followed a British model resulting in, " ... a fairly uniform system, with similar entry requirements, entry standards, ideas about what a 'educated person' is, and similar institutional missions being adopted" (Webbstock, 1994:7). However, there is also a tendency for them to play 'big brother' to the developing universities by prescribing to them what is 'good' or 'proper' university activity" (Noruwana, 1993:38). Precisely, how the HWUs and HBUs perceive the development and significance of their sociology undergraduate curriculum will be revealed in the study.

The Committee of University Principals (CUP) have thus far played an important role in making recommendations to address the need for quality assurance. These recommendations include:

* The formation of a Quality Promotion Unit (QPU) under the authority of the CUP;

* The purpose of the QPU should be to assist universities in conducting productive institutional self-evaluation at different levels; and

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*   Creating a basis in the higher education sector for development-promoting accreditation for purposes of articulation (Brink, 1997:   6-1).

The salient features of the QPU are (Brink, 1997:4):

*   Quality improvement/promotion at universities with the sole aim of self-improvement. At this early stage quality assessment/ accreditation will not feature. It would, however, in the end, orient towards accountability.

*   It would also share the best practice in quality improvement among institutions.

*   There will be no link to state formative financing. In other words, it would not be punitive.

*   There will be no ranking and intercomparison of universities.

*   In the beginning reports will be confidential. This is necessary in order to give universities time to adjust, to promote collegiality among institutions, to foster a culture of quality and to promote improvement rather than accountability.

*   Ownership will reside in the hands of the university system, individual universities and the QPU.

*   Two basic options are available when starting off a quality system. One is evaluation at the system level and the other is the programme level.

In addition to the CUP, the Ministry considers quality assurance as the responsibility of higher education institutions. In the Draft Higher Education Bill, provision is made for:

*   the coordination of quality assurance in higher education through a Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).

*   the HEQC will be established as a permanent committee of the Committee for Higher Education (CHE).

* The establishment of the HEQC, its registration with SAQA and its modus operandi will be determined by the CHE within the framework and procedural guidelines developed by SAQA (Government Gazette, 1997:21).

The functions of the HEQC will include programme accreditation and institutional auditing. It should operate within an agreed framework underpinned by:

* the formulation of criteria and procedures in consultation with higher education institutions.

* a formative notion of quality assurance, focused on improvement and development rather than punitive sanction.

* A mix of institutional self-evaluation and external independent assessment(Government Gazette, 1997:21).

SERTEC would form the basis of the HEQC which would carry out the HEC's statutory authority for accreditation of higher education programmes. Quality promotion activities should be encouraged and monitored by the HEC, but undertaken on an agency basic. The QPU of the CUP could play this role and its scope could be broadened beyond the universities (NCHE, 1996).

2.4.4 *Quality assurance criteria for assessing the sociology undergraduate curriculum*

Besides the above-mentioned criteria for assessing the curriculum, the following criteria have also been identified as playing an important role in curriculum assessment. They are

drawn from the SERTEC criteria for evaluating academic programmes in South African technikons. They include:

*   **Staff**: in terms of qualifications, specialization and experience. Other issues relate to staff **satisfaction** in teaching programmes, staff preparedness to get involved in curriculum development and staff relations with employers and industry (Prior, 1995:119).

*   **Placement of qualified students**: in terms of visible evidence for more sociology graduates, visible evidence that courses and content offered prepare students for employment, visible evidence that courses as content offered equip students for career progress (Prior, 1995:119).

*   **Professional and non-formal activities**: in terms of the input of industry, government and others on teaching/curriculum development/experiential training/employment of graduates (Prior, 1995:119) in related fields.

Table 2.7 : An Overview of Models for Assessing a Curriculum

Prototype	Key emphasis	Purpose	Key activities	Key Viewpoint used to Delimit study	Outside experts needed	Expected Teaching staff involvement	Risks	Pay-off
Tyler's Evaluation Model	Instructional Objectives	To measure student progress towards objectives	Specify objectives; measure student competence	Curriculum supervisor; teacher	Objectives, specifiers, measurement specialist	Conceptualize objectives; give tests	Oversimplify school aims; ignore processes	Ascertain student progress
Institutional self-study	Staff self-study	To review content & procedures of instruction	Discuss program; make professional judgments	Classroom teacher; administrator	None, but possible outside authentication or technical help	Committee discussion	Exhaust staff; ignore values of outsiders	Increase staff leadership responsibility
Stake's Countenance Model	Description & judgement data	To report the ways different people see the curriculum	Discover what audience wants to know about; observe, gather opinions	Audience of final report	Journalists; social psychologists	Keep logs; give opinions	stir-up value conflicts; ignore causes	Broad picture of curriculum conflicting hopes
Stufflebeam's CIPP Model	Decision-making	To facilitate rational & continuing decision-making	Identify upcoming alternatives; study implications, set up quality control	Administrator; director	Operations analyst	Anticipate decisions, contingencies	Overvalue efficiency; undervalue student aims	Curriculum sensitive to feedback
Taba's Social Studies Evaluation Model	Cause & effect relationship	To seek simple but enduring explanation of what works	Exercise experimental control & systematic variation	Theorist; researcher	Research designer; statistical analysts	Tolerate experimental constrains	Artificiality ignore personal values	Get rules for developing new programs
Scriven's Goal-Free Evaluation	Evaluator's goal-free checklist	To assess effects of program	Ignore proponent claims; follow checklist	Evaluator	Jurist; curriculum analyst	Male the program accessible	Overvalue documents & record keeping	Data on effect with littler cooption

(Jenkins, 1976:21)

Table 2 refers to some of the models on assessing a curriculum. They are useful in that each one focuses on a particular aspect of the curriculum. For example, the Ralph Tyler model focuses on instructional objectives only, while Stake's model looks at how different people view the curriculum. But because each model focuses on a particular aspect, it has its limitations as well. Therefore, with regard to the focus of the current study, a framework has been designed to meet the goals and objectives of the current study. This can be compared to Scriver's Goal - Free Evaluation where a checklist is compiled. This checklist/framework in the researcher's opinion, serve the needs of this study.

2.6 *Summary*

Higher education and universities in particular are seen as a national resource. Given the huge amount of investment (both financial and moral) within higher education, a need exists for some kind of accountability. This accountability is best expressed in the form of audits, evaluations and assessment of different aspects of the university. The current study focuses on one such aspect, viz., the sociology undergraduate curriculum. In order to do this, the critical component of the sociology undergraduate curriculum have been identified. They include what is taught, why it is taught, how it is taught, methods of assessment, society, resources, focus and coherence. These criteria will be applied to sociology at levels one, two, three and between the levels as well.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

3.   *Introduction*

The central concepts within the undergraduate curriculum are the concepts of teaching, learning and knowledge. The latter largely defines and guides the process of both teaching and learning and therefore occupies a central role in the construction of the undergraduate curriculum. In particular, a discipline (and in the current study the discipline is sociology) and its underlying assumptions further dictate the focus, coherence and form that the curriculum assumes. But, in essence, a curriculum is constructed (either knowingly or unknowingly) under the influence of the predominant forms of inquiry and socio-economic conditions. This becomes clear as one examines the curriculum from both a modernist and post-modernist paradigm.

Both paradigms of modernism and post-modernism shed a great deal of light and insight into the construction of teaching, learning and knowledge. While concepts within the modernist theory or curriculum are useful, the post-modernist theory is presented as an alternate to the shortcomings of the former. The differences between the two are meant to enhance this analysis. The discipline sociology and its formalisation into the undergraduate curriculum is easily located within the paradigms of both modernism and post-modernism. These contrasting paradigms serve to highlight the development of the discipline both within and outside of the formal undergraduate curriculum.

3.1   ***Distinctions between modernism and post-modernism***

Doll (1993:4) is of the opinion that assessing the modernist perspective on the curriculum is a pre-requisite for understanding the post-modernist perspective. The curriculum in this context is defined in terms of process - a process of development, dialogue, inquiry, transformation (Doll, 1993:13). The significance of this definition is that it shifts emphasis from curriculum as being content driven to curriculum as "... person and process of running the course, the experience an individual undergoes in learning, in transforming and being transformed" (Doll, 1993:13).

The most distinctive characteristics between the modern and post-modern paradigms is provided by Premlal (1994:58) in the following table. This table highlights the differences between the two paradigms against the following categories: rationality, cosmology, metaphor, epistemology, systems dynamics, metanarratives, intellectual vision, discovery of change, era and protagonists of both schools of thought. These paradigms are located within particular historical periods and their predominant ideologies have had obvious implications and bearing on the curriculum. In particular, its bearing on knowledge, the way it is pursued, the way it is examined, the way it is perceived are all central to these two paradigms.

Table 3.1 : Differences between modern and post-modern paradigms

CATEGORIES	MODERN PARADIGM	POST-MODERN PARADIGM
Rationality	Technical control, utilitarian, strong sense of individualism.	Eclectic pastiche, Qualitative, social and humanistic.
Cosmology	Stable, uniform, absolute, order, symmetrical, single	Asymmetrical, chaotic, dissipative, changeable, self-organising, dis-equilibrium, complex, multi-layered interpretation.
Metaphor	Conventional: cause-effect what is, need to find closure.	Liberated: creative organisation, what can be, need to explore.
Epistemology	Deification of Science, verificationist, spectator theory of knowledge, pre-dictable.	Personal subjectifications, unpredictable, critique of modernism, experiential espistemology, generative, hermeneutical, inter-active, language game methodology.
Systems dynamics	Closed system, stable, mechanistic, cause-effect, cybernetic.	Open system "chaotic", disparate.
Metanarratives	Strives for certain knowledge and scientific truth.	Incredulous towards metanarratives.
Intellectual vision	Positivistic certainty.	Pragmatic doubt concerning human experience.
Discovery of change	Evolution and entropy.	Creativity and exploration.
Era	Industrial	Post-industrial.
Protagonists	Bacon, Descartes, Newton.	Einstein, Bohr, Heisenberg, Prigogine.

(Arjun, 1994:58)

The above paradigms are situated within historical epochs that have exercised an influence on the thought and practice of both the sciences and humanities. Bosch (1992:349) is of the opinion that "... the 'modern' or 'enlightenment' era would not be the last epoch of world history to exercise an influence on the thought and practices of mission... All other epochs including the modern one, belong to the past... The situation

with the post-modern paradigm is fundamentally different. New paradigms do not establish themselves overnight. They take decades, sometimes even centuries, to develop distinctive contours. The new paradigm is therefore still emerging and it is, as yet not clear which shape it will eventually adopt. For the most part we are, at the moment, thinking and working in terms of two paradigms."

Essentially, an assessment of any curriculum would have to locate the past and highlight its link to the present and the possible future. To do this, competing and conflicting paradigms would need to be utilised.

In fact, concepts like post-modernism and modernism are currently used by both sociologists and critics in America (Lyotard, 1987:XXIII). For Lyotard (1987:XXIII) "... it designates the state of our culture following the transformations which, since the end of the nineteenth century, have altered the game rules for science, literature and the arts." He uses the term post-modernism to describe the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies.

3.2   Central concepts in modernist curriculum theory

Before central concepts in modernist curriculum theory are discussed, the term modernism will be defined and its historical development outlined.

3.2.1   *Defining modernism*

The modernist paradigm has been built on science. This paradigm framed American intellectual, social and educational thought during the first seven or eight decades of this century. The scientific pursuit of knowledge has become for the social sciences, and hence for education and curriculum, a paradigm (Doll, 1993:1). Modernization is described as a process and central to this process is differentiation (John Murray Cuddihy as cited in Küng and Tracy, 1989:198). Modernist theories differentiate at various levels. They are:

*   the differentiation of home from job;

*   the differentiation of political economy (Marx) into politics and economy;

*   differentiation of the culture system from the personality and social systems;

*   differentiation of economy from society (Weber, Parsons, Smelser);

*   differentiation of fact from value, of theory from praxis; and

*   differentiation of art from belief (Küng and Tracy, 1989:198).

These distinctions manifest themselves within the sociology undergraduate curriculum at varying levels. These distinctions become clearer as the various concepts within modernism are clarified.

3.2.2   *A closed vision*

The modern paradigm is seen to represent a closed vision. The scientific method of inquiry is deterministic and dogmatic "... predicated on a stable, uniform, cosmological

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order" (Doll, 1993:21). Mathematics is used to measure cause effect relationships. While this is deterministic it also depends on a closed non-transformative, line early developed universe. Stability was essential and disciplines from mathematics to physics through sociology and psychology were organized in a reductionist hierarchy (Doll, 1993:21). The sociology undergraduate curriculum has largely been constructed on this basis.

3.2.3 *The modernist technocrat*

Professionalism - the mark of the educationist technocrat is a modernist concept. It places value on specialized expertise and technique over a broader, wiser, more holistic approach to knowledge and life. However, in the pre-modernist era, Greeks perceived professionalism as a study in excess and thus represented failure (Doll, 1993:24). They defined quality education in terms of essences whereas modernist education defines quality education in terms of text scores, certificates and degrees. This narrow assessment is done at the expense of assessing knowledge, skills, talents, educational acquisitions, memory and wisdom (Jensen, 1981:11). While sociology itselfis not a professional qualification, it feeds into other professions like social work. A major in sociology can lead to a degree. Assessment is largely based on a grade.

3.2.4 *The measured curriculum*

Modern science ensured that the curriculum was designed in a mechanistic and scientific way. Doll (1993:28) calls this the machine-oriented curriculum where "... the goals lie outside, and are determined prior to, the instructional process, and are determined prior

to, the instructional process; once firmly set, they are 'driven through' the curriculum. The teacher becomes the driver; the student becomes at best a passenger, at worst an object being driven." The results of this kind of curriculum planning is that it does not allow the student to interact meaningfully with the teacher in planning the goals and emerge from within the process of learning rather than being set before hand. For the sociology undergraduate curriculum, goals are always pre-determined.

3.2.5   *Control, scientific methodology, stability*

Inherent in modernism are forces of positivism and determinism. This exists to the extent that all aspects of social life can be controlled. Being able to control was the key to the paradigms productive success (Doll, 1993:29). This is evident not only among industrialists and technocrats but in educational and curricular manifestations as well. The ability to control was solidified through the scientific method of inquiry.

Descartes (1637/1950) as cited in Doll (1993:29) was instrumental in providing a scientific foundation for the curricular methodology present in our education system. This he did by advocating clear definitions, a reductionist methodology and careful evaluation. First, he defined ends as external to the process. Second, he separated theory from fact, imagination from practicality, and observable as fact not imagery (Doll, 1993:31). Third, the curriculum tacitly separates teacher from student, known from known and self from other (Doll, 1993:31). One of the features of the curriculum in the current study is the separation between the scientific and non-scientific. This manifests itself in the way theories are categorised into positivist (conflict and functionalist) and humanist.

The above scientific form of inquiry gave curriculum planners a degree of stability. Ralph Tyler (1950), one of the earliest theorist on curriculum planning provides a framework for curriculum planning that is based on the scientific method. He provides four fundamental foci for curriculum planning: chosen purpose, provided experiences, effective organization and evaluation. Doll (1993:31) argues that within this paradigm "... learning is encased in a closed system - limited to the discovery of the pre-existent, the already known. Here there can be a transmission of information but not a transformation of knowledge" (Doll, 1993:31). Therefore, from the modernist paradigm, knowledge could be discovered and not created thereby creating a closed and limited system.

3.2.6 *Linear sequencing*

At the heart of mathematical order is linear sequencing or calculus order devised by Newton (Doll, 1993:37). This linear connectedness of development has been built into educational and curriculum theory. It is assumed that the curriculum must be organized in sequential steps. Any gap or break in the curriculum is either absent or viewed negatively. Time is seen only in cumulative terms and as a co-relation with what is learned. The more time spent on learning, the greater the learning accumulated. In other words: "Time is not seen as an active ingredient, necessary for developing the creative possibilities inherent in any situation" (Doll, 1993:37). In the modernist paradigm the concept of curriculum as autonomous but interconnected units is present from grade one. The curriculum is made up of units arranged in linear order and learning is defined in terms of the number of units covered, mastered and accumulated (Doll, 1993:38). This

is evident in the structure of the undergraduate curriculum which is divided into units/modules or courses. They are also arranged in a linear fashion.

3.2.7   *Industrialisation and technical rationality*

Industrialisation is the concrete embodiment of the modern vision (Doll, 1993:39). This revolution has shaped society and education along the following technological lines.

(i)   Technocratic rationality that embodies principles of efficient production, scientific decision-making and orderly behaviour.

(ii)   Scientific management of teaching and the curricular where results are measured against fixed standards and time correlated with learning. This efficient use of time resulted in the creation of curricula in small measured units. The undergraduate degree generally has a time frame attached. The normal duration of the degree is three years. A major in sociology ought to take three to four years.

3.2.8   *The emergence of the professional*

Industrialization itself demanded leaders, with technical expertise, drawn from art science and industry. Knowledge had become compartmentalised into specialised in-depth areas. This is known as professionalism which is based on technical skill, theoretical knowledge on which the skill is based and acceptance by a community of other professionals. The

knowledge that a professional possessed was knowledge that a lay person did not and could not possess. The prominent features of professionalism are:

*   The basic training model is the medical one based on theoretical science;

*   The professional is motivated by community rather than individual interest (Doll, 1993:45);

*   Within an industrial society a dilemma exists between professionalism based on science that fulfils the technocratic need of this society and professionalism based on religious, aesthetic, intuitive values necessary for participatory leadership (Bell, 1973 as cited in Doll, 1993:45). The relationship between professionalism and science has obvious implications for the curriculum and education. The implication being a single reliance on an absolute, technical and rational reliance on science as a form of inquiry. And for Doll (1993:46), this is not a good model for the inquiring mind. But the early developments in sociology were largely based on scientific inquiry. This is, however, beginning to change.

3.3 *Weaknesses inherent within the modern paradigm*

At the heart of the modernist paradigm are concepts of technorationality as espoused by Descartes, Newton's metaphysical and cosmological views, prediction, control, cause-effect relationships and the linear ordering of events. These central concepts within the modernist intellectual movement have outlined its usefulness, yet it lives on as a force in curriculum practice. Research methods in sociology are based on scientific inquiry. Given the changes in the intellectual, political and social scene it becomes imperative for curriculum planners "... to question the modernist assumptions on which these methods

and practices are based and to develop a new perspective that simultaneously rejects, transforms, and preserves that which has been" (Doll, 1993:11). Among the criticisms against the modernist paradigm in education and the curriculum, the following are the most significant.

Closed vision

(i)   There is a strong need to break away from the rigid, scientific approach to planning learning to one that is more transformative and engaging.

(ii)   **The expansion of rationality:** Rationality as defined in the modernist paradigm is seen to be an inadequate cornerstone on which to build one's life since: "The objectivist framework imposed on rationality has had a crippling effect on human inquiry; it has led to disastrous reductionism and hence to stunted human growth" (Bosch, 1993:353). Hence, rationality has to be expanded and one way of doing this is to recognise that language cannot be absolutely accurate and that it's impossible to define the finality of either scientific laws or technological truths (Bosch, 1993:353).

(iii)   **Beyond the subject-object scheme:** Within the modernist paradigm everything is reduced - nature is objectified and the physical world is subjected to the human mind and will. Machines, production and technology began to enslave rather than liberate human beings. This resulted in a closed, unchanging world where human beings are separated from nature, mind from body and subject from object. The emphasis should be symbiosis (Bosch, 1993:355).

(iv) **Rediscovery of the teleological dimension:** The need for prediction is deeply embedded within the modernist paradigm. The belief that everything operates according to unchanging laws of cause and effect is inevitably flawed in attempts to explain inexplicable phenomena. For example, social scientists are finding it extremely difficult to explain many forms of social behaviour and this calls for a paradigm shift in investigating and understanding social behaviour (Bosch, 1993:356).

(v) **The challenge to progress thinking:** Progress thinking during the enlightenment era gave rise to colonial expansion which created the mass inequalities between developed and underdeveloped nations. Inherent in this were relationships of power and domination of one nation by another on the basis of race and gender (Bosch, 1993:356).

(vi) **A fiduciary framework:** The subject-object dichotomy within modernism is based on a positivist philosophy of cause and effect and thus laden with empiricism. This leads to a clear and radical distinction between value and fact since every act of knowing contains an appraisal (Polanyi, 1958:17) and this in itself is value-laden, not objective (Bosch, 1993:62).

(vii) **Chartered optimism:** One of the fundamental assumptions of modernism is that all problems, in principle, are solvable. This belief is inherently flawed. The testimony to this is the dismal failure of First World schemes on Third World countries. This condition directs one to search for meaning outside the dictates of a modernist paradigm (Bosch, 1993:362).

The above discussion clearly indicates the limits of the modernist paradigm on education and specifically the curriculum. The predominant argument is that a rigid scientific approach to understanding social behaviour is not adequate. Within education, the limitations are brought into sharper focus. The rapidly changing higher education system, the emergence of new educational problems, the restructuring of disciplines, the challenges faced by curriculum planners in designing appropriate material, economic/ecological crises and student failure and drop-out all point toward the need for an alternate way of thinking and inquiry. And this alternate paradigm is post-modernism.

3.4 *Defining post-modernism*

The word post-modernism is currently in use in America among sociologists and critics (Lyotard, 1987:XXIII; Bosch, 1993). It was one of the most debated issues in the academic world during the 1980s and "... has become part of the resurgence of modern philosophies of pragmatism in challenging the major tenets of modern scientific and social knowledge" (Rust, 1991:611). While post-modernism has influenced a wide variety of fields including anthropology and sociology there is no agreed upon meaning for the term.

At best, it is marked by a wide variety of interpretations (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991:60).

Lyotard as cited in Aronowitz and Giroux (1991:60) describes post-modernism "... as a rejection of grand narratives, metaphysical philosophies, and any other form of totalizing

thought ... post-modernism is inextricably related to the changing conditions of knowledge and technology that are producing forms of social organisation that are undermining the old habits, bonds and practices of modernity." Given the rapid and unprecedented changes in society regarding scientific knowledge, technology and electronics and the inability of modernism to provide meaning about an unstable and changing world post-modernism offers an "... ideological and political marker for referencing a world without stability, a world where knowledge is constantly changing and where meaning can no longer be enclosed in a technological view of history" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991:60).

3.5   *Central concepts in post-modernism curriculum theory*

3.5.1   *An open system*

Unlike modernism, post-modernism posits a different social, personal and intellectual vision. It departs from positivistic certainty and is predicated on pragmatic doubt. In other words, doubt has to arise as a result of human experience and not on metanarrative themes. This lack of certainty is meant to encourage dialogue and communication with others. Furthermore, it strives for an eclectic/local integration of subject/object, curriculum/person, teacher/student and us/others. This integration is a living process that is negotiated and created not preordained and found (Doll, 1993:61-62). The general trend in higher education is to shift from a teacher/content centered approach to a combined learner centered one. The sociology undergraduate curriculum would therefore be forced to move in this direction.

3.5.2 *Curriculum as process*

Doll (1993:155) states that curriculum is a process not of transmitting what is known but of exploring what is unknown and through explorations students and teachers transform both knowledge and themselves. However, there is a risk involved in this process view. The risk is basing our future on a presence grounded on nothing but itself; its historical part and faith in ourselves. And to succeed one needs to develop the correct amount of tension between commitment and contingency. This is an art which curricularists need to develop so that learning and understanding come through dialogue and reflection. The very nature of the discipline of sociology demands that learning and inquiry be based on explorations and joint discovery.

3.5.3 *The post-modern curriculum and history*

The radical shift from modernism to post-modernism indicates that there should be a complete break from the past. However, Doll (1993:157) is of the opinion that while the post-modern curriculum should be free of past domination it needs the roots of history in order to grow and develop. Rather than rejecting the modern, post-modernism transcends and transforms it. Inherent and inevitable in this is the essential and productive tension between the past and present where the old is to utilised within the new. This is easily understood within the sociology undergraduate curriculum since it has a strong and rich historical tradition.

3.5.4   *Self-organisation*

This feature distinguishes the post-modern from the modern and holds the most implication for curriculum. Piaget as cited in Doll (1993:158) describes self-organisation as the essence of life itself, underlying the processes of assimilation and accommodation. These processes interact to give life its harmony and developmental qualities. A transformative union results from differing qualities, substances, ideologies combine in dynamic ways to inform self-organisation. The most significant aspect of this is that self-organisation allows for change from within and at the will of individuals. For the curriculum it is significant in that there is a shift in perception of curriculum as an 'external force' deterministic to which teachers/learners respond to curriculum as mediated and negotiated.

Curriculum designed with self-organisation as a basic assumption has the following features:

* the student is not only receiver of knowledge but active participant;

* challenge and perturbations become the reason for organisation and re-organisation;

* student challenge does not threaten the role of the teacher. Therefore while the open systems require disruptions in order to function, a closed system rejects and eliminates it completely, seeing it as a threat to its functioning (Doll, 1993:159). Current developments at universities indicate that students are becoming (or should become) more involved in organising the curriculum.

3.5.5   *Developing the practical*

There is the view that the curriculum field has reached a state of unhappiness because there is a mistaken reliance, adoption and borrowing of theory from other disciplines. The main argument is that problems of teaching and learning need to be handled from a practical rather than theoretical perspective. This does not mean that theory must be separated from practice but that it be grounded and developed from practice (Doll, 1993:162). The implications for the curriculum are that both teachers and students are free to develop their own curriculum in interaction with one another. This encouraged recursive reflection is necessary to develop a sense of community (Doll, 1993:163). Within sociology there is a strong capacity to ground theory in practice since the discipline is rooted in everyday reality. This is evident in the variation of modules offered.

3.5.6   *Utilising self-organisation*

For self-organisation, perturbation is essential since a system only works when there is a perturbation, problem or disturbance. Piaget as cited in Doll (1993:163) claims that this disequilibrium is the driving force of re-development. Yet not every perturbation would lead to re-development but destruction as well (Doll, 1993:164). The nature of the discipline (sociology) lends itself well to this.

Within the curriculum: "Perturbation will trigger self-organisation only when the environment is rich enough and open enough for multiple uses, interpretations, and perspectives to come into play" (Doll, 1993:164). So while the student needs to be able

to know the material, be able to solve, interpret and analyse information the learner should also be able to play with this information (Doll, 1993:164).

3.5.7   *The role of authority*

The issue of authority and control occupies a central place in the lives of teachers and education. However, the problem with its interpretation is that it is externally controlled (modernist perspectives) and imposed on students. Yet control can be situated outside these parameters and the teacher's role in a transformative post-modernist curriculum should be "... restructured and re-situated from being external to the student's situation to being one with that situation" (Doll, 1993:167). In this context, the teacher's role is more crucial than in the modernist one since the teacher is the leader from within not a dictator from without. Furthermore, this creative interaction between student and teacher allows for an understanding that no one owes the truth and everybody has the right to be understood, thereby creating a sense of community (Doll, 1993:169). Fortunately, sociology is taught at universities to learners who are largely adults. This allows for a large measure of creative integration between student and teacher.

3.5.8   *Metaphor and the narrative mode*

Bruner as cited in Doll (1993:169) states that there is another, complementary mode of thought to the logical, analytic and scientific. These are the metaphorical, narrative and hermeneutical. The analytic is explanatory while the narrative is interpretative. This is the key difference between them. With the explanatory mode the teacher aims for precision in presentation but with the narrative the teacher aims to keep the dialogue

going. Meanings are constructed through dialogue and without dialogue there is no transformation.

Metaphors serve to generate dialogue by helping us see what we don't see. Logic is definitional and serves to clarify issues. Therefore, while logic aims for closure, metaphors aim for creative imagination. An interplay of both needs to be brought into the curriculum (Doll, 1993:169).

The narrative requires interpretation and challenges the reader to enter into dialogue with the text (Doll, 1993:109). Text in sociology does precisely this to the reader. Sometimes the reader is aware of this, at other times the reader is unaware.

3.5.9 *Goals, plans and purposes*

A significant element of the curriculum is purposive planning. And humans are competent in this. However, there are two misconceptions regarding this. One is the assumption that individuals best develop planning skills by passively receiving another's plans rather than being an active participant in the planning process. The other is a tacit assumption of a cosmology based on a universe stable in order (Doll, 1993:170).

3.5.10 *Evaluation*

Unlike the modernist curriculum the post-modern transformative curriculum does not have a set norm or canon which can exist as a universal reference point (Doll, 1993:173). The two assumptions upon which modernism attaches meaning to evaluation is

problematic to post-modernism. The first assumption is that teaching is framed within a closed set. The second assumption is that "... evaluation in terms of grades is the assessment of how much of this canon and its method the student has acquired" (Doll, 1993:172). Evaluation from a post-modernist perspective is not aimed at separating winners from losers (as in modernism) "... but essentially evaluation would be a negotiatory process within a communal setting for the purpose of transformation" (Doll, 1993:174). While the teacher would play a central role in the process of evaluation, the teacher would not be the only evaluator. Evaluation is meant to be communal and interactive. This ties in with the need for formative, peer and self-assessment in sociology.

3.5.11   *The four R's*

The three R's of reading, writing and arithmetic were late 19th century and 20th century developments meant to fulfil the needs of developing industrial society. The major problem with this in curricular terms is that it is present, pre-determined and set firmly in place before any interaction with students occur. Post-modernism argues for a curriculum that is generated and not pre-defined, and one that is indeterminate yet bounded (Doll, 1993:176). To achieve this Doll (1993:176) suggests the four R's of richness, recursion, relations and rigor.

(i)   **Richness:**   refers to a curriculum depth, it layers of meanings, its multiple possibilities and interpretations. For the curriculum to play a transformatory role among students and teachers it should have the right amount of anomaly,

indeterminacy, inefficiency, chaos, disequilibrium, dissipation and lived experience (Doll, 1993:176).

(ii) **Recursion:** means to happen again. Unlike repetition (as in modernism) recursion aims to develop competence in the ability to organise, combine, inquire and use something in a heuristic way. It's frame (unlike modernism) is open-ended. Reflection plays a positive role and engenders dialogue for transformation to occur. On the other hand reflection, within modernism, plays a negative roll (Doll, 1993:178).

(iii) **Relations:** is important in a post-modern, transformative curriculum in two ways:

* the pedagogical way which focuses on the connections within a curriculum's structure that give it its depth and which is developed by recursion. The twin processes of doing and reflecting on doing allow the curriculum to become richer from the beginning to the end (Doll, 1993:179).

* the cultural relations emphasises narration and dialogue as key vehicles in interpretation which interconnects the local culture with other cultures via a global matrix (Doll, 1993:180).

(iv) **Rigor:** has two dimensions. One is indeterminacy that claims that one can never be certain as to the rightness of anything. Therefore, one has to be searching and exploring for new combinations, interpretations and patterns. The other is interpretation which refers to the need to search out hidden assumptions so that

dialogue can be meaningful and transformative (Doll, 1993:183). The current study employs the first dimension which aims to search and explore the curriculum and the discipline (sociology) for new combinations and interpretations.

3.6   *Summary*

The past and current nature of the sociology undergraduate curriculum is best understood within the context of modernist and post-modernist curriculum theory. The former locates the development of the discipline within a scientific era with ramifications for course objectives, instructional methods, forms of inquiry, assessment forms and structure. Yet, within the modernist context of curriculum development weaknesses have emerged and the post-modernist curriculum theory is presented as a viable alternate to understanding and interpreting the post-modern curriculum. Of significance is its focus on curriculum as process, self-organisation, practicality, authority, metaphor and its strong focus on transformation.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

4.1   *Introduction*

Research into aspects of higher education is a relatively new field. The need to study aspects of the higher education system is driven by the emergence of new areas for empirical investigation and intellectual development. Among the many areas that have manifested themselves the following are the most pertinent: curriculum, financing, student support, access, equality, affirmative action, gender equity and academic advancement (Pretorius, 1998:1). In fact, "... higher education itself is changing fast enough, in most of the world, to require almost constant reassessment" (Fulton, 1992:1820).

Therefore, research in higher education is gaining momentum and beginning to occupy a central role in addressing issues of quality, cost-effectiveness, relevance and accountability. While the current study engages in research from a social science perspective, it overlaps closely with research in education and specifically the assessment of the curriculum. Therefore, a distinction needs to be made between social science research, educational research, educational assessment and hence curriculum assessment. Within these schools of research, are research methods appropriate to their particular orientation. The following discussion presents the method employed in gathering and analyzing the data.

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4.2   ***The purpose of social research***

The purpose of research are multiple and given to my interpretations, Bitzer (1994:1-4) cites the following interpretations:

*   Research has utility value only if it is:

  -        capable of adding new knowledge;

  -        of stimulating progress;

  -        helps society and man relate more efficiently and effectively to the problems that society and man perpetuate and create (McGrath, 1970:20).

*   -   Solves problems which leads to new knowledge;

  -        Uses methods of inquiry that are current and accepted by schools in the field (Helmstadter, 1970:5).

Much of social research emulates scientific methods of inquiry which is "... a systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions about the presumed relations among natural phenomena" (Kerlinger, 1973:11).

While the current study is located within the social sciences, there is a great overlap with research in education. Both social science research and educational research have the following aims in common:

*   a need to add new knowledge;

*   stimulating social and educational progress;

*   contributes towards solving social and educational problems;

*   adopt scientifically accepted methods of inquiry;

*   creates new knowledge; and

*   attempts to provide answers to "..... worthwhile, important and fundamental

        questions through the application of sound and acceptable methods" (Varma and

        Beard, 1981:18).

Against the background of the above a distinction needs to be made between educational

research and educational assessment.

4.3   *__The difference between educational research and__*

        __educational assessment__

An assessment of any aspect within higher education means engaging in research to

gather the necessary information for making judgements. Educational research and

educational assessment are often viewed as one and the same thing. While there is

considerable overlap between the two; there are three important differences:

*   Educational assessment is driven by a need to make decisions and take action

        concerning curriculum, instruction, university policy, management, political

        strategy and others. On the other hand, the impetus for educational research is to

        seek relationships among two or more variables.

*   Data associated with educational assessment is usually limited to a specific site,

        for example, a curriculum with its unique set of conditions. Data collected in

        educational research is likely to support widely applicable generalizations, for

        example, the effects of the environment on student performance.

*   Educational assessment is largely value-laden. Results are often expressed in

        subjective terms of worth such as good, bad, better, worse and others. These

terms are consistent with research that is judgemental (Borg and Gall, 1989:743 as cited in Longstreet, 1993:148). On the other hand, results in educational research are expressed in objective terms that "..... transcend specific situations" (Borg and Gall, 1989:743 as cited in Longstreet, 1993:148). For example, an assessment of the curriculum would entail a great deal of both professional (lecturers) and student judgement of the course based on their experience of it. These results are subjective. On the other hand, educational research would entail the admissions policy of the university in relation to available resources. These results are objective.

The differences between educational research and educational assessment indicate that the former focuses on macro issues and the latter on micro issues. Furthermore, educational assessment involves a wide range of micro issues from curriculum to funding, each of which is assessed separately. An assessment of the curriculum itself requires a particular methodology. This will be presented in the following discussion.

4.4   Assessing the curriculum

The process of assessing the curriculum is a truly complex one. Issues of reliability, validity, relevance all serve to justify and authenticate the results. An assessment should, ideally, be "..... based on specific criteria and principles as these may determine the quality of evaluation to a great extent" (Carl, 1995:123).

In the method of implementing a curriculum assessment process, the following criteria as identified by Carl (1995:123) are meant to be taken into account for the results to have legitimacy. These include:

*   Validity (assess what it is supposed to assess);

*   Continuity - completeness/comprehensiveness (assess all relevant aspects);

*   Correspondence (assessment is in accordance with what is actually envisaged and what is actually assessed);

*   Objectivity;

*   Reliability (permanence of results);

*   Comprehensiveness (utilize all relevant methods of assessment) and

*   Democratizing (by providing opportunities for student input).

The questionnaire survey was seen to be the most appropriate tool in gathering information. The advantages and disadvantages will be discussed later in the chapter. In essence, it serves to accommodate issues of validity, continuity, comprehensiveness, correspondence, reliability, objectivity and democratizing. However, the issue of democratizing needs to be discussed in more detail.

The current study takes as assessors of the undergraduate curriculum students who are in their final and third year of sociology and the lecturer/s concerned. Carl (1995:195) refers to this as consensus evaluation where the views of different persons or groups of persons are assessed with regard to the same curriculum. This adds to the validity and reliability of the survey. This assessment is carried out against a set of criteria determined by the researcher. This formulation of a set of criteria deserves some discussion since, like all curriculum research it is value-laden.

4.4.1   **_Towards the assessment of the sociology undergraduate curriculum –_**

           A model versus a checklist

From the discussion in chapter two, it was evident that a single model for assessing the entire undergraduate curriculum does not exist. While a model may supply meaningful guidelines for the process of assessment (Carl, 1995:183), it is limited for the simple reason that it focuses on one or two aspects of the curriculum only. A checklist on the other hand serves to incorporate all the different aspects of the curriculum into a coherent whole and this can be used as a basis for a comprehensive and complete assessment.

Many teachers and researchers in higher education prefer a checklist against which a course can be assessed. These people include:

*   Ellis (1993:99) finds it simpler to present typical categories and items like course organization and structure, workload, course difficulty, marking and exams, course impact on students, breadth of coverage and global overall ratings of the course.

*   Newble and Cannon (1989:88) formulate a checklist to include context and input evaluation, process evaluation, and outcome evaluation. These comprehensive areas provide for a detailed assessment that a single model cannot do.

*   Rowntree (1978:155) identifies twelve questions in order to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum.

*   Pratt (1980:413) also provides an extensive checklist against which a curriculum can be assessed.

*   Cawood (1984:44-47) identifies six components against which a curriculum is assessed.

*   Diamond (1989:247) acknowledges that no checklist could ever be complete yet "... a general list of questions tend to recur in the evaluation of courses and other programs of instruction." In the initial stages of an assessment, a checklist can serve as a functional guideline and in the latter stages it should serve as a means of ensuring that all relevant issues/questions have been considered.

The above suggests that a comprehensive checklist best serves the need for the assessment of a curriculum. However, for this to occur, the following steps have to be implemented within the research process. This was duly carried out by the researcher.

4.5   *Procedure used in the gathering of data*

The following procedure has been crucial to the systematic investigation of the current study. The steps taken served to ensure the collection of relevant data which reinforced the validity and reliability of the results obtained.

4.5.1   *Review of relevant literature*

While research is not always a linear process, a formal scientific study recognizes a starting point, be it practice or theory. The starting point for the current study began with a literature study on aspects of the transforming nature of the higher education system. This enabled the researcher to identify particular aspects of the higher education

system and focus on one particular area of study. In this case, it was the sociology undergraduate curriculum.

The literature review enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding on the complex functioning of the higher education system. It further reinforced the need for studying aspects of the undergraduate curriculum. The literature study provided a strong theoretical basis upon which the empirical study was based. Anderson (1990:97) states that "... successful research is based on all the knowledge, thinking and research that precedes it, and for this reason a review of the literature is an essential step in the process of understanding a research study."

4.5.2 *The initial interview*

The aim of these initial interviews was to establish the particular areas that require attention within a rapidly transforming higher education system. In keeping, with the literature study, the following were identified as key areas: policy and planning, funding, student learning, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, relevance, quality and curriculum development/assessment. These informal interviews were carried out with stakeholders within the higher education system ranging from researchers, lecturers, peers, educationists and AD personnel.

4.5.3 *Consultation with authoritative sources*

Given the many challenges facing higher education it was necessary to seek out the views of experts in the field of higher education, education and related individuals. The views

of the following people provided a great deal of insight into the nature of the current study. Their informed opinions and ideas combined with their wisdom served to direct much of the study. Among those who were consulted, were Prof J. Jansen (Dean of the Faculty of Education - University of Durban-Westville) whose initial comments served to direct the study, Prof Chris Kapp (Director for the Centre of Adult and Higher Education - University of Stellenbosch) whose imput was invaluable both academically and personally, Prof Eli Bitzer (Centre for Higher Education - University of Stellenbosch) who clarified aspects of the study, Prof C. Crothers (Head of Department - University of Natal - Durban) and Prof Herbert Vilakazi (Head of Department - University of Zululand). Other people were also consulted, sometimes through formal interviews and at other times informally. These views were indispensable to the way in which the study evolved.

4.5.4   *Methods of data collection*

The objectives of the study allowed for the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods for the collecting of data. The questionnaire survey was quantitative while the informal interview and the open-ended questions were qualitative. This is called methodological orientation (Cohen, 1981:211).

Questionnaires were administered to students (individual level) and to academic members of the different departments (the group - interactive level). This double level of analysis is referred to as combined levels of triangulation (Cohen, 1981:211). Administering questionnaires to both staff and students served to enhance and legitimate the results obtained.

The questionnaire combined both a qualitative and quantitative dimension. The qualitative dimension included open-ended questions in the questionnaire and informal interviews. The quantitative aspect included the use of a Likert scale and fixed-alternative questions (Bailey, 1987:188).

For the following universities (University of Durban-Westville, University of Natal - Durban and Pietermaritzburg and the University of Zululand) the questionnaire was administered and collected by the researcher. For the University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg the Head of Department personally administered the questionnaires. In this regard, there was triangulation at the level of the investigator as well.

Triangulation at the level of investigator and method served the needs of the study in the following ways:

* It helped to clarify the complex nature of the undergraduate curriculum and in particular sociology.

* It reduced time in administering the questionnaire.

* It helped to deal with some of the controversies and uncertainties regarding the study.

* It served to corroborate the results obtained.

* It added authenticity to the results.

* It gave credibility to the study.

4.5.4.1   *Informal interviews*

This constituted the first stage of the data collection process as outlined in 4.4.3.

4.5.4.2   *The interview schedule : questionnaire survey*

Given the vastness of the current study, the interview schedule is seen to be the most appropriate means of gathering data. It is also compatible with the objectives of the study. It is frequently used in educational research. It is valuable in that it is:

*   Objective. This is achieved through the use of standardized sets of statements and response categories.

*   Simplicity. Statements are simple, straight-forward and easy to understand.

*   Comprehensive. It allows a coverage of a wide range of categories.

*   Reliable.   The extensive list of questions allows the researcher to build in reliability and ensure the legitimacy of the results.

*   Validity. Objectivity is a precondition for the attainment of validity in research. A survey of a factual situation often reflects the real situation quite truthfully (Mouton, 1996:112).

*   An inexpensive method that allows for anonymity which encourages friendliness and honesty (Mitchell and Jolley, 1988:289).

*   Can be administered to a large number of respondents.

In the current study the questionnaires were administered by the researcher at the University of Natal - Durban, Durban-Westville and Zululand. These questionnaires were either filled in the presence of the researcher or taken away by respondents to complete at home and returned a week later. This did not jeopardize the results. At the University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg, the questionnaires were administered by the head of department and a member of the academic staff. They were completed within a

lecture period. However, some students completed the questionnaires at home and returned it a few days later.

The advantages of an investigator administered questionnaire are that:

*   It increases response rate.

*   Clarifies issues/questions.

*   Stresses importance of the study.

*   Communicates seriousness of research.

*   Allows for respondents and researcher to establish rapport and thereby enhance objectivity of the results obtained.

*   Gives a sense of the relevance of the study.

*   Allows researcher to monitor progress.

The disadvantages are:

*   Presence of the researcher could be intimidating.

*   Presence of the researcher reduces anonymity thus influencing the accuracy of responses.

*   Can be time-consuming.

*   Can encounter difficulties in setting up an appointment.

*   Difficulty in working with students who are not compelled to participate.

These disadvantages require tact, skill and patience on the part of the researcher. A great deal of diplomacy and appeal has to be used in trying to overcome these barriers. Once students are aware of the benefits of the study they are responsive. In retrospect, it would appear that some kind of incentive for respondents would facilitate the process.

The advantages of a questionnaire administered by an assistant/significant other are that it is less time-consuming and quicker. However, the disadvantage is that in the event of queries from respondents, the researcher is not present to clarify it.

(i)   *__The student questionnaire__*

The student questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A contains students' biographic details whereas Section B contains fixed alternative questions and the Likert scale. This section was further divided into the following important areas: content, focus and coherence, learning, instructional methods, assessment, resources, vocational and social relevance and quality assurance. Students were expected to rate their responses on a five-point Likert scale for each year of study from Sociology One, Two and Three. The open-ended questions appeared at the end of the questions.

The Likert scale is seen to serve the purpose of this study. The five response categories range from very positive (5), positive (4), uncertain (3), negative (2) and very negative (1). While these response categories are not necessarily referred to by these labels, the euphemisms correspond to the idea of agreement or disagreement. For example, the response categories for question three are very easy (5), easy (4), reasonable (3), difficult (2) and very difficult (1). These categories are assigned scores from five to one. The respondents views are measured by his/her total score. The total score is the sum of the scores of the categories that the respondent has endorsed for each of the items. This scale is also known as the summated rating scale.

The current study is based on student and staff experience of the course. Therefore, there is an element of evaluation and value-judgement present in it. The Likert scale is used precisely because it has this evaluative component. It also has a higher reliability than the Thurstone scale of the same length, it appears to be a reasonable ordinal scale, is simpler to construct and is likely to be more reliable than a Thurstone scale (Moser, 1977:364-265).

The interview schedule was adapted in the following way. Section A consists' of the following biographical details - age, gender, year of study at the institution, courses registered for, failure in sociology, first/second language and the reason for majoring in sociology. This information was crucial for identifying the links between the discipline and student needs. Furthermore, it serves to direct the nature of the hypothesis in the sense of the relevance of the curriculum.

Section B consists of the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study and includes the use of the Likert scale. Questions are drawn from the literature study in terms of the following important categories.

(a) **Content:** Clearly this is the most significant aspect of the curriculum. Particular aspects that require assessment are workload, difficulty, clarity and consistency of course objectives, preparation of course material, relevance of topics and assignments, volume of work, conceptual understanding, application of ideas to research, diversity of content and coverage of current developments.

(b) **Focus and coherence:** The aim of this section was to identify the level of coherence within the course in terms of focus, different perspectives, progression,

continuity, integration, appropriateness, co-ordination, pace, logical order, organization, efficiency, logistics and core courses.

(c) **Learning:** A course that does not produce learning is of no value. This is assessed in terms of stimulating subject interest, time required for learning, clarity of course objectives, feedback, assessment practices, degree of choice and initiating positive values.

(d) **Instructional methods:** Among the many instructional methods available some are suitable against particular objectives and student needs. This was ascertained in terms of preference, quality of teaching, teaching aids and appropriateness.

(e) **Assessment:** The final arbiter of success/failure is the assessment of student learning. Precisely how students assess this is done in relation to feedback, fairness, usefulness, preference of assessment methods, frequency of assessment, promotion of learning, relevance to course objectives, aspects that were tested and aspects that ideally should be tested.

(f) **Resources:** Without the proper infrastructural support effective and meaningful learning cannot take place. The availability of lecturers/tutors, library books, journals, laboratory/workshop facilities, computer facilities, suitable lecture venues, and appropriate learning material were examined against student needs.

(g) **Vocational and social relevance:** The utility of the discipline was examined against both social and vocational relevance.

(h) **Quality assurance:** The overall quality of the programme was assessed in terms of the most and least significant unit/subject for each year of study. This was combined with relevance, staff qualifications and capabilities.

(ii)   *The staff questionnaire*

This questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A contains the course and staff profile. The course profile was taken from the university calendar/prospectus for each university. This served as a starting or reference point for the study. This method is preferred by curriculum specialists like Posner (1995). The staff profile includes details like the number of staff involved in teaching, experience and teaching qualifications.

Section B contained the bulk of the relevant information. It was completed jointly by academic staff involved in teaching the programme. In some instances, other relevant people like AD personnel or educationists were consulted. The following categories were assessed.

(a)   **Constructing the curriculum:** This category identifies the time taken to construct the curriculum and the various people that were involved in this process and those who should be. It also identifies the starting point in framing the curriculum and the three most important factors taken into account in constructing the course. A link was also established between lecturers' educational background and the construction of the course.

(b)   **Content:** This important section identifies the primary way in which students interact with content, the general aims, knowledge, skills, attitudes, experiences provided for the achievement of these objectives, expectations of student learning, prescribed/ recommended texts, availability of texts, inter-disciplinarity and multi-disciplinarity, relevance of content, achievement of objectives, student

awareness of objectives and the link between the content and vocational relevance.

(c) **Beliefs and assumptions:** The most crucial question examines why the course is taught. In particular, the importance of knowledge, communication, skills, values and attitudes contained in the course is assessed. Furthermore, its ability to promote specific competencies are assessed.

(d) **Method of instruction:** This section examines the frequency and importance of particular instructional methods. This is contextualized within the objectives of the course, needs of students, assessment forms and effectiveness of learning. Dominant forms of instruction are the lecture, tutorial, seminar, consultation and others.

(e) **Learning:** This section explores the nature of inquiry within the discipline and its influence on student learning. It draws a distinction between learning based on content and learning based on the process. This important distinction is meant to highlight the nature of the course and its relationship to learning.

(f) **Assessment:** This category looks at the forms and frequency of assessment practices. It also looks at the extent to which cognitive learning, emotional/moral development and practical competence is assessed in the course.

(g) **Focus and coherence:** This refers to the logical order in which topics are taught, continuity, sequence, integration of subject-matter, structure, thematic organization and overlap with other disciplines.

(h) **Resources:** The level of provision that exists to support the teaching of the programme was assessed in terms of library, computers and lecture venues.

(i) **Quality assurance:** This category examined attempts to review and update the curriculum.

(j)   Academic staff: The issue of staff development activities, staff satisfaction and staff qualification were examined in detail. This was necessary in order to establish the link between staff development and curriculum development.

4.5.4.3   *The pilot study*

This was carried out on a group of five students to identify errors in the design of the questionnaire. There were no errors.

4.6   *The sampling procedure*

4.6.1   *Objective*

The credibility of the results depends largely on the way in which respondents are identified and selected. This was achieved through a method of random sampling of Sociology III students from each university. They were volunteers who agreed voluntarily to participate. This method served the needs of the study. Mouton (1996:138) suggest that random samples, "by their very nature", are unbiased since, "... every member of the population has a equal chance of being selected."

4.6.2   *The choice of the study area*

There are trends within higher education to seek and promote inter-regional and inter-institutional co-operation among universities. While an assessment of the sociology undergraduate curriculum serves to enhance and clarify the role and nature of the

discipline, an inter-regional assessment serves to highlight the major similarities and differences between universities in a particular region.

The region is Kwa-Zulu Natal and the universities are University of Durban-Westville, University of Natal - Durban, University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg and University of Zululand. The significance of this approach is its ability and potential to draw inferences and conclusions regarding the nature of teaching the discipline with a view to promoting an organic relationship between the universities. Furthermore, the researcher is based at the University of Durban-Westville and registered within the Department of Sociology.

4.6.3   *The population*

The population consists of all **Sociology III** students at the four universities: University of Durban-Westville, University of Natal - Durban, University of Pietermaritzburg and University of Zululand.

4.7   *Fieldwork*

The fieldwork commenced on the 1 September 1998 and was completed by 31 October 1998. The researcher administered the questionnaires to Sociology III students from the University of Durban-Westville, University of Natal - Durban, University of Pietermaritzburg and University of Zululand. The head of department administered the questionnaires to students at the University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg. All the questionnaires were completed by 31 October 1998. It is important to note that prior

permission to carry out the research was obtained from the various heads of departments in August 1997.

4.8   *Data processing*

Upon completion of the fieldwork, each questionnaire was scrutinized for completeness and inaccuracies.   There were no inconsistencies for both the staff and student questionnaire. Each interview schedule was then assigned a number from one to fifty for each of the universities.   The biographical details, experience scores and qualitative questions were manually entered into a coding frame.

With the use of content analysis, the responses for the qualitative section were manually entered into data sheets.   The common responses were added together and then categorized.

4.9   *Summary*

This chapter presents the various steps taken in executing this study. The techniques and procedure utilized in the current study include a review of relevant literature, informal interviews, consulting with significant others and the administration of the interview schedule to both students and lecturers. The student questionnaire included students' biographical details and an assessment of various components of the curriculum. The staff questionnaire included an assessment of the important components of the curriculum. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Triangulation of methods served the needs of the study. The last phase of data processing included

editing, coding and capturing the data on data sheets and onto the computer. These results are analyzed and interpreted in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1   *Introduction*

The literature study strongly suggests that there is strong and urgent need to review the curriculum and that this can be done at many levels and in many ways. A model normally guides assessment but in the current study assessment is based on the basis of a framework/checklist against which various aspects of the undergraduate curriculum is assessed. In particular, the views of students and staff involved in teaching are sought. The assumption upon which this study is based is that there is a need to assess the sociology undergraduate curriculum. Against this assumption data were gathered at one level - against the implementation of the questionnaire to both student and staff. Students were expected to share their experience of the course from level one to three while staff were expected to outline the form, nature and development of the curriculum. The response of academic staff was largely based on a "professional judgement" of the curriculum.

The student questionnaire consists of two important areas. Section A includes the demographic details of the student and Section B includes 70 5-point scales that relate to specific categories. There are no measures of statistical analysis. The findings are presented in the form of tables combined with interpretation and comments.

The data in Section B which forms both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study are presented in the form of percentages. Fifty questionnaires were administered at each of the universities except for University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg, where only 45 questionnaires were received.

The staff questionnaire follows the same pattern of analysis. This chapter therefore aims to provide an analysis of the responses that were obtained during the data gathering process. The scale ranges from 5 to 1 with the following categories:

5 – Strongly agree

4 – Agree

3 – Uncertain

2 – Disagree

1 – Agree

Where this differs, indications will be made at the beginning of the question.

5.2 *Demographic analysis of students*

The demographic analysis includes age, gender, linguistic background and academic performance. It also refers to reasons why students registered for sociology.

N = 50

SECTION A

Table 5.1 : Age

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
17-20	4%	2%	30%	18%
21-25	52%	36%	52%	50%
26-30	28%	38%	6%	16%
30+	16%	24%	12%	16%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 5.1 indicates that most students fall in the age group between 21-25 for all four universities followed by the 26-30 age group. This indicates that most students are young adults with a fair degree of maturity. However, the figures indicate that University of Natal - Durban has a fairly large number (30%) of students in the 17-20 age group while University of Zululand has a low (2%) number of students in the same age group. At the same time the University of Zululand has a far higher number (24%) of students in the 30+ age group. This could mean that University of Natal - Durban might have a far younger student population largely possible because it is an urban/centralized place and generally sought after by matriculants just out of school. The same could hold for the University of Durban-Westville and University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg. University of Zululand, on the other hand, has evening classes. This makes it possible for working/employed people to attend evening classes. They are older and can only afford to study part-time. This is also in keeping with global trends in higher education.

Table 5.2 : Gender

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
MALE	30%	24%	20%	14%
FEMALE	70%	76%	80%	86%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

The above figures indicate that the number of female students far exceeds those of male students. This should not come as a surprise since the current trends in higher education, both nationally and globally, are an increasing number of both older/adult students and an increasing number of female students. McKeachie (1994:225) claims that more students who are older than the traditional 17-22 year old are entering the higher education system and that women constitute half or more of the total population at many institutions. These changes have obvious implications for the kind of learning that occurs and the relevance of the curriculum in the context of these changes. The design of the curriculum would have to take into account the distinctions between adult learning (andragogy) and adolescent learning (pedagogics). In the past, the 17-20 year age group (largely adolescents) largely made up the student population. This is now changing. There are distinct differences in learning between young adults as learners and older learners (Knowles, 1996:28-46). This has implications for the way in which a course is designed.

Table 5.3 : Year of study at the institution

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
1st				
2nd				
3rd	96%	92%	96%	92%
4th	2%	4%	2%	8%
5th	-	-	-	
Other	2%	4%	2%	
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

The figures suggest that on the average 90% of students are in their third year suggesting that they successfully completed levels one and two in the required time. This, also, should not be surprising since weaker students would be eliminated in the first year and those that succeed would succeed with few problems to levels two and three.

Table 5.4 : Courses registered for

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Criminology III	12%	14%		
Economics III		-	2%	
English III		14%		
History III		4%		
Geography III	4%	2%		
Industrial Psychology III	22%	2%		
Industrial Psychology III B		-	48%	
Legal Studies III		-	2%	16%
Marketing III		-	4%	
Political Science III		2%		4%
Psychology III	36%	16%	38%	16%
Public Administration III	4%	2%		
Social Work II	20%		-	
Social Work III	40%	20%	-	42%
Zulu III	10%	10%	20%	
Psychology III B			4%	
English III B			4%	
Psychology III A			10%	
Psychology III B			6%	
Social Work Practice III B			16%	
Human Resource Management III				12%
Economic History				2%

The significance of these figures lie in their ability to indicate the kind of combinations between sociology and other disciplines. The significant combinations are between sociology and industrial psychology, psychology and social work. It would appear that sociology articulates well with disciplines in the social sciences and commerce.

Furthermore, the combination is more directed towards a vocational qualification (social work) or a professional qualification (clinical psychology). It would also appear that sociology is seen to feed into other disciplines from other faculties, namely law and commerce (Human Resource Management, Industrial Psychology and Marketing). This suggests the need to explore inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary combination. The boundaries of the disciplines do appear to merge with others. Post-modernists view this as border pedagogy which "... refers to the multiple reference to knowledge and meanings across the border of the discipline" (Arjun, 1994:69). This has to be viewed in the context of globalization and changes in the wider society. A plurality of disciplines and perspectives becomes necessary since: "The terrain of learning becomes inextricably linked to the shifting parameters of place, identity, history and power" (Giroux, 1990:34). This, in the researcher's view would apply to other disciplines (besides sociology) as well. Therefore disciplines would adapt in response to social and economic needs resulting in a modified and vocationally relevant curriculum.

Table 5.5 : Have you failed any year of sociology?

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
YES	8%	16%	2%	18%
NO	92%	84%	98%	82%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 5.5 indicates that the failure rate in sociology at all four universities is fairly low. This could suggest that aspects of the curriculum are integrated in such a way that students are able to proceed with minimal problems. Again, the sifting and sorting out process at first year would eliminate high risk students. The figures are consistent for all four

universities indicating that the pattern of pass and failure is the same. However, the 16% failure for UNIZUL and 18% for UNP as compared to 8% for UDW and 2% for UND suggests that both UNIZUL and UNP may have common areas of concern and this needs to be investigated in more detail.

Table 5.6 : Students' linguistic background

	UDW		UNIZUL		UND		UNP	
	1ST	2ND	1ST	2ND	1ST	2ND	1ST	2ND
English		66%	18%	66%		100%	26%	58%
Afrikaans		8%		2%		20%		28%
S. Sotho	8%	2%	2%				4%	
N. Sotho		2%			2%	2%		
Tswana	4%	2%	4%					
Sipedi		2%			2%			
Xhosa	24%	2%	8%			2%	10%	6%
Zulu	62%		64%	4%	90%	6%	36%	2%
Swazi	12%	2%			8%		6%	2%
Other: Rumanian							2%	
Yoruba							2%	
French							2%	
Spanish							2%	
Tsonga	2%							
Shangaan							2%	
Hindi		2%						

The figures indicate that for 62% at UDW, 64% at UNIZUL and 90% at UND the first language is Zulu with a corresponding value of 66% (UDW), 66% (UNIZUL) and 100% (UND) for English as the second language. UNP has a much lower percentage of Zulu first language speakers (36%) with a corresponding variation of foreign language students. Zulu is the predominant language in Kwa-Zulu Natal. There is a strong relationship between language and learning yet the majority of students are taught in a second language. This must have enormous implications for the nature and form of learning occurring at lectures, tutorials and among peers. Furthermore, the kind of difficulties experienced in reading and comprehending a text needs to be accommodated for in the design of the curriculum.

Issues that need attention are medium of instruction, possibilities for bilingual, multilingual teaching, opportunities created to optimize learning and the nature of assessment.

The issue of language and English second language speakers have dominated the higher education scene since the early eighties. The figures in table 5.6 indicate that there is a significantly high number of English second language speakers to warrant some kind of change in the curriculum. This could affect the following component/s of the curriculum; content, medium of instruction, instructional methods, text-books and course materials. In re-looking the language issue within the curriculum the following needs to be noted. Language involves both the content of thought and the process by which people think. Language enables the transition from perceptual to conceptual thought (Baijnath, 1993:22). Therefore, while second language speakers are able to draw conceptually from their own experience with the use of their first language they experience tremendous difficulty when required to do this in another language. These difficulties generally manifest themselves as massive conceptual gaps at first-year. Hence, the need for bridging, foundation modules.

Section A

7.   <u>**Why did you decide to major in sociology?**</u>

UDW

-    80% wanted to learn more about social behavior, society and interaction among people.

-    62% needed sociology as a major together with social work.

-    49% wanted to learn more about research methods and research in marketing.

-    65% felt that it will open doors for them in terms of employment and a career.

- 62% felt it would help them uplift poor and disadvantaged communities.

- 61% felt that studying sociology gives insight into social problems and their solutions.

- 60% feel that it adds to their understanding on trade unions, labor and development.

- 60% felt it would create job opportunities for them in the public sector.

- 30% felt that it would help them relate to other people.

- 16% felt that it shared strong links with criminology.

- 4% wanted to specialize purely in sociology.

UNIZUL

- 72% claimed that they were interested in solving social problems and decided to study social work. Sociology helped them gain this insight.

- 80% felt that sociology would help them get a deeper insight in social behaviour and thereby assist them in uplifting poorer communities.

- 68% said that studying sociology gives insight into how different societies function.

- 68% felt that it would open career opportunities.

- 68% felt that it would help them solve social problems and social issues.

- 67% felt that studying sociology would equip them with research skills necessary for market research.

- 60% said that it is a very interesting and challenging course.

- 60% felt that it would assist/support their understanding of Human Resource Management and Marketing.

- 2% wanted to specialize in sociology.

- 2% claimed that it dealt with particular social issues like gender and equality, culture and economics.

UND

- 76% felt that it gives insight into social behavior.

- 72% felt that it would enable them to understand labor and market issues and thus increase their chances of employment in the private sector.

- 70% needed sociology as a major together with social work.

- 70% claimed that it explains human behavior and social issues and that sociology equips them with research skills necessary to do this.

- 70% stated that it helps towards solving social problems.

- 65% claimed that it is an interesting and challenging course.

- 2% wanted to specialize in sociology.

UNP

- 80% majored in sociology because they wanted to know what was going on in the world and in particular societies.

- 76% were interested in studying social interaction and social behavior.

- 74% wanted to know more about helping people and uplifting communities. They have taken sociology as a major together with social work.

- 70% felt that it equips them with skills that would allow them to work in different areas.

- 63% felt that it would enable them to deal with issues in rural areas. More sociologists are required (they claim) in rural areas.

- 68% felt that it would create more jobs opportunities.

- 62% felt that it would prepare them to deal with women empowerment issues, gender and race equality.

- 60% felt that it would help them deal with issues of community planning.

- 41% felt that it would help them deal with media, communication and working with people.

- 70% felt that the course was interesting and challenging.

- 40% felt it would prepare them to work in industry.

- 32% combined it as a major with Psychology as they plan on studying Clinical Psychology.

- 4% wanted to major in sociology so they could proceed to post-graduate studies.

- 2% see it as an alternate to legal studies. If they don't succeed in law they will continue with sociology.

While the study of sociology does not lead to a professional qualification, the majority (80% for UDW, 72% for UNIZUL, 76% for UND and 80% for UNP) of students are confident that a major in sociology would increase their understanding of society and thereby allow them to deal with social problems and thereby contribute to its solutions. Not surprisingly, its taken as a major together with social work by a significant number of students (62% for UDW, 72% for UNIZUL, 70% for UND and 74% for UNP).

Students also recognize that in order to deal with social problems/issues they need to be equipped with research skills. They are of the opinion that a study of sociology would do

precisely this. A significant number hold this view (49% for UDW, 67% for UNIZUL, 70% for UND and 70% for UNP).

In the final year of their studies, students become increasingly concerned about employment. A large percentage (60% for UDW, 68% for UNIZUL, 72% for UND and 68% for UNP) are of the opinion that a major in sociology would increase their chances of employment.

Besides the combination with social work, students feel that other disciplines articulate in a natural way with sociology to produce vocationally relevant qualifications. In particular they mention labour and economic needs (commerce oriented). This reflects in the following figures (60% for UDW, 67% for UNIZUL, 72% for UND and 40% for UNP). At least 32% at UNP see it as a complementary combination with Psychology with a view to specializing in Clinical Psychology.

Besides the above combinations, students see sociology to complement other areas of interest such as law (2% for UNP), Criminology (16% for UDW), Marketing (60% for UND), Gender studies (2% for UDW, 62% for UNP) and Media/Communication studies (41% for UNP). This indicates, in a very strong way, the need for interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary studies that combine around particular vocational qualifications.

The above indication can be located within the current organizational restructuring of the academic sector at UDW and across tertiary institutions in the country. This restructuring

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is imperative and is evolving in the direction of programmes or programme based learning. These so-called programmes are largely informed by academic coherence, occupational relevance and knowledge application (Parekh, 1998:3). These imperatives are bound to have a profound influence on the undergraduate curriculum. The post-modernist view of border pedagogics is increasingly being viewed as a programme defined as: "A programme is a coherent set of courses and/or modules which advance knowledge and collectively skill individuals with particular competencies thereby making them more marketable" (Parekh, 1998:3). Clearly, the process of merging disciplines has been set into motion.

SECTION B

5.3   *A The quantitative/qualitative analysis of student experience*

5.3.1   *Content*

8.   **How do you feel about the content of the course?**

5 – very positive

4 – positive

3 – neutral

2 – negative

1 – very negative

Table 5.7 : Content of the course

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	30%	38%	64%	28%	20%	26%	18%	18%	38%	46%	42%	46%
4	42%	44%	22%	30%	60%	42%	64%	50%	30%	28%	40%	50%
3	20%	8%	12%	42%	20%	18%	12%	30%	18%	22%	14%	2%
2	4%	6%	-	-	-	4%	6%	2%	12%	4%	4%	-
1	4%	4%	2%	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-	-	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Except for a small percentage, students generally felt positive about the content of the course. However, there is a need to investigate the source of discontent and why students felt neutral. This will serve to identify and highlight areas of weakness in terms of difficulty, volume, relevance, interest, teaching method and sequence. These figures will have to be compared with the qualitative aspect of the study where students point out the specific areas of difficulty. It is generally accepted that if students feel positive about the course they will be motivated to perform effectively.

9.   How would describe the workload?

5 – very light

4 – light

3 – reasonable

2 – heavy

1 – very heavy

Table 5.8 : Workload

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	4%	4%	20%	28%	-		10%	8%	-	-	-	-
4	12%	14%	28%	30%	-	8%	12%	42%	-	-	-	2%
3	72%	78%	42%	42%	82%	48%	46%	30%	60:%	24%	6%	38%
2	12%	4%	6%	-	12%	32%	20%	20%	26%	24%	20%	46%
1	-	-	4%	-	6%	12%	12%	-	14%	52%	74%	14%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The workload generally influences student performance in either a positive or negative way. The figures indicate that for the first year the workload is fairly reasonable but increases in the second year and gets heavier in the final year for all four universities. This is to be expected since the final year has much more areas to cover (incorporating a practical component) and increases in difficulty. But, it appears that students do recognize this. This is evident by the number of students who feel the workload is reasonable (60% for UDW, 24% for UNIZUL, 6% for UND, 38% for UNP). A significant figure (74%) have experienced the third year workload at UND as extremely heavy.

10.   How would you describe the degree of difficulty?

5 – very easy

4 – easy

3 – reasonable

2 – difficult

1 – very difficult

Table 5.9 : Degree of difficulty

	SOCIOLOGY I			SOCIOLOGY II					SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	-	2%	16%	4%	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-
4	2%	42%	38%	26%	2%	8%	8%	6%	-	4%	-	6%
3	74%	56%	40%	54%	76%	38%	56%	58%	68%	20%	40%	58%
2	22%	-	2%	8%	4%	36%	32%	34%	26%	60%	26%	26%
1	2%	-	4%	8%	18%	18%	4%	2%	6%	16%	32%	10%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

While the degree of difficulty is concentrated at the level of reasonableness for all four universities, there is a significant increase in difficulty from level one to three. This is in keeping with the nature of the discipline and the academic demands of the course where a wider and more complex range of skills form part of the second and third year course.

11.   I understood/understand the subject matter

Table 5.10 : Understanding subject matter

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	25%	68%	26%	18%	38%	58%	4%	12%	30%	52%	12%	30%
4	55%	22%	68%	68%	32%	42%	76%	74%	36%	38%	46%	66%
3	16%	10%	2%	10%	24%	-	14%	8%	28%	8%	36%	2%
2	4%	-	4%	4%	6%	-	4%	6%	6%	-	2%	2%
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-	-	2%	4%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Bloom's taxonomy with regard to the cognitive domain is based on a continuum ranging from knowledge of facts to the intellectual process of evaluation (Curzon, 1992:144). A students' first contact with the curriculum should ensure that s/he understands the basic subject matter which will then enable him/her to proceed to higher levels of learning. The figures indicate that where students are required to understand at a level that would facilitate learning, they are able to do so. This suggests that subject matter is presented in a way that facilitates understanding. At the same time the figures for UDW (24% for sociology 1 and 28% for sociology 2) and UND (36% for sociology 3) indicate that there is

some degree of uncertainty. The source of this uncertainty will emerge in question 77 which investigates the source of difficulties.

12.   The course is challenging

Table 5.11 : Challenge

	SOCIOLOGY 1				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	26%	12%	28%	14%	18%	36%	16%	12%	78%	50%	30%	34%
4	58%	60%	68%	52%	62%	52%	70%	58%	8%	36%	56%	62%
3	14%	20%	2%	18%	16%	6%	8%	18%	12%	10%	10%	2%
2	2%	8%	2%	16%	4%	6%	4%	10%	2%	4%	-	2%
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	2%	-	-	4%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The nature of the discipline is such that it stimulates interest in social behavior and contemporary issues. Given this, it should be challenging in ways that allow students to engage with the environment and the discipline. While uncertainty does exist and a few do disagree, the majority of students find the course challenging from level one to three at all four institutions. This is supported by student response in question four and question seven.

13.   I clearly understood/understand the objectives of the course

Table 5.12 : Understanding

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	18%	22%	24%	20%	22%	30%	22%	14%	40%	36%	64%	42%
4	36%	44%	70%	62%	52%	56%	66%	62%	58%	60%	28%	52%
3	16%	32%	4%	14%	18%	12%	8%	22%	2%	2%	6%	6%
2	22%	2%	-	2%	8%	2%	4%	2%	-	-	-	-
1	8%	-	2%	2%	-	-	-	-	-	2%	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Without clearly understanding the objectives of the course, learners are unable to make sense of the nature of learning and thereby plan and map the learning process. While the objectives were understood in most cases, there is a fair proportion of students who are uncertain. This means that some attention needs to be paid in stating/constructing course

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objectives.   The figures also indicate that students have less problems understanding objectives as they proceed to the third year.   This could be the result of them becoming familiar with the course, discipline and lecturers.

14.   The course objectives are clearly consistent

Table 5.13 : Consistency of objectives

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	4%	36%	16%	16%	2%	38%	12%	18%	2%	18%	14%	24%
4	32%	32%	70%	66%	42%	46%	74%	56%	52%	52%	74%	68%
3	24%	24%	8%	16%	16%	12%	8%	26%	16%	10%	12%	8%
2	38%	8%	2%	-	28%	4%	2%	-	22%	20%	-	-
1	2%	-	2%	2%	12%	-	4%	-	8%	-	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Consistency is required for ensuring that meaningful, clear and unambiguous learning is occurring.   The figures indicate that the degree of inconsistency is greater at all three levels for UDW. UND appears to be the most consistent. A fair amount of students indicate they are uncertain. This could also mean that they do not understand the question.

15.   The course objectives are clearly stated

Table 5.14 : Clear statement of objectives

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	12%	26%	60%	38%	16%	52%	36%	22%	22%	30%	52%	40%
4	22%	36%	28%	46%	32%	42%	52%	60%	48%	52%	28%	54%
3	30%	26%	8%	14%	26%	6%	6%	14%	30%	12%	10%	6%
2	26%	12%	2%	2%	16%	-	2%	4%	-	6%	6%	-
1	10%	-	2%	-	10%	-	4%	-	-	-	4%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

One of the requirements of an effective curriculum is the need to state course objectives clearly.   This ensures that students understand what is required of them.   Students are thereby guided in a clear and consistent way during the process of learning.   UND course objectives seem to be stated clearly, while UDW has high percentage of disagreement at

levels one and two. UNP and UNIZUL also appear to have clearly stated objectives. The figures also indicate that the level of agreement increases at third year. This could be the result of students being more familiar with the discipline and the structure and functioning of their departments. Furthermore, they become more focused as they reach their final years and are able to interpret course objectives more easily. Griessel et al (1993:31) is explicit in the contention that "... a clearly defined teaching aim is a sine qua non for effective instruction with the view to realizing effective learning." This area of the curriculum will need continuous attention.

16.   The content covered in the course clearly matches the objectives

Table 5.15 : Content compared to objectives

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	4%	32%	58%	18%	6%	4%	14%	38%	14%	20%	16%	36%
4	36%	42%	32%	62%	76%	68%	66%	34%	76%	68%	66%	56%
3	22%	20%	8%	20%	18%	22%	18%	24%	10%	10%	14%	6%
2	28%	6%	2%	-	-	6%	2%	4%	-	2%	2%	2%
1	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

While there is a considerable percentage that is uncertain, the figures indicate that content covered matches the objectives to a large extent. This figure increases as the course proceeds to the third year. It should also be noted that objectives have been defined in a broad since this would facilitate student understanding of the questionnaire. Ralph Tyler (1949) has been one of the early curriculum evaluators who stressed the importance of clear and consistent objectives. And, Dressel (1976:27) acknowledges that formulating objectives meets with great resistance that result from the following difficulties: confused terminology, basic philosophical differences in regard to the nature and role of education, difficulties in translating global concerns into realistic objectives and scepticism over the

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usefulness of stating objectives. The area of formulating objectives is vast but the value/need for formulating objectives are: it specifies learning outcomes that students must accomplish by their achievement of learning objectives, forces lecturers to consider and plan what they should achieve by means of their teaching and provides a basis for evaluation and assessment (du Toit and de Boer, 1994:51). The figures suggest that lecturers are familiar with the process of formulating objectives and choosing relevant content. Both occur simultaneously.

17.   Course materials are well-prepared

Table 5.16 : Preparation of course materials

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	16%	18%	66%	32%	14%	8%	18%	22%	-	38%	56%	62%
4	82%	56%	26%	52%	86%	88%	66%	58%	72%	56%	30%	36%
3	2%	14%	8%	16%	-	-	8%	12%	22%	6%	6%	2%
2	-	12%	-	-	-	4%	6%	8%	6%	-	4%	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-	-	-	4%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Confusion reigns when course material is unclear, unorganized and poorly prepared. This acts as a barrier to efficient learning and inevitably frustrates students. There is nothing more painful to students, especially in their first year, to be confronted with poorly prepared course materials. The figures indicate that in all cases, course materials were well prepared.

18. **I have learnt/am learning something valuable**

Table 5.17 : Value of learning

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	30%	40%	78%	30%	16%	22%	62%	18%	84%	72%	72%	60%
4	38%	42%	18%	56%	62%	66%	28%	62%	12%	22%	16%	40%
3	28%	12%	4%	12%	18%	12%	4%	14%	2%	6%	4%	-
2	2%	6%	-	2%	2%	-	4%	6%	-	-	-	-
1	2%	-	-	-	2%	-	2%	-	2%	-	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

In keeping with current trends in higher education, students have to experience the value of what they are learning, be it vocational, social, intrinsic or other. While (28% for UDW at first year and 18% for UDW at second year) are uncertain the majority are of the opinion that they have learnt something valuable. Yet the level of uncertainty decreases as students enter their third year. This could be attributed to the fact that as a student enters his/her final year, the big picture starts to emerge. It would seem that students are best able to appreciate the value of a discipline in their final year. It is only in their final year that they are able to consolidate all that they have learnt in their previous years. Furthermore, in their increased wisdom and maturity they are able to compare the worth of various disciplines.

19. **The recommended readings contributed towards understanding the course**

Table 5.18 : Recommended readings

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	6%	12%	68%	32%	2%	26%	22%	22%	6%	42%	72%	60%
4	72%	70%	30%	54%	74%	72%	72%	72%	76%	56%	20%	34%
3	22%	18%	2%	14%	-	2%	2%	4%	-	2%	4%	6%
2	-	-	-	-	14%	-	2%	2%	18%	-	-	-
1	-	-	-	-	10%	-	2%	-	-	-	4%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

While lectures are meant to convey the general content of the course, tutorials are meant to deepen this understanding. In addition to this, students are expected to enhance and

develop their understanding of the discipline by reading around it. This can be done by independent research or by lecturers providing students with the recommended readings. These readings are meant to contribute toward understanding the course. The figures indicate that recommended readings largely contributed toward understanding the course.

20. Topics chosen were appropriate to the course

Table 5.19 : Appropriateness of topics

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	40%	48%	68%	40%	42%	48%	18%	22%	42%	42%	66%	32%
4	34%	36%	28%	52%	46%	46%	80%	60%	52%	56%	22%	68%
3	22%	16%	4%	8%	10%	4%	-	18%	6%	-	6%	-
2	4%	-	-	-	2%	2%	-	-	-	2%	4%	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-	-	-	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

It would seem as if students were satisfied that topics chosen were appropriate to the course. This is significant in the light of question 7 where students outline why they majored in sociology. It seems that student expectation of the course has been compatible with the nature of the offerings. In fact, the figures are exceptionally high in the positive dimension suggesting that topics were not only appropriate but relevant to the real lived experiences of the student.

21. Course content stimulated student interest in the area

Table 5.20 : Stimulating interest

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	20%	18%	66%	28%	34%	20%	18%	2%	22%	34%	42%	34%
4	72%	62%	24%	42%	60%	62%	64%	76%	72%	50%	40%	64%
3	6%	12%	8%	26%	6%	12%	16%	20%	4%	10%	14%	2%
2	2%	8%	2%	4%	-	64%	2%	2%	2%	6%	4%	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Student performance increases if course content is presented in a manner that stimulates interest. This has been largely successful. This also indicates that students are more likely to proceed to third year (as in the current situation) if they find the subject interesting. If they were not mentally stimulated by the content of the course they would have not continued from level one. Sometimes, first year students see little value in the knowledge and skills taught in a course (Diamond, 1989:9). To overcome this, the content needs to be related to the interests of the student or attempts could be made to explain why the course is important.

22. Assignments were relevant to the course

Table 5.21 : Relevance of assignments

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	14%	30%	72%	28%	50%	56%	46%	30%	52%	62%	58%	64%
4	38%	36%	28%	58%	32%	42%	48%	56%	32%	36%	36%	36%
3	36%	30%	-	14%	12%	-	6%	12%	6%	2%	2%	-
2	12%	4%	-	-	6%	2%	-	2%	6%	-	2%	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4%	-	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Except for UDW (36% at level one) and UNIZUL (30% at level one) assignments given appear to be relevant to the course. This is important since assignments are an extension of the course where students are able to apply their knowledge, skills and attitudes. An

assignment is supposed to reflect the key issues. It is one of the few opportunities given to students wherein they can demonstrate a wide range of skills. As such, it plays a central role in promoting learning. Therefore, they need to be well-structured and relevant.

23. The sheer volume of work to be gone through means you can't comprehend it all thoroughly

Table 5.22 : Volume of work

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	-	6%	8%	-	-	-	4%	4%	-	16%	16%	8%
4	76%	30%	64%	22%	66%	36%	66%	16%	72%	22%	60%	22%
3	18%	18%	10%	46%	16%	22%	18%	52%	22%	28%	10%	42%
2	6%	40%	14%	28%	16%	30%	10%	26%	6%	30%	10%	22%
1	-	6%	4%	4%	2%	12%	2%	2%	-	4%	4%	6%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The significance of this question is based on the observation that students often complain about the workload. A high workload influences their capacity to comprehend effectively. The figures suggest that a significant number experience difficulty in comprehension because of the workload. This is referred to as content overload and often a difficult aspect of the curriculum. The tendency is to cover as much as possible with little attention is paid to student learning.

24. **If you consider the workload "a little too heavy" or "much too heavy", please indicate which of the following factors contributed to the excessive workload. You may tick more than one box if you wish**

Table 5.23 : Excessive workload

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
The amount of material covered	72%	70%	78%	72%	76%	78%	74%	76%	82%	86%	84%	84%
The difficulty of the material covered	70%	60%	64%	60%	68%	76%	72%	74%	76%	78%	70%	70%
A lack of structure to the material	4%	4%	14%	8%	6%	20%	16%	20%	4%	4%	6%	6%
Uncertainty as to what is required	60%	60%	42%	40%	40%	40%	32%	36%	10%	12%	6%	14%
The number of contact hours required	2%	2%	4%	10%	2%	-	14%	10%	4%	8%	10%	10%
The amount of written work required	62%	40%	48%	40%	68%	66%	62%	68%	76%	82%	78%	78%
The amount of reading required	60%	60%	60%		60%	68%	60%	68%	72%	80%	76%	76%
Other (Please specify) Limited time			2%									

These figures are self-explanatory and students at all levels at the four institutions basically experience the same problems. These include volume, difficulty, amount of written work and amount of reading required. Uncertainty is confined to levels one and two only. At level three uncertainty does not appear to be a problem. This could be because of their familiarity with the discipline and the functioning of the department. These figures are supported by those in question 13, question 15 and question 23.

25. Course material was not too difficult for me

Table 5.24 : Difficulty of course material

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	6%	8%	66%	22%	4%	12%	10%	12%	-	4%	10%	18%
4	36%	42%	22%	56%	42%	48%	70%	62%	32%	30%	62%	60%
3	18%	20%	4%	10%	6%	6%	12%	12%	6%	30%	6%	8%
2	32%	30%	6%	8%	28%	12%	4%	12%	42%	36%	12%	12%
1	8%	-	2%	4%	20%	22%	4%	2%	20%	-	10%	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The figures are fairly consistent for all levels across all four institutions. This means that course material was not too difficult except for levels one, two and three at UDW and levels one and three for UNIZUL. This difficulty can be interpreted in many ways. One is that at first year students experience problems of adjustment. The other is that the first year did not act as a screening and filtering mechanism to estimate very weak students. So they enter second and third year with the same coping capacities. But there could be other reasons as well. This needs to be explored.

26. Application of research findings were adequately examined

Table 5.25 : Examination of research findings

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	-	2%	16%	4%	-	-	8%	2%	-	42%	20%	16%
4	2%	10%	68%	60%	16%	34%	72%	72%	48%	36%	64%	66%
3	92%	82%	2%	32%	72%	66%	6%	20%	42%	20%	6%	14%
2	6%	6%	10%	-	12%	-	10%	2%	10%	2%	4%	2%
1	-	-	4%	4%	-	-	4%	4%	-	-	6%	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

There was more agreement at levels two and three, possibly because at these levels there is more application, research, practicals and projects. At first year the course is still very conceptual that is why more students are uncertain (92% for UDW, 82% for UNIZUL, 32% for UNP). In contrast, 68% of first years at UND and 60% of first years at UNP agree that research findings are adequately examined. By its very nature, sociology demands, that all

research findings be critically examined. This demand increases in the second and third. The figures suggest that there is a corresponding increase in student awareness of this.

27. The course gave adequate background of ideas and concepts

Table 5.26 : Adequate background of ideas and concepts

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	10%	38%	42%	22%	16%	26%	24%	20%	32%	24%	50%	36%
4	88%	54%	58%	68%	64%	60%	64%	70%	68%	62%	40%	58%
3	2%	4%	-	4%	8%	8%	12%	8%	-	12%	4%	2%
2	-	4%	-	4%	12%	6%	-	-	-	2%	2%	2%
1	-	-	-	2%	-	-	-	2%	-	-	4%	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

In order for any meaningful and enduring learning to take place, students have to be equipped with an adequate background of ideas and concepts. This is an essential first step to learning as explained in Bloom's taxonomy (Curzon, 1992:144). The figures indicate that this has been very, very successful for all three levels at all four institutions.

28. The course gave different points to view

Table 5.27 : Different points of view

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	8%	16%	54%	28%	16%	34%	22%	14%	24%	24%	34%	30%
4	72%	72%	42%	56%	76%	60%	68%	74%	72%	70%	60%	62%
3	12%	12%	2%	8%	8%	4%	6%	6%	4%	4%	2%	4%
2	8%	-	2%	4%	-	2%	4%	2%	-	2%	2%	2%
1	-	-	-	4%	-	-	-	4%	-	-	2%	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Contemporary society requires that disciplines within the social sciences provide not only updated information but different points of view as well. This is to ensure that students are well informed with a view to formulating balanced well-rounded arguments, decisions and viewpoints. The figures indicate that this is the case for all levels at all four universities.

29. The course discussed current developments

Table 5.28 : Current developments

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	48%	44%	40%	18%	52%	46%	40%	32%	46%	46%	48%	64%
4	38%	42%	58%	54%	40%	44%	52%	60%	48%	46%	40%	32%
3	12%	10%	-	20%	4%	6%	4%	2%	6%	6%	10%	2%
2	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%	2%	-	2%	-	-
1	-	2%	-	4%	-	-	-	4%	-	-	2%	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

By its very nature, sociology deals with social behaviour. Social behaviour, as is evident, is an everchanging, fluid and unpredictable phenomena. Therefore, for sociology to have any social relevance, it would have to be in touch with current developments. There is overwhelming agreement that this has been the case with sociology at all three levels at the four institutions.

5.3.2 Focus and coherence

30. Units for each course fitted well together

Table 5.29 : Focus and coherence

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	2%	8%	18%	14%	6%	8%	12%	10%	12%	2%	64%	24%
4	62%	52%	76%	64%	68%	64%	70%	74%	66%	68%	30%	68%
3	36%	28%	6%	22%	26%	24%	18%	14%	22%	24%	2%	8%
2	-	12%	-	-	-	4%	-	2%	-	6%	2%	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The principles of focus, coherence, sequencing, meaningful learning and mediation derive from cognitive theory. The following cognitive theorists (Bruner, 1965; Ausubel, 1967; Gagne, 1975) as cited in Hartman and Warren (1994:11) view "... learning as involving a shift from concrete and common sense to abstract and academic forms of thinking, and from an ability to perform simple procedures to a capacity to conduct complex ones. Hence they propose that courses be organised around the sequential and coherent development of

topics, skills or concepts." The figures suggest that units for each course fitted well together. However, there is some degree of uncertainty, but overall the results are positive. Nonetheless, this uncertainty has to be investigated further.

31. The course helped me appreciate different perspectives

Table 5.30 : Appreciation of different perspectives

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	76%	30%	24%	14%	72%	30%	22%	18%	82%	48%	24%	62%
4	24%	64%	74%	64%	28%	68%	72%	62%	18%	48%	70%	30%
3	-	4%	2%	20%	-	2%	6%	18%	-	4%	2%	8%
2	-	2%	-	2%	-	-	-	2%	-	-	2%	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

There is overwhelming support that the course was instrumental in helping students appreciate different perspectives. This is supported by the result in question 28. There is growing acknowledgement that students need to be provided with an eclectic approach to the study of the social sciences. In particular, sociology has to ensure that students are able to critically appreciate the perspectives : functionalism, conflict and humanism. This serves to contribute to the well-rounded student and citizen. An eclectic approach serves to sustain the academic value of the discipline.

32. As the course progressed links between units emerged

Table 5.31 : Links between units

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	38%	32%	16%	10%	42%	34%	8%	12%	44%	46%	20%	24%
4	36%	52%	74%	78%	36%	56%	72%	72%	38%	38%	64%	70%
3	16%	14%	8%	12%	22%	8%	14%	16%	18%	12%	8%	6%
2	10%	2%	2%	-	-	2%	6%	-	-	4%	6%	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

In keeping with the need for effective sequencing as explained in question 30, the results indicate that links between units emerged as the course progressed. And this was experienced by a large number of students. As the course progresses, it is important for these links to become clearer since students need to be able to see the logic within the curriculum, the organic continuity between the units and the relevance of the discipline as a whole. A fragmented only serves to confuse students.

33. There is a great deal of continuity between sections at each level

Table 5.32 : Continuity between sections

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	12%	12%	14%	20%	18%	20%	12%	16%	18%	30%	16%	20%
4	40%	20%	78%	64%	48%	20%	78%	68%	42%	36%	72%	68%
3	48%	26%	8%	12%	34%	28%	10%	12%	30%	18%	10%	6%
2	-	42%	-	4%	-	20%	-	2%	10%	14%	2%	6%
1	-	-	-	-	-	12%	-	2%	-	2%	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Hartman and Warren (1994:11) are of the opinion that if learning is a developmental and active process, then tasks and texts should ideally progress in complexity. Except for UDW and UNIZUL, this appears to have been the case for UND and UNP. This is significant for the undergraduate curriculum, since each level has a core component that articulates with relevant and significant units. Therefore, complexity and relevance add meaning and continuity between sections at each level.

34. <u>The subject matter is well integrated for each level</u>

<u>Table 5.33 : Appropriateness of goals and objectives</u>

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	22%	14%	16%	10%	20%	22%	10%	8%	24%	26%	18%	34%
4	48%	42%	76%	58%	52%	40%	76%	78%	56%	58%	72%	68%
3	30%	28%	6%	30%	28%	32%	14%	14%	20%	12%	6%	8%
2	-	16%	2%	2%	-	6%	-	-	-	4%	4%	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Ausubel (1963) as cited in Miller (1986) presents the concept integrative reconciliation which "... means that when new material is learnt, it is not only incorporated into the student's existing framework of knowledge but that some of the previously learned concepts will be modified as a result of the new learning." Therefore subject matter has to be integrated in a way that will promote this kind of learning. The figures suggest that this had happened successfully.

35. <u>The goals and objectives for each level of sociology was appropriate for the level at which it was taught?</u>

<u>Table 5.34 : Appropriateness of goals and objectiveness</u>

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	72%	34%	18%	24%	82%	50%	6%	22%	88%	64%	20%	54%
4	28%	56%	78%	58%	18%	30%	78%	56%	12%	28%	70%	36%
3	-	8%	4%	16%	-	16%	14%	20%	-	6%	6%	8%
2	-	2%	-	2%	-	4%	2%	2%	-	2%	2%	2%
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

As students proceed from first to third year the complexity of the course increases. First years serves as a base line or yardstick from which the difficulty and complexity of subsequent years are judged by students. One of the conditions for effective learning is called a progressive differentiation of content (Ausubel, 1963:79). This means that for effective learning to take place students need to be able to link a new idea or concept of what she already knows. Therefore, within a curriculum courses need to be pitched at

levels compatible with student preparedness. The figures suggest that the goals and objectives were largely appropriate for the level at which it was taught.

36. The course was poorly co-ordinated

Table 5.35 : Co-ordination of course

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	-	-	10%	-	-	2%	8%	-	4%	6%	6%	2%
4	-	-	12%	-	4%	6%	6%	8%	16%	2%	6%	2%
3	12%	16%	6%	8%	10%	18%	8%	10%	10%	2%	2%	2%
2	62%	62%	62%	68%	68%	54%	68%	66%	54%	60%	36%	62%
1	26%	22%	10%	24%	18%	20%	10%	16%	16%	30%	50%	32%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Co-ordination influences student performance since it would serve to reduce/eliminate confusion, ensure infra-structural provision required by the needs of the curriculum (Posner, 1995), clarify the administrative aspects of both the department and students and oversee the smooth functioning of the course. There are strong indications that the course was well co-ordinated. A well co-ordinated course reduces student frustration, facilitates administrative functioning, ensures clear and unambiguous communication and generally reflects on the competence and professionalism of the department.

37. The pace at which the course was taught was:

Table 5.36 : Pace of teaching

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	4%	8%	10%	10%	2%	2%	6%	8%	2%	10%	22%	8%
4	36%	10%	6%	6%	22%	42%	28%	20%	36%	10%	16%	10%
3	48%	82%	74%	80%	68%	54%	62%	70%	62%	80%	62%	80%
2	10%	-	10%	2%	8%	-	4%	2%	-	-	-	2%
1	2%	-	-	2%	-	2%	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Most students feel that the pace was about right. This is significant since the pace of the course should give students enough time and opportunity to acquire, practice, consolidate

and apply new skills and concepts (Hartman and Warren, 1994:11). The figures indicate that this was possible. Furthermore, underprepared students have particular demands with regard to pace. Together with second language students, their needs have to be accounted for in the design of the curriculum. This is going to play an increasingly important role in curriculum practice in higher education.

38.   The different sections for each level appear in a logical order

Table 5.37 : Logical order of sections

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	42%	8%	16%	8%	36%	36%	8%	8%	42%	52%	40%	20%
4	52%	68%	80%	70%	56%	48%	74%	70%	52%	38%	50%	68%
3	6%	20%	2%	18%	8%	16%	14%	18%	6%	10%	2%	10%
2	-	4%	-	4%	-	-	4%	4%	-	-	4%	2%
1	-	-	2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Besides a progressive differentiation of content, there needs to be a logical treatment of topics and units. This is essential for promoting integrated learning that is also meaningful and enduring. The figures indicate that the majority are of the view that there is a logical treatment of topics. The core areas in sociology are theory and research. Other topics revolve around these two issues. The challenge is to ensure logic and coherence between the different sections.

39. **The course appeared to be well organized**

Table 5.38 : Organization of course

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	24%	6%	16%	22%	36%	26%	8%	22%	36%	30%	22%	60%
4	76%	70%	80%	70%	64%	68%	72%	54%	64%	68%	68%	40%
3	-	22%	2%	6%	-	2%	14%	18%	-	-	2%	-
2	-	2%	-	2%	-	4%	4%	6%	-	2%	4%	-
1	-	-	2%	-	-	-	2%	-	-	-	4%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

These figures are similar to those in question 36. This is reflective of the degree of organization and efficiency within the department. At the individual level, it reflects the particular skills of a lecturer required for success within a complex and demanding academic environment. These include competence, time-management meeting deadlines, coping with pressure, working with people and setting goals.

40. **The course handouts were clear and useful**

Table 5.39 : Usefulness of course handouts

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	22%	26%	10%	20%	26%	28%	10%	22%	28%	66%	68%	40%
4	68%	68%	66%	76%	66%	68%	66%	74%	64%	28%	26%	58%
3	4%	6%	12%	2%	-	4%	12%	2%	4%	2%	-	-
2	-	-	8%	2%	-	-	8%	2%	-	4%	6%	2%
1	6%	-	4%	-	8%	-	4%	-	4%	-	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Clarity of instruction, objectives and content are essential for effective, clear and unambiguous communication. Course handouts are an essential way of communicating the requirements of the course to students. Clearly, all four institutions have succeeded in ensuring that course handouts for all three levels were clear and useful.

41. Course assignment schedules were easy to follow

Table 5.40 : Course assignment schedules

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	32%	26%	16%	18%	36%	28%	6%	16%	34%	40%	20%	18%
4	58%	60%	76%	70%	54%	62%	76%	56%	56%	46%	64%	60%
3	8%	8%	8%	6%	4%	6%	14%	20%	2%	4%	8%	18%
2	2%	4%	-	6%	6%	4%	4%	8%	8%	8%	6%	4%
1	-	2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Just like the response in question 40, there is a great degree of clarity in the way in which lecturers communicate with students. Successful performance in the assignments depends on clear and simple instructions. This was largely the case for all four institutions at all three levels.

42. How would you rate the co-ordination of subject matter between lectures, seminars and practicals which formed your course?

Table 5.41 : Co-ordination of subject matter/lectures/seminars and practicals

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	12%	4%	20%	6%	2%	10%	20%	6%	10%	20%	28%	24%
4	66%	68%	72%	60%	54%	68%	44%	70%	56%	62%	58%	70%
3	22%	26%	8%	30%	28%	22%	28%	24%	8%	18%	8%	6%
2	-	2%	-	4%	10%	-	8%	-	16%	-	4%	-
1	-	-	-	-	6%	-	-	-	10%	-	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The seminar, tutorial and practical is basically an extension of the lecture which deals with core subject matter. Again, for successful learning to occur, there has to be a strong link between the two or three. Even though a fair number of students rated this as average most rated this as good and very good.

44. <u>Were there suitable numbers of seminars/tutorials for your requirements on the course?</u>

<u>Table 5.42 : Suitability of seminars/tutorials requirements</u>

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	-	8%	16%	4%	-	14%	2%	2%	-	14%	24%	4%
4	6%	16%	22%	14%	-	24%	4%	14%	-	12%	20%	8%
3	94%	72%	48%	72%	76%	52%	72%	78%	20%	36%	52%	74%
2	-	2%	-	10%	14%	8%	6%	6%	44%	2%	-	10%
1	-	2%	14%	-	10%	2%	16%	-	36%	36%	4%	4%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Forty four percent of third year students at UDW feel that there are few seminars/tutorials as opposed to the low numbers for the other institutions. This needs to be addressed. Perhaps students require more practical work. But on the average students are satisfied that there are suitable numbers of seminars/tutorials for all three levels.

45. <u>Were there suitable numbers of assignments for your requirements on the course?</u>

<u>Table 5.43 : Suitability of numbers of assignments</u>

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	-	-	8%	4%	4%	6%	2%	6%	20%	16%	6%	6%
4	10%	26%	18%	10%	22%	20%	6%	6%	45%	40%	36%	18%
3	82%	70%	56%	80%	70%	72%	52%	82%	35%	44%	42%	70%
2	8%	4%	14%	6%	4%	2%	8%	4%	-	-	6%	4%
1	-	-	4%	-	-	-	32%	2%	-	-	10%	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The figures indicate that as students proceed from first to third year the number of assignments increase. This is in keeping with the increasing volume of work from first to third year. However, the majority are satisfied with the number of assignments for each level.

45. **Were there suitable numbers of assignments for your requirements on the course?**

Table 5.44 : Suitability of numbers of assignments

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	-	-	8%	4%	4%	6%	2%	6%	20%	16%	6%	6%
4	10%	26%	18%	10%	22%	20%	6%	6%	45%	40%	36%	18%
3	82%	70%	56%	80%	70%	72%	52%	82%	35%	44%	42%	70%
2	8%	4%	14%	6%	4%	2%	8%	4%	-	-	6%	4%
1	-	-	4%	-	-	-	32%	2%	-	-	10%	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The figures indicate that as students proceed from first to third year the number of assignments increase. This is in keeping with the increasing volume of work from first to third year. However, the majority are satisfied with the number of assignments for each level.

46. **Were there suitable numbers of practicals/projects for your requirements on the course?**

Table 5.45 : Suitability of numbers of practicals/projects

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	-	-	2%	-	-	-	2%	-	4%	4%	6%	8%
4	4%	6%	4%	4%	12%	10%	6%	4%	26%	40%	36%	10%
3	62%	52%	64%	66%	56%	50%	60%	70%	50%	52%	42%	64%
2	24%	12%	6%	14%	22%	28%	16%	10%	18%	2%	6%	12%
1	10%	30%	24%	16%	10%	12%	16%	16%	2%	2%	10%	6%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The general view is that there were average number of practicals/projects. But, more third years feel that there are many practicals/project. Again, this is in keeping with the changing academic demands, complexity and needs of the course as it proceeded from levels one to three.

47.   **There is a strong continuity between levels 1 and 2**

Table 5.46 : Continuity between levels 1 and 2

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
YES	84%	50%	80%	66%
NO	4%	24%	24%	6%
UNCERTAIN	12%	26%	6%	28%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

The majority of students at UDW (84%); UND (80%) and UNP (66%) see a strong continuity between levels one and two. The figure for UNIZUL indicate that there could be some break between levels one and two. A significant percentage said no (24%) as compared to the low percentage for UDW and UNP. Furthermore at least 26% are uncertain. Nevertheless, the results for UDW, UND and UNP are corroborated by the results in question 35, question 39 and question 42.

48.   **There is a strong continuity between levels 2 and 3**

Table 5.47 : Continuity between levels 2 and 3

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
YES	76%	52%	76%	68%
NO	-	12%	14%	10%
UNCERTAIN	24%	36%	10%	22%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

These figures clearly indicate that there is a strong continuity between levels 2 and 3. However the 36% (UNIZUL), 24% (UDW) and 22% (UNP) are causes for concern. Question 47 and question 48 are important questions designed to identify if there is a continuous, logical development within the undergraduate curriculum. The response is

significant since it indicates that students appreciate the course and the discipline as a logical, coherent and systematic whole.

5.3.3 *Learning*

49. **The course seems to encourage us to develop our own academic interests as far as possible**

Table 5.48 : Encouraging academic interests

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	46%	28%	24%	10%	52%	30%	14%	14%	56%	44%	46%	30%
4	48%	60%	76%	66%	40%	68%	74%	68%	44%	54%	48%	66%
3	6%	10%	-	16%	8%	2%	12%	14%	-	-	6%	4%
2	-	2%	-	6%	-	-	-	4%	-	-	-	-
1	-	-	-	2%	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Given the nature of the discipline, students should be encouraged to develop their own academic interests. This seems to be the case form level one to three. In fact, students indicate that they were largely encouraged to develop their own academic interests. This is also essential for promoting independent life-long learning.

50. **We are generally given enough time to learn the things we have to learn**

Table 5.49 : Adequacy of the given to learn

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	38%	32%	20%	6%	26%	16%	6%	-	30%	12%	16%	6%
4	62%	50%	72%	66%	72%	68%	74%	68%	70%	68%	68%	62%
3	-	10%	6%	14%	2%	6%	10%	20%	-	6%	8%	18%
2	-	6%	2%	10%	-	8%	10%	8%	-	8%	6%	10%
1	-	2%	-	4%	-	2%	-	4%	-	6%	2%	4%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Time is usually determined by pace. There is general agreement that students were given sufficient time to learn. Whether successful learning has taken place or not does not reflect in these figures but students are positive about the appropriation of time to their learning.

51. **Its often hard to discover what is expected of you in the course**

Table 5.50 : Expectations of the course

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	-	10%	12%	6%	-	2%	14%	-	-	12%	12%	6%
4	26%	10%	14%	20%	32%	38%	14%	30%	2%	30%	8%	12%
3	-	20%	2%	14%	-	18%	-	20%	2%	6%	6%	16%
2	68%	56%	64%	56%	66%	40%	66%	48%	94%	46%	66%	60%
1	6%	4%	8%	4%	2%	2%	6%	2%	2%	6%	8%	6%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

At the undergraduate level students need strong guidance on how to proceed and clear indications on what is expected of them. This ensures confidence necessary for success. Furthermore, it facilitates easy engagement with course material. The figures indicate that this has been the case.

52. **Feedback on student work is provided only in the form of marks and grades**

Table 5.51 : Feedback in the form of marks and grades

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	62%	60%	14%	20%	68%	50%	16%	20%	66%	44%	20%	14%
4	28%	22%	80%	50%	28%	28%	78%	50%	30%	36%	72%	40%
3	8%	4%	2%	10%	2%	4%	4%	10%	2%	2%	2%	10%
2	2%	10%	4%	12%	2%	14%	2%	14%	2%	14%	4%	30%
1	-	4%	-	8%	-	4%	-	6%	-	4%	2%	6%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

While marks and grades are an effective and efficient way of judging student performance, it does little to promote post-test learning. True learning begins after assessment (Knight, 1996:4) and if marks and grades are the predominant means of assessment then learning is encouraged in a mechanistic way with little regard for deep, enduring and meaningful learning. The figures indicate that there is a strong reliance on grades and marks as forms of assessment. This needs to be restructured.

53. <u>**Students are given a great deal of choice over how they are going to learn**</u>

<u>**Table 5.52 : Choice over learning**</u>

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	-	10%	16%	2%	-	4%	42%	2%	-	6%	60%	30%
4	76%	56%	66%	56%	90%	10%	30%	46%	90%	20%	20%	58%
3	2%	10%	12%	20%	6%	10%	16%	22%	6%	20%	12%	10%
2	10%	18%	2%	14%	2%	66%	6%	24%	2%	50%	4%	2%
1	12%	6%	4%	8%	2%	10%	6%	6%	2%	4%	4%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

For the exception of UNIZUL, the other universities appear to provide a great deal of choice over how students will learn. This is significant in the light of the need to move towards a learner-centered approach where students become increasingly more responsible for their own learning. This is also necessary for promoting independent life-long learning. Moreso, at university, students need to approach learning in a flexible and creative way.

54. <u>**The course instilled positive values regarding social issues**</u>

<u>**Table 5.53 : Positive values and social issues**</u>

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	58%	52%	24%	12%	68%	40%	20%	10%	70%	30%	28%	24%
4	36%	40%	72%	68%	32%	56%	66%	68%	30%	66%	64%	64%
3	6%	8%	4%	18%	-	2%	8%	22%	-	4%	8%	10%
2	-	-	-	2%	-	-	4%	-	-	-	-	2%
1	-	-	-	-	-	2%	2%	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

This question tests the moral and social dimension of the curriculum. While sociology is an academic discipline it appears to have been very successful in instilling positive values regarding social issues. This could have been facilitated by the nature of the course which largely deals with social problems.

5.3.4 *Instructional methods*

55. **Rate your preference of teaching methods for each year of study**

(1 = most preferred; 5 = least preferred)

A - Lectures

B - Tutorials

C - Seminars

D - Practicals

E - Consultations

UDW

Table 5.54 : Preference of teaching methods - UDW

	SOCIOLOGY I						SOCIOLOGY II						SOCIOLOGY III					
	5	4	3	2	1	T	5	4	3	2	1	T	5	4	3	2	1	T
A	-	-	10%	28%	62%	100%	-	-	12%	22%	66%	100%	-	-	10%	22%	68%	100%
B	-	-	-	18%	82%	100%	-	-	4%	30%	66%	100%	42%	32%	10%	-	16%	100%
C	78%	18%	2%	-	2%	100%	42%	-	12%	16%	30%	100%	2%	-	-	32%	66%	100%
D	2%	-	-	30%	68%	100%	4%	-	-	30%	66%	100%	-	-	-	54%	46%	100%
E	6%	10%	10%	12%	62%	100%	38%	12%	10%	21%	19%	100%	-	-	2%	22%	76%	100%

UNIZUL

Table 5.55 : Preference of teaching methods- UNIZUL

	SOCIOLOGY I						SOCIOLOGY II						SOCIOLOGY III					
	5	4	3	2	1	T	5	4	3	2	1	T	5	4	3	2	1	T
A	-	2%	12%	16%	70%	100%	5%	5%	4%	10%	76%	100%	-	-	10%	20%	70%	100%
B	-	2%	8%	10%	80%	100%	10%	6%	6%	12%	66%	100%	-	-	10%	28%	62%	100%
C	78%	12%	2%	6%	2%	100%	66%	10%	12%	6%	6%	100%	-	-	-	32%	68%	100%
D	28%	10%	24%	12%	26%	100%	26%	16%	12%	20%	26%	100%	-	-	2%	28%	70%	100%
E	40%	-	1%	4%	55%	100%	12%	18%	14%	36%	20%	100%	2%	2%	2%	36%	58%	100%

UND

Table 5.56 : Preference of teaching methods – UND

	SOCIOLOGY I						SOCIOLOGY II						SOCIOLOGY III					
	5	4	3	2	1	T	5	4	3	2	1	T	5	4	3	2	1	T
A	-	-	4%	36%	60%	100%	2%	-	20%	12%	66%	100%	2%	6%	4%	16%	72%	100%
B	-	-	-	8%	82%	100%	10%	8%	10%	12%	60%	100%	28%	12%	10%	10%	40%	100%
C	88%	6%	2%	2%	2%	100%	20%	12%	16%	12%	40%	100%	4%	6%	6%	12%	72%	100%
D	62%	22%	6%	10%	-	100%	10%	4%	6%	22%	58%	100%	-	-	6%	18%	76%	100%
E	72%	10%	12%	6%	-	100%	10%	2%	16%	12%	60%	100%	60%	12%	-	6%	22%	100%

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Table 5.57 : Preference of teaching methods - UNP

	SOCIOLOGY I						SOCIOLOGY II						SOCIOLOGY III					
	5	4	3	2	1	T	5	4	3	2	1	T	5	4	3	2	1	T
A	10%	2%	26%	4%	30%	100%	26%	22%	20%	24%	8%		10%	8%	4%	12%	66%	
B	28%	-	-	12%	60%	100%	6%	4%	4%	10%	76%		20%	-	10%	16%	54%	
C	54%	36%	12%	-	8%	100%	62%	24%	-	2%	12%		10%	10%	10%	30%	40%	
D	42%	6%	10%	2%	40%	100%	40%	28%	22%	-	10%		20%	-	-	22%	58%	
E	38%	2%	26%	4%	30%	100%	26%	22%	20%	24%	8%		10%	8%	4%	12%	66%	

Some of the challenges facing higher education are the selection of appropriate teaching methods for particular levels (Miller, 1986:33). Figures indicate that the most preferred methods are lectures, tutorials and consultations for all levels. Practicals and seminars are preferred at third year – largely because it incorporates a practical component and contains higher order skills such as debate, argument and critical thinking.

56. **Describe the general quality of teaching**

Table 5.58 : Quality of teaching

5 – very high

4 – high

3 – average

2 – low

1 – very low

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	-	16%	22%	36%	6%	10%	4%	10%	8%	58%	52%	34%
4	36%	20%	20%	30%	42%	40%	26%	46%	36%	28%	4%	48%
3	64%	60%	56%	30%	52%	50%	56%	40%	56%	10%	36%	16%
2	-	4%	2%	2%	-	-	4%	4%	-	4%	8%	2%
1	-	-	-	2%	-	-	10%	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Together with teaching methods are the need to ensure quality teaching. Improved teaching
methods are beginning to occupy an important place in the higher education agenda both
nationally and globally. Figures indicate that for levels one and two, quality of teaching
lies at the average level with quality teaching being high and very high for level three
(except UDW).

57. **Which of the following aids do you find useful in teaching?**

Table 5.59 : Usefulness of teaching aids

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Handouts	80%	92%	100%	100%	82%	92%	100%	100%	84%	88%	100%	100%
Overhead Projector	86%	88%	60%	100%	86%	90%	100%	100%	82%	86%	14%	100%
Slide Projector	-	6%	-	2%	4%	6%	2%	2%	2%	4%	-	4%
TV/Video	2%	10%	10%	22%	-	18%	-	20%	6%	62%	14%	14%
Other	2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-	-	-	-
All	-	-	-	2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%

Given the varied and complex changes in the student population the need for innovative teaching practices becomes important. Teaching aids are meant to facilitate and promote effective learning. Difficulties can be experienced in choosing appropriate teaching aids. But the figures indicate that the overhead projector and handouts are exceptionally useful in promoting good teaching.

58. Which teaching methods were used for each level of sociology?

Table 5.60 : Teaching methods for each level

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Lectures	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Tutorials	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	60%	100%	100%
Seminars	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6%	4%	-	2%
Practicals	-	-	-	2%	-	-	-	2%	52%	70%	70%	32%
Consultation	20%	68%	42%	40%	26%	66%	38%	36%	32%	76%	66%	68%
Other	20%	68%	42%	40%	26%	66%	38%	36%	32%	76%	66%	68%

Lectures and tutorials and consultations predominate at all levels. However, practicals for third year seem inevitable. This is so because the third year includes a practical component that is a culmination of all that was studied in first and second year. The consultation is also beneficial for students and preferred by many. In addition to these teaching methods other methods should also be explored.

59. Were they appropriately used for each year of study?

Elaborate

These were the important comments:

UDW

- 72% said yes since it made them understand content easily.

- 60% felt that in Level 1 very little is gained from lectures and more is gained from tutorials.

- 60% felt that at levels two and three they automatically motivate themselves to gain from lectures. Failure to understand lectures leaves them with the option of consultations.

- 80% felt that tutorials were significant and extremely useful in first year.

- 12% felt that supplemental instruction was not used appropriately and more use should be made of seminars and practicals where ideas could be shared.

UNIZUL

- 70% said yes.

- 60% felt that the research practical in the final year was beneficial.

- 64% felt that third year students should have more access to tutorials.

- 62% felt that the lecture is a convenient way of teaching – it gives general guidelines.

- 60% felt that the lecture and tutorial were well integrated.

- 42% felt that tutorials should be confined to first year and be compulsory.

- 26% felt that tutorials should be confined to first year and not be compulsory.

- 50% said that tutorials at first year helped to clarify concepts.

- 50% were of the opinion that seminars at level three helped to clarify concepts.

- 56% said that practicals empower students with research skills.

- 10% saw a need for tutorials at level three.

- 2% did not want the practical.

UND

- 60% said yes.

- 88% claimed that tutorials were very useful.

- 62% felt that tutorials were especially useful at third year

- 10% said no.

- 50% said that methods were appropriate to the work load.

- 68% benefited from tutorials since they were allowed to ask questions and clarify issues.

- 70% benefited from tutorials at level one since they required a great deal of assistance and it was provided at tutorials.

- 30% claimed that methods were appropriate for the level of study.

- 38% felt that methods were not appropriately used in level 2.

UNP

- 94% felt that methods were used appropriately for different years of study.

- 60% suggested that there should be less lectures and more practical work in third year.

- 68% benefited a great deal from tutorials as it clarified ideas.

- 54% stressed the usefulness of the overhead projector in allowing and ensuring that the main points have been taken down.

- 60% mentioned that lectures and tutorials were very well structured and dealt with relevant issues.

- 60% indicated that the practical at third year allowed them to practice their research skills.

- 40% benefited from consultation at level three.

- 2% experienced the second level of lectures as too fast.

- 10% suggested that students be given notes before lectures. They experienced problems of access to readings at short loan and most times relevant pages were removed by other students.

While there was unanimous agreement that instructional methods were used appropriately, the following problematic areas have been identified:

- the use of seminars to promote the sharing of ideas;

- tutorials for third years;

- compulsory tutorials for first years;

- assessing the effectiveness of methods by individual institutions, departments for the different levels;

- providing and improving infra-structural support that enable these methods to flourish.

5.3.5 *Assessment*

60.   Feedback on assignments was fair and useful

Table 5.61 : Feedback on assignments

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	-	24%	30%	20%	-	28%	32%	20%	-	22%	28%	20%
4	60%	50%	54%	56%	68%	60%	46%	58%	62%	60%	52%	70%
3	22%	16%	16%	20%	-	2%	14%	14%	-	6%	12%	8%
2	18%	8%	-	4%	32%	8%	6%	8%	38%	10%	6%	2%
1	-	2%	-	-	-	2%	2%	-	-	2%	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

While there is agreement on the usefulness of feedback, 32% for level two and 38% for level three at UDW disagree. The reasons for this need to be explored but will possibly manifest in question 77. It also needs to be recognized that large numbers of students, which is a problem at all four institutions make it difficult to provide detailed feedback. Nonetheless, assignments play an integral role in learning since they test a wide range of skills. One way of promoting this learning is through detailed feedback.

61.   Please place these assessment methods in your order of preference from 1-5

(1 = most preferred; 5 = least preferred)

UDW

Table 5.62 : Preference of assessment methods - UDW

	5	4	3	2	1	TOTAL
Examinations	6%			14%	80%	100%
Tests	10%	-	-	12%	78%	100%
Assignments	8%	-	14%	12%	62%	100%
Practicals	-	-	16%	20%	64%	100%
Projects	-	-	18%	18%	64%	100%
Orals	60%	14%	12%	8%	6%	100%
Other (Please specify)	-	-	-	-	-	-

UNIZUL

Table 5.63 : Preference of assessment methods - UNIZUL

	5	4	3	2	1	TOTAL
Examinations	26%	-	22%	20%	32%	100%
Tests	10%	18%	2%	38%	42%	100%
Assignments	14%	6%	2%	18%	60%	100%
Practicals	2%	-	60%	18%	20%	100%
Projects	4%	18%	18%	28%	32%	100%
Orals	78%	12%	-	-	10%	100%
Other (Please specify)	-	-	-	-	-	-

UND

Table 5.64 : Preference of assessment methods - UND

	5	4	3	2	1	TOTAL
Examinations	40%	2%	14%	2%	42%	100%
Tests	10%	6%	12%	12%	60%	100%
Assignments	30%	2%	4%	2%	62%	100%
Practicals	54%	10%	12%	4%	20%	100%
Projects	56%	16%	10%	8%	10%	100%
Orals	20%	6%	12%	10%	52%	100%
Other (Please specify)	-	-	-	-	-	-

UNP

Table 5.65 : Preference of assessment methods - UNP

	5	4	3	2	1	TOTAL
Examinations	6%	-	6%	28%	60%	100%
Tests	20%	-	6%	18%	56%	100%
Assignments	12%	-	8%	38%	42%	100%
Practicals	20%	14%	20%	36%	10%	100%
Projects	6%	14%	10%	12%	58%	100%
Orals	54%	6%	-	-	40%	100%
Other (Please specify)	-	-	-	-	-	-

Examinations, tests and assignments appear to be the most preferred forms of assessment.

Orals seem to be least preferred except for UND. The problem with this response is that

other forms of assessment do exist but students have only been exposed to these common

forms. Therefore they are not in a position to make an informed opinion. It is recommended that lecturers begin to implement a range of assessment forms available.

62.   How often would you like to be assessed?

Table 5.66 : Frequency of assessment

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Weekly	6%	12%	42%	24%
Fortnightly	12%	10%	18%	36%
Monthly	66%	68%	72%	80%
End of term	72%	68%	66%	64%
End of semester	72%	66%	40%	56%
End of year	62%	66%	10%	18%

Students generally prefer to be assessed monthly, at the end of term and the end of semester. This shows that they do not like long intervals (80% monthly for UNP, 72% for UND, 68% for UNIZUL and 66% for UDW). One reason could be that continuous assessment promotes learning at a constant rate and they are given the opportunity to revise on their work and improve on their weaknesses.

63.   Assignments added to course understanding

Table 5.67 : Assignments and course understanding

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	28%	28%	20%	18%	24%	32%	20%	20%	26%	30%	38%	28%
4	62%	66%	74%	68%	28%	60%	68%	66%	26%	66%	48%	60%
3	4%	4%	4%	12%	22%	6%	6%	10%	20%	2%	10%	8%
2	6%	2%	2%	-	20%	2%	4%	2%	22%	2%	2%	2%
1	-	-	-	2%	6%	-	2%	2%	6%	-	2%	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

In most cases learning begins after assessment. Therefore assessment should play an integral role in promoting learning. Assignments not only add to course understanding but feedback on assignments also provide students with guidance on how and where to develop

their weaknesses. Except for UDW (20% at second year and 22% at third year) the rest felt that assignments added to course understanding. These results are supported by those in question 60.

64.   Exams reflected important aspects of the course

Table 5.68 : Exams and important aspects of the course

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	6%	34%	38%	28%	8%	26%	32%	34%	8%	30%	20%	28%
4	62%	64%	50%	56%	68%	66%	48%	54%	68%	60%	66%	58%
3	10%	8%	8%	12%	4%	4%	10%	8%	4%	6%	6%	10%
2	12%	-	-	-	14%	-	4%	-	16%	-	2%	-
1	10%	2%	4%	4%	6%	4%	6%	4%	4%	4%	6%	4%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Students are of the opinion that exams reflected important aspects of the course. This is significant in that while students are not really in a position to judge the important aspects of a course there is a large degree of compatibility between their expectations and the exams.

65.   Feedback on tests provided useful guidance

Table 5.69 : Feedback on tests

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	26%	26%	40%	40%	22%	32%	38%	40%	20%	28%	44%	28%
4	42%	56%	60%	56%	48%	52%	50%	40%	72%	62%	52%	58%
3	16%	6%	-	-	12%	6%	8%	12%	-	2%	4%	10%
2	10%	10%	-	4%	8%	8%	2%	6%	2%	6%	-	4%
1	6%	2%	-	-	10%	2%	2%	2%	6%	2%	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

While tests are meant to assess student learning it is also meant to promote post-test learning. Tests therefore play a dual role. A significant percentage feel positive about the role of tests in providing useful guidance. Often students are unsure of their abilities, understanding and their level of development. At first year they require much feedback in

the form of tests. Even though student numbers militate against detailed feedback, other forms of assessment should be explored. These include self assessment and peer assessment.

66. Identify which of the following aspects were tested (tests, exams and assignments) for each level

Table 5.70 : Criteria for testing

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UN
Content and subject knowledge only	60%	66%	60%	60%	62%	64%	60%	66%	60%	68%	72%	68
Application of principles to a practical context	62%	60%	6%	72%	66%	60%	66%	68%	68%	70%	74%	70
Analysis of ideas and theories	6%	60%	54%	70%	76%	62%	58%	70%	76%	78%	78%	72
Critical thinking	60%	64%	66%	68%	70%	72%	70%	70%	78%	78%	82%	70
Logical thinking	66%	68%	66%	68%	70%	72%	70%	72%	76%	74%	80%	78
Appreciation of cultural diversity	68%	16%	70%	60%	70%	18%	-	18%	78%	10%	10%	12
Imagination and originality in formulating ideas and hypothesis	6%	12%	60%	60%	44%	10%	60%	84%	66%	14%	60%	70
Truthfulness	4%	2%	4%	6%	2%	4%	-	10%	10%	6%	4%	36
Accuracy in enquiry	2%	4%	20%	20%	2%	8%	20%	20%	58%	38%	58%	50
Ability to learn Independently	40%	10%	36%	60%	10%	42%	66%	76%	36%	60%	70%	
Ability to locate Information	16%	8%	34%	68%	38%	6%	36%	70%	74%	10%	52%	72
Social awareness of the value of education	26%	6%	50%	50%	56%	6%	42%	6%	66%	4%	40%	30
Human understanding and respect for others	42%	10%	48%	40%	44%	8%	50%	28%	46%	10%	42%	40
Awareness of moral issues and traditions	46%	10%	30%	40%	52%	8%	30%	48%	50%	10%	28%	56
Awareness of diversity of religious and other thought	40%	12%	30%	48%	46%	10%	28%	36%	42%	8%	8%	36
Awareness of social Issues	60%	14%	12%	10%	66%	12%	60%	66%	72%	12%	72%	84
Commitment to Democracy	20%	10%	12%	10%	26%	2%	4%	24%	30%	2%	34%	32
Knowledge of major Systems of governments	20%	10%	20%	28%	26%	8%	4%	42%	48%	4%	32%	56
Ability to make sound Career decisions	6%	-	8%	2%	4%	2%	4%	4%	20%	8%	32%	22
Knowledge of the Labor-market	8%	-	8%	2%	6%	2%	6%	10%	56%	4%	34%	36
Employability skills	-	-	4%	2%	-	-	6%	4%	20%	16%	40%	20

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On the whole figures indicate that the following were included in tests, exams and assignments for all three levels:

- Content and subject knowledge only;

- Application of principles to a practical context;

- Analysis of ideas and theories;

- Critical thinking;

- Logical thinking;

The following appear to have been tested at third year:

- Accuracy in inquiry;

- Ability to learn independently;

- Ability to locate information with UNIZUL having significantly lower percentages for these three.

Ability to make sound career decisions, knowledge of the labor market and employability skills do not feature in any significant way (except 56% for UDW at level 3). There is also a significant increase at level three for all four universities with regard to analysis of ideas and theories, critical thinking and logical thinking. This is compatible with the nature of the course.

67. Identify the level at which the following should be included in any assessment

Table 5.71 : Preferred criteria for testing

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Content and subject knowledge only	60%	66%	68%	100%	6%	10%	70%	60%	62%	10%	66%	62%
Application of Principles to a practical context	52%	10%	58%	52%	50%	60%	60%	66%	72%	72%	68%	70%
Analysis of ideas And theories	66%	16%	60%	80%	68%	70%	70%	80%	76%	70%	70%	80%
Critical thinking	66%	18%	60%	78%	66%	64%	66%	82%	66%	66%	72%	82%
Logical thinking	6%	12%	66%	82%	6%	12%	60%	80%	76%	72%	70%	80%
Appreciation of Cultural diversity	42%	36%	52%	40%	40%	32%	56%	50%	48%	36%	62%	40%
Imagination and Originality in Formulating ideas And hypothesis	58%	46%	10%	50%	62%	52%	58%	66%	66%	58%	68%	70%
Truthfulness	66%	8%	10%	10%	68%	12%	12%	14%	72%	36%	18%	14%
Accuracy in enquiry	62%	60%	66%	68%	66%	60%	66%	70%	70%	80%	68%	72%
Ability to learn Independently	54%	66%	60%	80%	56%	66%	68%	82%	54%	72%	74%	82%
Ability to locate Information	50%	60%	60%	80%	50%	60%	60%	80%	50%	60%	68%	80%
Social awareness of the Value of education	6%	12%	18%	867%	8%	16%	18%	62%	6%	14%	18%	60%
Human understanding And respect for others	42%	52%	50%	74%	46%	58%	50%	70%	48%	56%	50%	68%
Awareness of moral Issues and traditions	60%	40%	44%	66%	60%	46%	40%	60%	60%	42%	46%	62%
Awareness of diversity Of religious and other Thought	6%	12%	10%	40%	12%	10%	12%	50%	8%	10%	10%	60%
Awareness of social Issues	58%	40%	46%	76%	60%	60%	62%	78%	56%	68%	74%	84%
Commitment to Democracy	56%	52%	50%	50%	58%	58%	58%	50%	56%	60%	56%	56%
Knowledge of major Systems of governments	50%	50%	58%	40%	50%	50%	62%	40%	70%	66%	68%	40%
Ability to make sound Career decisions	72%	30%	62%	60%	70%	60%	68%	66%	76%	78%	78%	78%
Knowledge of the Labor-market	20%	52%	60%	60%	22%	54%	66%	64%	60%	68%	72%	74%
Employability skills	12%	50%	50%	68%	12%	50%	66%	74%	80%	70%	72%	82%

Other comments

UDW

- 68% of students felt that assessment should include guidance and planning where students should be guided in making decisions about their sociology degrees and careers.

-       12% claimed that assessment should include an oral as well since tests and exams only test memory.

UNIZUL

-       16% Basic issues should be included for each year.

UND

        None

UNP

        None

While content and subject knowledge is identified for all levels there is a significant increase for the inclusion of the following at third year:

●   Application of principles to a practical context;

●   Analysis of ideas and theories;

●   Logical thinking;

●   Ability to make sound career decisions;

●   Knowledge of the labor-market; and

●   Employability skills.

The market focus of assessment is not surprising given that students need some training and skills in preparing for a career. This becomes even more urgent in their final year.

5.3.6 *Resources*

68. **How would you rate the availability of the resources you may have needed for your course?**

5 – very good

4 – good

3 – average

2 – poor

1 – very poor

UDW

Table 5.72 : Availability of resources - UDW

	5	4	3	2	1	Total
Library books	6%	32%	46%	2%	14%	100%
Lab/Workshop facilities	-	-	2%	48%	50%	100%
Computer facilities	2%	8%	10%	26%	54%	100%
Suitable lecture venues	16%	14%	20%	26%	24%	100%
Appropriate learning materials	20%	18%	50%	6%	6%	100%

UNIZUL

Table 5.73 : Availability of resources - UNIZUL

	5	4	3	2	1	Total
Library books	66%	20%	12%	-	2%	100%
Lab/Workshop facilities	-	4%	12%	28%	56%	100%
Computer facilities	8%	10%	12%	26%	44%	100%
Suitable lecture venues	16%	26%	58%	-	-	100%
Appropriate learning materials	22%	40%	30%	8%	-	100%

UND

Table 5.74: Availability of resources - UND

	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Total**
Library books	36%	36%	20%	8%	-	100%
Lab/Workshop facilities	2%	2%	28%	40%	28%	100%
Computer facilities	10%	6%	62%	2%	20%	100%
Suitable lecture venues	38%	46%	14%	2%	-	100%
Appropriate learning materials	26%	42%	30%	2%	-	100%

UNP

Table 5.75: Availability of resources - UNP

	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Total**
Library books	30%	24%	34%	12%	-	100%
Lab/Workshop facilities	10%	4%	66%	12%	8%	100%
Computer facilities	18%	14%	56%	8%	4%	100%
Suitable lecture venues	44%	34%	18%	4%	-	100%
Appropriate learning materials	18%	48%	22%	-	2%	100%

In order for the curriculum to succeed, infra-structural support is essential. On the whole responses are positive but suitable lecture venues seem to be a problem at UDW and computer facilities seem to be a problem at UDW and UNIZUL. Both are historically black universities and a general lack of resources is a problem. Poor library facilities also appear to be a problem at UDW. The most important centre, the library, appears to be good for all except UDW.

69.   **Lectures were available outside class when you needed to see them**

Table 5.76 : Availability of lecturers

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	30%	30%	28%	46%	22%	32%	36%	52%	10%	40%	20%	62%
4	40%	54%	62%	30%	54%	60%	40%	34%	42%	54%	44%	28%
3	10%	6%	2%	16%	2%	4%	4%	6%	12%	-	2%	2%
2	16%	6%	-	6%	18%	4%	10%	6%	20%	4%	2%	6%
1	4%	4%	8%	2%	4%	-	10%	2%	16%	2%	32%	2%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

This is a contentious area but nonetheless lecturers need to avail themselves to students at odd hours. The figures indicate that this has happened within reasonable human limits. This is especially significant in the context of large numbers of underprepared students who require individual attention.

5.3.7. Vocational and social relevance

70.   **The content of the course has strong links with society**

Table 5.77 : Links with society

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	22%	38%	56%	46%	24%	38%	40%	28%	28%	28%	50%	60%
4	62%	62%	44%	36%	66%	62%	52%	62%	68%	72%	46%	36%
3	12%	-	-	12%	6%	-	6%	4%	-	-	4%	4%
2	2%	-	-	4%	2%	-	-	6%	2%	-	-	-
1	2%	-	-	2%	2%	-	2%	-	2%	-	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Sociology, by its very nature is rooted in social behaviour. Therefore, it is not surprising that the content has strong links with society. It is clear that the content deprives from a social reality that is in a state of continuous change. The discipline has to, therefore, adapt accordingly.

71. **The goals and objectives of sociology are consistent with the mission statement of the university**

Table 5.78 : Goals/objectives and the university mission statement

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
YES	64%	76%	48%	68%
NO	4%	2%	20%	-
UNCERTAIN	32%	22%	32%	32%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

For those students who are uncertain, they are not aware of the mission statement. A higher percentage for UND (20%) said no while the majority see a strong link between the goals and the mission statement.

72. **The course will prepare me for a career**

Table 5.79 : Preparation for a career

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	20%	26%	38%	34%	22%	26%	28%	16%	48%	48%	40%	54%
4	36%	28%	58%	22%	32%	34%	58%	48%	46%	40%	54%	32%
3	38%	34%	2%	36%	30%	28%	8%	28%	4%	6%	4%	12%
2	6%	6%	-	-	16%	6%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
1	-	6%	2%	8%	-	6%	4%	6%	-	4%	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The course seems to have proceeded in a manner where students feel confident that it will prepare them for a career. While sociology is not specifically geared to a particular profession it appears to have vocational relevance. Furthermore, the positive response reflects that students see a great economic value in the discipline. This provides a vocational justification for teaching the discipline.

5.3.8 *Quality assurance*

73. **Please indicate your overall view of the quality of the course in each year of study**

5 – very high

4 – high

3 – average

2 – low

1 – very low

Table 5.80 : Overall quality of the course

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	8%	10%	46%	36%	10%	26%	34%	4%	14%	2%	38%	50%
4	58%	60%	54%	40%	50%	66%	50%	74%	58%	56%	38%	48%
3	28%	30%	-	24%	36%	8%	12%	22%	28%	20%	20%	2%
2	6%	-	-	-	4%	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4%	-	-	-	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Quality assurance is going to play an increasingly important role in the future of higher education. The auditing of courses and departments will point towards the quality of courses. For all three levels at all four institutions the quality of the course is significantly high. This is especially significant in the current calls for accountability and student rating is an important dimension of this process.

74. <u>Which unit/subject do you regard as having been the most significant in each</u>

<u>year of study</u>

UDW

<u>Table 5.81 : Significance of unit/subject - UDW</u>

UNIT/SUBJECT	SOCIOLOGY I	SOCIOLOGY II	SOCIOLOGY III
Sociology of education	-	42%	58%
Labor and development			66%
Gender and citizenship			18%
Democracy and transformation		14%	
Theories	62%	66%	40%
Current issues	66%	40%	60%
Research methods	-	-	78%
Industrial sociology			70%
All	2%	2%	2%
Health and development			66%

UNIZUL

<u>Table 5.82 : Significance of unit/subject - UNIZUL</u>

UNIT/SUBJECT	SOCIOLOGY I	SOCIOLOGY II	SOCIOLOGY III
Social theories	40%	40%	66%
Democracy	28%	-	-
Urban sociology	-	6%	-
Rural sociology	-	16%	-
Social research methods	-	-	72%
Policing and ordering	-	-	66%
Crime and deviance	16%	26%	66%

UND

Table 5.83 : Significance of unit/subject - UND

UNIT/SUBJECT	SOCIOLOGY I	SOCIOLOGY II	SOCIOLOGY III
Introduction to sociology	68%	-	-
Rural sociology	-	60%	-
Political sociology	-	-	64%
Social research methods	84%	86%	42%
Urban sociology	-	62%	
Media sociology			52%
Theories	60%	66%	62%
Sociology of health	-	-	62%
Sociology of deviance	-	-	64%
South Africa in transition	-	-	66%

UNP

Table 5.84 : Significance of unit/subject - UNP

UNIT/SUBJECT	SOCIOLOGY I	SOCIOLOGY II	SOCIOLOGY III
Introduction to sociology	62%	-	-
Social structure, social change and South African society			
Gender studies	65%	-	-
The sociological tradition: Theories	62%	-	78%
Sociology of development in South Africa		68%	
Practical course in research Method		62%	
Social and economic issues in third world development			70%
Sociology of rural South Africa			60%
Cultural, communication and Development			62%

The significance of this question lies in its ability to expose and highlight those areas of the curriculum that are significant and relevant in terms of student experience. It also indicates the relevance of content and the merit of its existence. It reflects student sentiment plus academic worth. There is always a tension and struggle in deciding what to include in the

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curriculum and the levels at which these should be included. The following responses should act as a useful guide on the pertinent aspects of the curriculum. The following is only student's response on content and should ideally be combined with the views of other relevant stakeholders – academics, industry and educationists.

For all four universities, research methods seem to play a useful theoretical and practical role within the context of the discipline plus the academic needs of students. It would appear that there is a strong link between theory and practice. This is reflected in the high value placed on theory at all four institutions. It seems that theory informs research and that this sequence and combination be strengthened and enhanced within the undergraduate curriculum.

Aside from the central/crucial role played by theory and research, industrial and economic issues in third world development all point to the strong industrial and labor focus within sociology.

At the first level, the following are strongly favored by students. These include theories, current issues, contemporary South African society and introduction to sociology. It seems as if theory forms the basis upon which students base their understanding of South African society and contemporary issues. Furthermore, theory is seen to occupy a central role from first to third year. This suggests that it needs to be retained within the core curriculum.

At first year, students seem to find the following modules relevant – theory, research, introduction to sociology and contemporary South African society. This is not surprising

since they combine together to inform the core sociology curriculum. For UNP gender studies at first year is important and democracy at UNIZUL. At third year, a variety of courses are offered (except at UNIZUL).

58% at UDW see sociology of education as relevant, 66% for labor and development, 70% for industrial sociology and 66% for health and development. At UNIZUL policing and ordering (66%) and crime and deviance (66%) are popular third year courses. These are compulsory since students do not have a choice of modules. UND has a wider choice of modules at third year. Political sociology, media sociology, sociology of health, sociology of deviance and South Africa in transition are highly rated. It would appear that contemporary issues play a political role in the curriculum. UNP also has a wider choice of modules thereby offering students a wider choice. Those rated as the most relevant are gender studies (78%) social and economic issues in third world development (66%) sociology of rural South Africa (62%) and culture, communication and development (62%). Again, current issues that have a direct bearing on society are seen as relevant and significant.

75. <u>Which subject/unit do you regard as having been the least significant in each</u>

<u>year of study?</u>

UDW

Table 5.85 : Insignificance of unit/subject - UDW

UNIT/SUBJECT	SOCIOLOGY I	SOCIOLOGY II	SOCIOLOGY III
Theories	6%	6%	2%
Research	-	-	2%
South African society	2%	-	-
Labor and development	-	-	2%
Feminism	2%	2%	2%

UNIZUL

Table 5.86 : Insignificance of unit/subject - UNIZUL

UNIT/SUBJECT	SOCIOLOGY I	SOCIOLOGY II	SOCIOLOGY III
Sociology of everyday Life	2%	-	-
Poverty	-	4%	-
Education	-	-	2%
Feminism	-	-	2%
Policing	-	-	2%
Theories	-	2%	-
None	2%	2%	2%

UND

Table 5.87 : Insignificance of unit/subject - UND

UNIT/SUBJECT	SOCIOLOGY I	SOCIOLOGY II	SOCIOLOGY III
Marx's theory	6%	8%	12%
Gender inequality	2%	10%	4%
Theories	2%	2%	2%
Suicide	-	2%	-
Functionalism	2%	2%	2%
Crime	2%	-	-
Racism	-	-	2%
Social exchange	-	-	2%

UNP

Table 5.88 : Insignificance of unit/subject - UNP

UNIT/SUBJECT	SOCIOLOGY I	SOCIOLOGY II	SOCIOLOGY III
None	20%	26%	52%
Introduction to sociology	2%		
Social structure, social charge and South African society	2%		
The sociological tradition		2%	
Practical course in research Methods			2%

The above figures are so insignificant that it does not warrant any discussion except to say

that the undergraduate curriculum is of a significantly high standard.

76.   Staff were well qualified and equipped to teach the course

Table 5.89 : Competence of staff

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5	42%	22%	36%	26%	38%	30%	28%	18%	52%	42%	54%	32%
4	36%	76%	60%	64%	52%	68%	66%	64%	46%	58%	36%	64%
3	22%	2%	2%	10%	10%	2%	6%	16%	2%	-	6%	4%
2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-	-	2%	-
1	-	-	2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Recent developments in higher education point to the need for some form of staff

development. This is largely driven by a need for relevance and quality teaching. The

figures indicate that staff were rated quite highly by students at all three levels for all four

universities. This is a significant development in the light of current concerns within higher

education and need to be compared to the views of staff members.

77. **Please state the two main sources of difficulty you encountered in pursuing sociology**

UDW

-   54% complained about being lectured by unqualified lecturers at third year level.

-   68% claimed that they experienced difficulties in lecture halls in their first year.

-   64% claimed that in their first year they did not really understand what they were doing.

-   60% experienced difficulty in understanding the content of the second year course.

-   60% experienced difficulty in taking notes in lectures. They felt the overhead projector useful in facilitating note-taking.

-   64% experienced difficulties in reading and summarizing.

-   62% felt it difficult to understand theory and apply it in a practical context.

-   60% felt that a lack of tutorials in second year added to their difficulties.

-   62% felt that there were too many issues and questions to deal with in a short period of time.

-   50% experienced difficulty in expressing their ideas in written form.

-   50% experienced difficulty in obtaining additional readings.

-   40% could not afford the course pack.

-   50% complained about late lectures.

-   52% complained of scripts being marked by tutors.

-   50% felt the lecturer lectured too fast.

-   2% experienced no difficulty.

UNIZUL

- 66% experienced difficulty in applying concepts and theories to society.

- 60% complained about the volume of work.

- 60% complained about the pace (too fast) of lectures.

- 50% were unable to contrast different theories.

- 66% complained about understanding the content of theories.

- 60% complained that there was a lack of library resources.

- 40% felt that reading material was out of date.

- 40% were unhappy with the way in which material in the library was vandalised.

- 10% were of the opinion that the third year course (research) was restrictive and did not allow innovation.

- 50% claimed that they were unable to interpret the knowledge of the discipline.

- 40% said that the test duration was too short since they need time to organize their ideas and write it down.

- 36% were dissatisfied with the weekly submission of essays since it takes time to write a well organized and structured essay.

- 20% said that while the course can identify problems it does not give solutions.

- 10% explained that the level three course is too expensive.

- 10% experienced difficulty in understanding political issues, democracy, poverty and concepts in research.

- 2% experienced no difficulty.

UND

- 10% said no problems were experienced in the course.

- 62% experienced understanding every author in course one (theories).

- 46% experienced difficulty with the content of course one.

- 66% experienced difficulty with the reading material, interpretation and summarizing.

- 64% felt they could not apply theory to the South African situation.

- 60% experienced problems with English as a second language.

- 60% disliked research statistics.

- 58% claimed that problems arose because different lecturers taught at course two and one person marked the exam paper.

- 58% complained about extra assignments in course three (too many).

- 70% felt the workload too heavy at level three.

- 58% felt the need for more time.

- 30% claimed that they did not get enough attention.

- 10% felt poverty was not explored thoroughly.

- 10% felt material at third year level was poorly limited.

- 2% claimed that there was not enough work in course two.

UNP

Percentage   Source of difficulty

- 60% Experienced no difficulty.

- 60% Understanding theories at first year.

- 66% Writing assignments at first year.

- 68% Workload was too heavy.

- 72% Felt reading materials were too difficult.

- 60% Complained of the requirements for exams, essays, assignments.

- 70% Said there were too many readings.

- 68% Experienced difficulty in accessing library material.

- 20% Felt lecturers did not explain clearly.

- 66% Complained of lack of facilities.

- 60% Experienced problems of adapting to university in first year.

- 36% Said taking notes in lectures were a problem.

- 36% Were getting confused between the psychological and sociological perspectives.

- 40% Experienced difficulty in remembering concepts and theories.

- 58% Felt understanding conflicting issues by critical thinkers was difficult.

- 60% Felt there were too many essays.

- 36% Said some lecturers lacked lecturing skills.

This is by far the most important question since it attempts to identify specific sources of difficulty. The quantitative aspect of the questionnaire, while useful, was limited in its ability to highlight areas of weakness and student concern. Furthermore, this question identifies specific problem areas that impact on meaningful student learning. The common areas of concern can be grouped according to the following categories.

(i)   *First entry students:* Immense difficulties were experienced at first year. These include large impersonal lectures, large student numbers, not knowing what to do, taking notes in lectures, reading and summarizing, content overload, expressing ideas both verbally and in a written form, affordability of course material, speed of lecturing, being taught in a second language (English), not enough individual attention, poor lecturing skills and writing assignments.

The above difficulties are common across all institutions. They have been acknowledged, at varying levels, by different stakeholders as a priority area in educational development. These problems also cut across all faculties and departments and are not specific to sociology. It is generally accepted that first entry students experience enormous pressure at university.

(ii) *Understanding, interpreting and applying theory:* The understanding of theory seems to be a difficult area for many students. The problem seems to occur in a sequence of understanding, interpreting and applying theory to a practical context. Sociological theory requires a great deal of thought, in-depth analysis and synthesis. This problem is compounded by the language barrier and the degree of conceptual underpreparedness. Furthermore, students are unsure of a particular approach to understanding theory. There is also a problem with regard to contrasting different theories.

(iii) *Library:* The library is by far the most important resource for the students. Students indicated the high level of frustration in accessing reading material, lack of resources, library vandalism, out-of-date material, poor facilities and lack of facilities.

(iv) *Reading:* The concern for reading revolves around areas such as volume, level of difficulty, obtaining additional readings, many readings, interpreting and

summarizing. This is by far the most serious concern since subject matter is based purely on reading.

(v) ___Style of lecturing:___ Since the lecture is the primary and predominant means of conveying information it received the most criticism. Specific problems experienced were lecturer was too fast, being taught by one lecturer and assessed by another, lecturers not explaining concepts clearly, poor lecturing skills and unqualified lecturers at senior level.

(vi) ___Workload:___ A heavy workload was experienced at the level of assignments, readings, volume of work, many issues to be covered over a short period of time, lack of time for preparation (assignments and tests) and time required for reading.

(vii) ___Logistical:___ Student complaint about late lectures needs to be viewed against students travelling long distances from home to campus. This is a common problem since many students live away from the main campus. Travelling in the late hours is especially dangerous for female students. A safe learning environment is always conducive to meaningful and successful learning.

(viii) ___Other:___ While these problems appear on a minor scale, they are areas of extreme concern. The reason for this is that if they are addressed (dealt with) early on it can be alleviated/eliminated. Often these problems seem minor and generally ignored. But they have the potential to manifest in a disruptive way. When this happens the

entire undergraduate programme is affected negatively. These minor problem areas are:

*   lack of tutorials in second year;

*   exam/tests/assignments being marked by tutors;

*   monitoring the course;

*   lack of choice in modules;

*   inability of course to offer solutions;

*   dealing with issues superficially and

*   content underload.

78.   **How worthwhile was this course in comparison to other courses at the university?**

Table 5.90 : Comparative worth of course

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5 – Very worthwhile	28%	28%	36%	48%
4 – Just worthwhile	70%	66%	60%	36%
3 – Uncertain	-	2%	4%	16%
2 – Useless	2%	2%	-	-
1 – Very useless	-	2%	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Except for an insignificant number that have a negative view of the course, most compare it to other courses and find it worthwhile. This is a positive signal indicating that the course plays a positive role in the lives of students. It is clear that the discipline, sociology, has sustained and fulfilled not only academic demands but social and personal ones as well.

79. **In general the course was valuable to me**

Table 5.91 : General value of the course

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5 – Strongly agree	28%	30%	26%	24%
4 – Agree	70%	66%	68%	70%
3 – Uncertain		2%	6%	4%
2 – Disagree	2%	2%	-	2%
1 – Strongly disagree	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

These figures support the previous responses which indicate, in most instances, the positive role played by this course in the academic and social lives of students. Furthermore, it has played a developmental role necessary for providing an all round education.

80. **The moment the sociology course is made up of a number of compulsory and elective units. Please indicate which (if any) of the units should remain compulsory**

UDW

Percentage		**Unit**
88%	-	Research methods
80%	-	Industrial sociology
76%	-	Education and development
72%	-	Gender and development
72%	-	Theory
70%	-	Current issues

UNIZUL

86%	-	Research methods
84%	-	Crime and deviance
72%	-	All core theories
70%	-	Urban and rural sociology
20%	-	Political sociology
18%	-	Sociology of education
18%	-	Sociology of medicine
10%	-	Sociology of housing

UND

86%	-	The sociology of development
86%	-	Research methods
82%	-	Theory
80%	-	Statistics
64%	-	Women's studies
60%	-	Political sociology
66%	-	South Africa in transition

UNP

86%	-	All modules
80%	-	Introduction to sociology
60%	-	Social structure, social change and South African society
76%	-	Sociology of development in South Africa

88%   -   The sociological tradition

88%   -   Practical course in research methods

90%   -   Social and economic issues in third world development

2%   -   Social studies in conservation

86%   -   Sociology of rural South Africa

90%   -   Gender studies

86%   -   Culture, communication and development

These figures support those in question 74. There is a strong correlation between the significant subjects/units/courses and those that should be compulsory. Among the common compulsory units for the four institutions the following have been identified:

*   Research methods

*   Theory

*   Introductory module

*   Industrial sociology

*   Gender studies

*   Contemporary development

In addition to this, current issues and education development have been identified for UDW; crime and deviance, medicine and housing for UNIZUL; statistics, political sociology and South Africa in transition for UND and social/economic issues in third world development and culture, communication and development for UNP. These indications are useful in guiding the construction of the undergraduate curriculum on an institutional and regional basis.

81.   Other comments

UDW

-    66% felt that every script should have a grade plus detailed comments.

-    68% claimed that the course was interesting and challenging

-    60% felt that job opportunities in relation to sociology should be made clear at the beginning.

-    60% felt more debates and public seminars be held.

-    54% felt that reading material should be available all the time.

-    40% were of the view that it should be updated every year.

-    42% felt that more developmental and supplemental work be done in the first year.

-    58% claimed that studying sociology has been an eye-opener. It has fostered critical skills in them.

-    42% suggested that the labor section be taught from first year.

-    30% were satisfied that it linked with other courses.

-    32% suggested that the department open its own resource centre because the library is poorly equipped.

-    20% were unhappy about choosing modules based on lecturer availability.

UNIZUL

-    80% felt that studying sociology gave a better understanding of society, cultures and human interaction.

-    40% felt that because it is people oriented it fits well with studies in social work, education and law.

-    40% saw the need to focus less on theories.

-       30% suggested a need for a better library.

-       28% claimed that it is too theoretical and based on imagination.

-       28% are of the opinion that it bears no relevance on social issues.

UND

-       60% claimed that majoring in sociology would not prepare them for a job.

-       60% felt that studying sociology increased their understanding of society, crime and
        social problems.

-       58% were pleased that they major will help in their social work profession.

-       56% felt the need for integration between social science subjects.

-       50% suggested including a computer literacy component in the course.

-       56% felt the need to reduce the number of theories studied, especially at third year
        level, and to focus more on practical issues.

-       46% were pleased with the teaching at third year level since they were allowed to
        consult.

-       10% suggested restructuring the course so that the South African situation is
        contextualized.

-       10% said that research statistics should begin at first year.

-       10% suggested that videos should be used as a teaching medium in first year.

UNP

-       28% Felt tutorials should be compulsory.

-       36% Said tutorials should be part of assessment.

-       46% Suggested more projects and practicals from first year.

- 66% Claimed level three was exciting, interesting and challenging.

- 20% Were of the opinion that sociology should be taught in schools so the gap can be closed.

- 36% Complained of student apathy and unwillingness to engage in discussion.

- 36% Felt sociology prepares one for areas such as government, politics, social work and research

- 10% Felt males should be encouraged to take gender studies.

- 16% Would like to introduce statistics as a course.

These comments cover those areas that have been overlooked. Only comments and responses that have not been mentioned will be discussed. The following have been identified as significant areas of development.

(i) *Assessment:* Students felt that there was a need for more detailed assessment that would be carried out on a continuous basis. Consultation could be used as part of the assessment process.

(ii) *Career opportunities:* These were concerns regarding the availability of jobs with sociology as a major. This is a natural concern since students are in their final year of study and are in the process of searching for employment. Students felt that they should have been guided from the beginning about career opportunities and sociology.

(iii)   *Supplemental instruction:*   In the context of educational underpreparedness, tutorials, seminars and debates are seen to play a supportive role in student academic development.   Suggestions made are useful and include increasing tutorials at first year and making it compulsory, using tutorials for assessment, extra projects and practicals, and extending tutorials to the third year.

(iv)   *Integration between social science subjects:*   Many students have taken sociology in conjunction with other professionally related courses like social work, law and education.   There is a suggestion to integrate common areas among the different courses in the humanities.   There is also the view that courses should be updated every year.

(v)   *Resource centre:*   There were concerns regarding the poorly equipped and often vandalized libraries.   One suggestion was for the department to have its own resource centre.

(vi)   *Allied courses:*   Students see the need for allied courses such as statistics and computer literacy.   These are essential for facilitating and enhancing student engagement with the practical and technical aspects of the course.   Furthermore, it allows students to prepare for the career world of computer technology.

5.4   *A quantitative/qualitative analysis of staff response*

The following analysis examines the curriculum from the moment of inception to the moment of implementation.   It is a crucial analysis since it is based on the views of those

who are directly involved in teaching it. The responses, therefore, are invaluable and provide a deep insight into the dynamics of the sociology undergraduate curriculum. It is a comprehensive analysis that incorporates all aspects of the undergraduate curriculum from course objectives, staffing, course design, continuity, relevance, focus, coherence, assessment and quality assurance.

The result serve to corroborate the views of students and should be read in conjunction with the above analysis (5.3). It should be noted that UND and UNP offer modules whereas UNIZUL offers a one year compulsory (at all levels) course. At UNIZUL there is no choice of courses and students are expected to progress from level one to the next without much space for failure. UDW is in the process of implementing the modular degree system. Presently, only the first year course is modularized. By 1999, the second year course will be modularized and by 2000 the third year course will be modularized.

SECTION A

5.4.1 Course/staff profile

UDW

Table 5.92 : Course profile - UDW

1. Name of Section/Unit	Duration	Semester Offered	Student Enrolment	Credits
Level one South African Society (History) Soc 101-T	1 term	1st	635	3
South African Society (Current issues) Soc 103-T	1 term	1st		3
Social Theory (Classical) Soc 102-T	1 term	2nd		3
Development issues (Mainstream) Soc 104-T	1 term	2nd		3
Sociology II Contemporary social theory Alternative approaches to Development Health and development Gender and development Labor and development Social problems and Development Education and development Race, Ethnicity and Development	1 term 1 term 1 term 1 term	year course	640	
Sociology III Research methods Education and development Gender and development Health and development Labor and development Race, Ethnicity and Development Social problems and Development	1/3 1/3 1/3	year course	300	

UNIZUL

Table 5.93 : Course profile - UNIZUL

1. Name of Section/Unit	Duration	Semester Offered	Student Enrolment	Credits
Sociology I				
ASY 115 Introduction to sociology	1 semester	1st	600	
ASY 125 Different theoretical schools of sociology	1 semester	2nd	600	
Sociology II				
ASY 215 History of sociological Thought	1 semester	1st	600	
ASY 225 The French Revolution	1 semester	2nd	600	
Sociology III				
ASY 315 Research methodology	1 semester	1st	280	
ASY 325 Contemporary sociology Theory	1 semester	2nd	280	

UND

<u>Table 5.94 : Course profile - UND</u>

1. Name of Section/Unit	Duration	Semester Offered	Student Enrolment	Credits
<u>Sociology I</u>	Weeks			
DIDS1 IS1 Individual, Society and	12 x 2	1st	600	
State + RMSS	12 x 2	1st	200	
DSOC 1SY2 – Sociology 1B Introduction to sociology	12 x 2	2nd		
<u>Sociology II</u>				
DSOC 2SY1 – Sociology 2A Classical sociological Theory and social Stratification	12 x 4		250	
DSOC 2SY2 – Sociology 2B The sociology of development	12 x 4		250	
<u>Sociology III</u>				
DSOC 3SY1 – Sociology 3A Contemporary sociological Theory and research Methodology	12 x 4		200	
DSOC 3SY2 – Sociology 3B Research methodology and Special sociological fields	12 x 12 x 4		200	

Other Comments:

ISS and RMSS have extra tutoring – in general this is key in developmental. Also in 1B +

3A and 3B etc.

UNP

Table 5.95 : Course profile - UNP

1. Name of Section/Unit	Duration	Semester Offered	Student Enrolment	Credits
Soc 100				
Sociology 110 Introduction to sociology	39	1	175	4
Sociology 120 Social structure, social change and South African society	39	2	175	4
Soc 200				
Sociology 221 Sociology of development in South Africa	39	1	140	4
Sociology 210 The sociological tradition	39	2	140	4
Soc 300				
Sociology 310 Practical course in research Methods	26	1	100	4
Sociology 322 Social and economic issues in Third world development	26	1	70	4
Sociology 330 Sociology of rural South Africa	26	2	80	4
Sociology 390 Gender studies	26	2	80	4
Sociology 371 Culture, communication and Development	26	2	50	4

For level one, the common units for all four universities are Introduction to sociology and social theory. A well developed introductory module seems to form the core of the first

year course. This is logical given that students are studying sociology for the first time and hence require conceptual development in the discipline. Furthermore, a study of South African society at UDW, UND and UNP suggest that links are made between the discipline and contemporary South African society. This is significant in the light of linking theory to practice. Theory, an important and abstract component of the discipline is introduced at UNIZUL and partly at UND and UNP. While the student enrolment is high and similar for UDW, UNIZUL and UND, it is much lower at UNP. The possible reasons could be that UDW and UND are urban centres that are accessible in terms of accommodation and centrality. UNIZUL is an HBU and caters mainly for historically disadvantages students. The credits for each unit at all four institutions are equivalent.

At the second level, theory plays a central role at all four universities. This is a logical development and builds on the foundation of the first level. Alongside theory are issues of development. Strangely though, UNIZUL gives a full semester to the study of the French Revolution. Among development issues UDW focuses on health, gender, labor, social problems, education, race and ethnicity. UND looks at the sociology of development and UNP at the sociology of development in South Africa. The credits are equivalent with UDW having a higher student enrolment and UNP the lowest.

The third level basically concludes the first and second by introducing the most important aspect of any course in the humanities, namely, research methods. This is common for all four universities. In addition to research methodology is a course on more advanced theory. Thus far the courses appear to be logically sequenced from first year to third year. Furthermore, this logic is extended to the variety of modules offered in related fields at

UDW, UND, UNP. These are normally referred to as specialist fields. They are rich and diverse and complete the discipline in a natural and organic way paving the path to post-graduate studies. However, UNIZUL, because of the degree structure, does not offer a variety of courses. Students are deprived of a choice. This can become problematic since students can be given a blinkered view of society. This points to the need for UNIZUL to review its sociology curriculum. Again student numbers are highest for UND and UDW. The credit points are equivalent and appear to be evenly weighted.

2. Number of lecturers involved in teaching

Table 5.96 : Number of lecturers

UDW		UNIZUL		UND		UNP	
YEAR	NUMBER	YEAR	NUMBER	YEAR	NUMBER	YEAR	NUMBER
First	4	First	3	First	3	First	6
Second	4	Second	1	Second	3	Second	4
Third	2	Third	2	Third	4	Third	6
TOTAL	10		6		10		16

The staff student ratio is a major factor in influencing meaningful interaction and learning with students. While UDW and UND have more students, UNP has far more teaching staff. There are obvious disparities that need to be addressed at both national and institutional level for any meaningful changes at a faculty and departmental level. Given this shortage of teaching staff, academics are under enormous pressure which affects morale and influences research capacity. It also affects quality time that lecturers can have with students. Morale could be low.

3. **Indicate the following for each member of staff involved in the teaching of the programme. Refer to the staff member as 1, 2, 3... Do not mention the staff member's name**

UDW

Table 5.97 : Staff qualification and experience - UDW

Staff member	Qualifications	Experience	Teaching Qualification
1	MA	7	HED
2	D Phil	14	
3	Drs	6	
4	BA	3	PTC
5	D Phil	18	DTE
6	D Phil/BEd	27	HPTC

UNIZUL

Table 5.98 : Staff qualification and experience - UNIZUL

Staff member	Qualifications	Experience	Teaching Qualification
1	D Phil	11 years	
2	Hons, M.Diploma	10 years	
3	Honors	4 years	

UND

Table 5.99 : Staff qualification and experience - UND

Staff member	Qualifications	Experience	Teaching Qualification
1	PhD		
2	PhD		
3	MA		
4	MA		
5	MSoc.Sc		
6	MA		
7	MSoc.Sc		
8	MA		
9	BSoc.Sc (Hons)		AD interests

UNP

Table 5.100 : Staff qualification and experience - UND

Staff member	Qualifications	Experience	Teaching Qualification
1	M.Soc.Sc	20 years	N/A
2	B.Soc.Sc Hons	10 years	N/A
3	M.Soc.Sc	5 years	N/A
4	BA Hons	2 years	N/A
5	BA Hons	2 years	N/A
6	BA Hons	6 years	N/A
7	BA Hons	2 years	N/A

The credibility of the departments rests largely on the qualifications plus experience (teaching) of the academic staff. The Phd appears to be the highest qualification and the honors the lowest. In addition to qualifications teaching experience plays a very important role and except for UND (figures not provided), there seems to be an abundance of teaching experience. This increases with qualifications. Together with experience and academic qualification are teaching qualifications which have a bearing on the quality of teaching. For the exception of UDW, none of the others possess a teaching qualification. At UND, one person has AD interests. This is significant in the context of underprepared students. It is important to note that this teaching qualification is a secondary school one, and departs radically, at some levels, from the demands of the university. There are, therefore, many teaching qualifications within the context of higher education that are offered by various institutions. These need to be included as part of the training and re-training of academic staff.

SECTION B

5.4.2   Constructing the curriculum

4.   Which of the following people were involved in the construction of the course?

Explain their role.

UDW

Table 5.101 : Who constructed the course? - UDW

Person	Tick (✓)	Role
Employer/industry		
Lecturer	✓	Selecting material
Student/learner		
Subject specialists	✓	Objectives, aims, relevance
Educational specialists		
Curriculum specialists		
AD Personnel		
Language specialists		
Other (Please specify)		

UNIZUL

Table 5.102 : Who constructed the course? - UNIZUL

Person	Tick (✓)	Role
Employer/industry	✓	
Lecturer		
Student/learner		
Subject specialists	✓	
Educational specialists		
Curriculum specialists		
AD Personnel		
Language specialists		
Other (Please specify)		

UND

<u>Table 5.103 : Who constructed the course? - UND</u>

Person	Tick (✓)	Role
Employer/industry		
Lecturer	✓	Everything
Student/learner		
Subject specialists	✓	
Educational specialists		
Curriculum specialists		
AD Personnel		
Language specialists		
Other (Please specify)		

UNP

<u>Table 5.104 : Who constructed the course? - UNP</u>

Person	Tick (✓)	Role
Employer/industry		
Lecturer	✓	Content
Student/learner	✓	Feedback (yearly)
Subject specialists		
Educational specialists		
Curriculum specialists	✓	Delivery design
AD Personnel		
Language specialists		
Other (Please specify)		

The obvious person involved in constructing the course is the lecturer. But in addition to the lecture are subject specialists who are familiar with content, objectives, aims and course material. UNP includes both students and curriculum design. This is a positive move given the many changes in the student population and new teaching technologies. However, in the light of the diverse needs of the current student population it would be useful to include AD personnel (as in UND) and language specialists in designing the curriculum.

5. **Identify which of the following people should ideally be involved in constructing the course**

UDW

Table 5.105 : Who should construct the course? - UDW

Person	Tick (✓)	Reason
Employer/industry		
Lecturer	✓	
Student/learner	✓	
Subject specialists	✓	
Educational specialists		
Curriculum specialists		
AD Personnel		
Language specialists		
Other (Please specify)		

UNIZUL

Table 5.106 : Who should construct the course? - UNIZUL

Person	Tick (✓)	Reason
Employer/industry	✓	
Lecturer	✓	
Student/learner		
Subject specialists	✓	
Educational specialists	✓	
Curriculum specialists		
AD Personnel	✓	
Language specialists		
Other (Please specify)		

UND

Table 5.107 : Who should construct the course? - UND

Person	Tick (✓)	Reason
Employer/industry		
Lecturer	✓	know subject-matter
Student/learner		
Subject specialists		
Educational specialists		
Curriculum specialists		
AD Personnel	✓	But only if they have subject matter competence
Language specialists		
Other (Please specify)		

UNP

Table 5.108 : Who should construct the course? - UNP

Person	Tick (✓)	Reason
Employer/industry		
Lecturer	✓	
Student/learner	✓	
Subject specialists		
Educational specialists		
Curriculum specialists	✓	
AD Personnel		
Language specialists		
Other (Please specify)		

The current trend in higher education is for team work in constructing the curriculum. The team work is normally comprised of a number of different experts who bring to the design of the curriculum their varying and different skills. To this end, curriculum specialists, educational experts and students are brought together to decide on the curriculum. There is unanimous agreement on the need to bring a range of skills to bear on the curriculum. However, it is surprising to note that while the language barrier is a problem at most universities, language specialists do not seem to be viewed as being able to contribute to the

design of the curriculum. AD personnel appear to be of benefit but this requires knowledge of subject matter.

6.   What was the starting point in constructing the course?

Table 5.109 : Starting point

STARTING POINT	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Subject matter	✓	✓	✓	1
Student needs	✓			2
Market needs	✓			
Discipline needs	✓	✓	✓	3
All of the above		✓		
None of the above				
A combination (Please specify)				
Other (Please specify)				

The need for a reference point in constructing a curriculum is essential for guided planning. Often difficulties are encountered in deciding what to teach, where to begin from and how to teach. Subject matter and the needs of the discipline often provide the initial basis. Figures suggest that this has been the case for all four universities. However, given the changes in higher education factors such as student diversity and market needs need to be accommodated for in designing a course. This has been the case for UDW. Indications are that most universities are moving towards programme based learning. This development requires an in-depth integration of the above factors in the design and construction of a curriculum.

7.   How long did it take to design the course?

Table 5.110 : Duration

DURATION	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Less than 3 months	✓	✓		
Between 3-6 months				
Between 6-9 months				
Between 9-12 months				
Between 12-15 months				
Between 15-18 months				✓
Other			ongoing	

The normal time it takes to put together a course is 18 months. This has been the case for UNP while UDW and UNIZUL takes between 3-6 months. UND indicates course design as an ongoing process. This is in keeping with the rapid changes within higher education and the restructuring of curricular. This is significant in the light of updating and reviewing curricular. Ideally this should be the case. Furthermore, the discipline is such that its core ideas are challenged regularly. This calls for new interpretations and new courses that address current social reality. Moreover, there are overlaps with other disciplines. This requires additional research and updating. Given the diverse needs of students, attention has to be given to incorporating various skills into the course.

8.   Was there a particular approach in constructing the course?

Table 5.111 : Approach to construction

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓		✓
No				
Uncertain			✓	

231

Explain further

UDW: Relevance, needs, context, marketability, knowledge and its influence on the course.

UNIZUL: Other departments of sociology were targeted to see what their course consisted of. These were compared and the best was selected within the limits placed on the subject matter by the dictum of the head of department and calendar.

UND: Strong focus on skills development. For example, tutorial exercises. Interest in using a theme to link course content.

UNP: New curriculum development thinking and changing student population.

The significance of this question is its ability to highlight an approach to constructing a course. Different departments across the country do not necessarily teach the same thing. But UNIZUL took this as a starting point in deciding their course which was eventually built and modified. In any case, this could have been the norm in the early stages of most departments. As expertise and experience develops there is greater confidence in deciding an approach independently. The common approaches identified are based on relevance, needs, marketability, knowledge, skills development, thematic linking, tutorials, changing student population and new curriculum development thinking.

9. **What were the three most important factors taken into account when constructing the course?**

UDW

(i)   Students

(ii)   Relevance of course in practice

(iii) Lecturers and other resources

UNIZUL

(i)   How to introduce the students to contemporary theories and issues – How to make it interesting?

(ii)   How to teach students to utilize theories as explanations of modern social life.

(iii) To ensure that students could read, comprehend, and apply knowledge.

UND

(i)   Student skill development.

(ii)   Introduction to sociology concepts.

(iii) Theme linkage – "food"

UNP

(i)   Changing student population and changing different approach to the subject.

(ii)   Reflect changing ideas in subject matter.

(iii) –

The need for systematic guidance is essential for ensuring that the curriculum reflects the most important factors. These include student/subject needs, available resources, teaching methodologies, skills, conceptual development, thematic linkage and the language of discourse. For the curriculum to have any significance or promote meaningful learning, it is essential to recognize and incorporate those factors that support and promote meaningful learning. While student needs have been acknowledged and the appropriate teaching methodologies identified, they can only succeed with the necessary infrastructural support. This is defined as available resources and is seen as an important determinant in constructing the course.

10. **In your opinion, are lecturers adequately equipped in constructing a course?**

Table 5.112 : Lecturer competence in constructing a course

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓			✓
No		✓		
Uncertain			✓	

Explain further

UDW: Proven expertise.

UNIZUL: Assistance needed especially in work related information, meeting needs of lecturers, employer and students.

UND: Depends – some very much, others are used to team work and "goal-oriented" teaching.

UNP: First year co-ordinator trains the lecturer, feedback from evaluation, etc.

The number of diplomas and degrees currently offered to train lecturers to teach in higher education clearly indicate that lecturers require additional expertise and skill in all aspects of lecturing including constructing a course. UNIZUL and UND do not say yes, suggesting the need for additional help. It would appear, that in addition to subject-knowledge lecturers need to acquire a higher educational background in teaching and learning.

11.   How important is it for lecturers to have a background knowledge in educational theories of teaching and learning when designing a course?

Table 5.113 : Background knowledge in educational theories

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5 – Very important				
4 – Important	✓	✓	✓	✓
3 – Uncertain				
2 – Unimportant				
1 – Not at all important				

This question links up with the previous one. There is growing consensus that given the many challenges in higher education, namely, student diversity, lecturers need to train and retrain themselves in aspects of teaching, learning, assessment and course evaluation. Within higher education, there is distinct difference between the way adults learn (andragogics) and the way adolescents learn (pedagogics). This needs to be understood and accounted for in the curriculum since andragogics is common in higher education. Figures indicate that all four universities share a common view that is important for lecturers to

have a background knowledge in educational theories of teaching and learning when designing a course.

12. **Explain the process of deciding who teaches what in the course?**

UDW: Mainly specialization and need.

UNIZUL: Haphazard- lecturer that teaches everything except one theory which is covered by lecturer two as he admires/prefers/enjoys this theorists work.

UND: - Person is not already overworked – refer fairness of teaching load.

- Person is compatible with others in team and or in working in team format.

- Some interest in course/subject matter.

Organization and planning are essential for ensuring systematic teaching. The process of resolving who teaches what is often resolved by looking at specialization, interest, need (UDW); workload and team teaching (UND); collective decision (UNP) or haphazard decisions. This process had to be well controlled so that one can guard against unfair distribution, inappropriate allocation, incompatible groupings and inexperienced lecturing.

13.   **Were there any problems experienced in constructing the course?**

Table 5.114 : Problems in constructing the course

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes				
No	✓	✓	✓	✓
Uncertain				

Explain further

UDW: Debating, not necessarily a problem.

UNIZUL: -

UND: -

While it may appear that enormous problems could be experienced in constructing a course (this is a normal occurrence) the figures suggest that no major problems were experienced except that student difficulties present a major challenge. This is an area that needs to be developed.

5.4.3 *Content*

14. **What are the primary ways in which the course (subject matter) represents itself to students?**

Table 5.115 : Representation of subject matter to students

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Worksheets	✓		✓	✓
Workbooks		✓	✓	
Study guides		✓	✓	
Prescribed textbooks	✓	✓		✓
Handouts	✓			✓
Other (please specify)				

Students need clear guidance on what is required of them. The department, therefore, has to ensure that it sends a clear message. The common mediums are the worksheet (UDW, UND and UNP) prescribed textbooks (UDW, UNIZUL, UNP), study guides (UNIZUL, UND) and handouts (UDW, UNP). These are essential ways of communicating with large numbers of students and are generally the only link between students and the department. These can be a problem if there are no printing facilities.

15. **Describe the three general aims of:**

UDW

Sociology I

(i) Introduction to discipline.

(ii) Develop a sociological perspective.

(iii) Application : understanding contemporary social issues.

Sociology II

(i)   Develop a sociological perspective.

(ii)   Application – understanding contemporary social issues.

(iii)   Focus on development issues in society.

Sociology III

(i)   Application – understanding contemporary social issues.

(ii)   Focus on development issues in society.

(iii)   Sociology in practice via research methodology.

UNIZUL

Sociology I

(i)   Introduce students to the institutions.

(ii)   Look at functions-problems. How do they work?

(iii)   Apply it to South Africa.

Sociology II

(i)   Introduction to theory.

(ii)   Apply to South Africa.

(iii)   –

Sociology III

(i)   Introduce students to modern social theory and contemporary social issues/problems.

(ii)   To teach students reading skills.

(iii)   To teach students how to apply theories to social issues.

UND

Sociology I

(i)   Introduction to sociological concepts (only 1B).

(ii)   Illustration of these through theme of food.

(iii)   Inculcation of study skills.

Sociology II

(i)   Laying down main conceptual foundations:

   - founding fathers

   - race, gender, class.

(ii)   Understanding development process within urban and rural communities.

(iii)   Particular skills – eg. Assimilation of data presented in reports.

Sociology III

(i)   Understanding range of modern sociological theory.

(ii)   Basic grounding in social research methods.

(iii)   Understanding South African society in transition.

UNP

<u>Sociology I</u>

(i) Provide a conceptual introduction to the subject (i.e. the language of the discipline).

(ii) Show the relationship of the subject to other social sciences.

(iii) Provide a theoretical and methodological foundation.

<u>Sociology II</u>

(i) Develop the conceptual framework and deepen the theoretical framework.

(ii) Open up students' critical faculties by providing more cognitive material.

(iii) –

<u>Sociology III</u>

(i) Develop the methodological framework of the discipline.

(ii) Deepen the theoretical framework.

(iii) –

A general pattern emerged regarding the three general aims for each level across the four institutions.

At level one an introduction to the discipline plus an understanding of contemporary social issues appear to be the foundation of the course. Skills development (UND) seem to be an essential component at first year with attempts at drawing relationships between sociology and other disciplines (UNP and UND). A focus on contemporary issues and the South African situation are also relevant.

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Level two focuses more on theory and development issues. This is a more advanced level requiring the following cognitive skills; critical thinking, application, association and a deepening of the theoretical and conceptual framework. There is a strong link between level two and one for all four universities and a logical progression to level three.

Level three consolidates all that was learnt in levels one and two. This is done through the implementation of research methods (at all four universities) where students are required to display advanced understanding of sociology by applying their skills in particular areas of sociology from development, critical reading, application of theories to social issues, understanding South Africa in transition and general preparation to honors level.

16.   **What knowledge, skills and attitudes do you expect of students when they enrol for the course?**

UDW

Sociology I

(i)   Knowledge : General knowledge of their social environment.

(ii)   Skills : Literacy, study, time-management.

(iii)   Attitudes : Culture of learning.

Sociology II

(i)   Knowledge : Broad knowledge regarding theories.

(ii)   Skills : More advanced academic skills eg. analysis, writings.

(iii)   Attitudes : Culture of learning.

Sociology III

(i)   Knowledge : Advanced knowledge.

(ii)   Skills : Interpretation of above skill, I and II in sociological investigation.

(iii) Attitudes : Culture of learning.

UNIZUL

Sociology I

(i)   Knowledge : A bit of history, geography and English competency.

(ii)   Skills : Read, understand and write.

(iii) Attitude : Positive attitude to studying education in general.

Sociology II

(i)   Knowledge : Understanding theories.

(ii)   Skills : Reading a text.

(iii) Attitude : Positive attitude towards learning.

Sociology III

(i)   Knowledge :- General history/geography.

   - Usable English.

   - Knowledge of reference techniques.

(ii)   Skills :   - Comprehend what they read.

   - Ability to differentiate between core material and general information.

   - Self-study – work on their own.

(iii) Attitude: - Positive attitude to self-study.

- Positive attitude to theory.

- Positive attitude to hard work.

UND

Sociology I

(i) Knowledge : Some institutional knowledge/experience of South African society.

(ii) Skills : percentaging on hand calculator.

Simple word processing.

(iii) Attitudes : Interest in understanding social context.

Sociology II

(i) Knowledge : Basic understanding of what 'sociological explanation' is.

(ii) Skills : Library and other study skills.

(iii) Attitudes : Interest in understanding societal context.

Sociology III

(i) Knowledge : Basic concepts in sociology and its following.

(ii) Skills : -

(iii) Attitudes : -

UNP

Sociology I

(i) Knowledge : A reasonable general knowledge of society.

(ii) Skills : A working knowledge of English.

Some direction in organizing academic work.

(iii) Attitudes : Openness to new ideas and curiosity.

Sociology II

(i) Knowledge : An ability to carry forward a stock of knowledge and use it.

(ii) Skills : Good organizational skills and argumentation.

(iii) Attitudes :

Sociology III

(i) Knowledge : Carry forward a stock of knowledge, both within the discipline and from other disciplines.

(ii) Skills : Ability to read critically and evaluate arguments.

(iii) Attitudes : Openness, willingness to engage and a critical attitude.

Learning assumes three forms, namely, knowledge, skills and attitudes. Again a common pattern emerges for all four universities.

At level one a general knowledge of the social environment, broad theoretical knowledge, a basic knowledge of history, geography, English competency, institutional knowledge and experience of South African society is essential. These combine to form a core from which

other forms of learning develop. Skills required to facilitate learning are grouped as literacy, life-skills (time-management), comprehension, calculations, computer literacy, organization, critical reading and coherent writing. A positive attitude, a culture of learning, interest and openness are attitudes expected of students.

At level two a broad understanding of theory, sociological explanation and an ability to use this knowledge are essential. Skills like analysis, critical reading of text, organization and argumentation are essential. A positive attitude plus a culture of learning are essential.

At level three students are expected to have advanced knowledge of the discipline, competence in English and literacy, reference techniques and comparison with other disciplines, as the following skills are significant: interpretation, differentiating core from general material, critical reading and evaluating arguments.

The above reflects a progression of knowledge, skills and attitude from level one to three. The levels at which they are pitched also appear appropriate.

17. What new knowledge, skills and attitudes do you expect students to develop during the course?

UDW

Sociology I

(i) Knowledge : Systematic understanding.

(ii) Skills : To start thinking sociologically.

(iii) Attitudes : Commitment.

Sociology II

(i)   Knowledge : Advanced understanding.

(ii)   Skills : To apply advanced understanding in specific areas.

(iii)   Attitudes : To understand relationship between theory and practice.

Sociology III

(i)   Knowledge : To apply sociological concepts in practice.

(ii)   Skills : To apply research skills to understand diverse sociological issues.

(iii)   Attitudes : Critical inquiry.

UNIZUL

Sociology I

(i)   To know what the institutions are, how they function and what problems they experience.

(ii)   Skills : Reading and writing.

(iii)   Attitudes : Positive attitude – own guided study.

Sociology II

(i)   Knowledge : Understanding theory.

(ii)   Skills : Reading and writing.

(iii)   Attitudes : Hard work.

Sociology III

(i) Knowledge : About where theory developed – influence of place, time, socialization etcetera on writer/theorist.

What is each theory about – how to apply it?

(ii) Skills : - Reading and writing skills.

- Application of what student has learned.

- Ability to work on their own.

(iii) Attitudes : Positive attitude to hard work and independent learning.

UND

Sociology I

(i) Knowledge : Introduction to sociology as a discipline. Sociological concepts applied to South African society, covering themes such as social change and social movements with their expressions in everyday life set within the global context.

(ii) Skills : -

(iii) Attitude : -

Sociology II

(i) Knowledge : - Classical sociological theory and social stratifications.

- The sociology of development.

(ii) Skills : -

(iii) Attitude : -

Sociology III

(i)   Knowledge : - Contemporary sociological theory and research methodology.

         - Key philosophical and conceptual issues underlying sociological research.

         - Special sociological fields.

(ii)   Skills : -

(iii)   Attitude : -

UNP

Sociology I

(i)   Knowledge : Learning concepts.

(ii)   Skills : Using concepts.

(iii)   Attitude : Confronting common sense ideas.

Sociology II

(i)   Knowledge : Theory and contemporary issues.

(ii)   Skill : Read, comprehend critically.

(iii)   Attitude : Interest in learning.

Sociology III

(i)   Knowledge : Application of theory and research method.

(ii)   Skill : Argumentation and debate.

(iii)   Attitude : Interest in learning.

At level one new knowledge includes systematic understanding of sociological concepts in practice, understanding the structure and functioning of institutions, sociological understanding of theory within a South African context and the ability to use sociological skills in arriving at a new understanding. The ability to read, write, apply, independent study and general skills development are important. Students are expected to develop a committed, positive, guided, common sense attitude to studies.

At level two, students are expected to acquire advanced understanding of the discipline in specific areas such as theory, development and contemporary issues. Skills like critical comprehension and reading, application and independent study are important. Hard work and interest are essential.

At level three application of research skills advanced theoretical understanding, independent study, specialized understanding and argumentation are seen to be the concluding components of the undergraduate curriculum.

These progressions from level one to three of knowledge, skills and attitudes form a logical and coherent whole. However, there seems to be a need for more skills development at level one for UDW, UNIZUL and UNP. It is only UND that has much a strong focus on skills development at level one. The need for this is based on the large number of underprepared students. The purpose of this skills development programme would be to address the gaps in students' knowledge, skills and attitudes that combine to bear on meaningful learning within the undergraduate sociology curriculum.

18. For students to develop the above attributes what experience/s do you need to provide for them during the course?

Table 5.116 : Provision of learning experience

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Sociology I	Directed group	Self-study opportunities	Lectures, tuts and course packs	-
Sociology II	Additional reading material to stimulate	-	Lectures and Tutorial exercises	-
Sociology III	Practical projects to investigate socio-logical issues in community	Ability to do self-study on their own. Application of theory - discuss in groups	Lectures, Worksheets, Group projects	-

Apart from lectures, group discussions and tutorials play a significant part in promoting learning. While lectures may promote a general understanding of the course, tutorials and group discussions focus more on deepening student understanding. Additional reading material promote reading/comprehension skills. Practical projects develop research skills while course packs and worksheets provide guided learning. Group work also promotes peer introduction necessary for inculcating positive attitudes towards learning. However, other forms of teaching can also be employed to enhance the development of particular skills. These include video material, audio cassettes etcetera.

19. <u>What are the three most important things that you expect students to gain from the course?</u>

UDW

<u>Sociology I</u>

(i)   Understand what is sociology.

(ii)   To begin to reflect on South African society sociologically.

(iii)   Understanding of development concepts.

<u>Sociology II</u>

(i)   Apply theory to practice.

(ii)   Understand and compare health development issues.

(iii)   Understanding of contemporary social problems.

<u>Sociology III</u>

(i)   Critical analysis.

(ii)   Apply research methods to social issues.

(iii)   Critical reflection on development issues.

UNIZUL

<u>Sociology I</u>

(i)   Knowledge about one society and the institutions in it.

(ii)   Knowledge on functioning of institutions and problems.

(iii)   Positive attitude to sociology.

Sociology II

(i)   -

(ii)   -

(iii)   -

Sociology III

(i)   Knowledge of theories.

(ii)   How to apply theories and explanatory models.

(iii)   How to use theories to understand social issues/problems.

UND

Sociology I

(i)   Knowledge of sociological concepts.

(ii)   Being able to apply sociological concepts to South Africa.

(iii)   Understanding social change and social movements in a global context.

Sociology II

(i)   Understanding classical sociological theory.

(ii)   Understanding social stratification.

(iii)   Understanding of the sociology of development.

Sociology III

(i)   Contemporary social theory and research methodology.

(ii)   Key philosophical and conceptual issues underlying sociological research.

(iii)   Special sociological fields.

UNP

Sociology I

(i)   Conceptual framework.

(ii)   Discipline study.

(iii)   Understanding social issues.

Sociology II

(i)   Theoretical range.

(ii)   Application of knowledge/conceptual framework to sub-disciplines.

(iii)   Critical engagement.

Sociology III

(i)   Flexibility and application of knowledge.

(ii)   Good methodological understanding.

(iii)   Problem solving.

Students are generally uncertain about what they are gaining by studying a discipline like sociology. Often the demarcations are not very clear. Yet a great deal of knowledge that feeds into other disciplines is gained. For example, at first level, a sociological understanding of society with reference to development issues in South Africa enhances their engagement with courses like Social Work and Psychology. Furthermore, social change, stratification and global understanding comprehends their understanding of

economic and industrial issues. So the three most important aims of the first year course/s is in a sense relevant to everyday social reality.

At second year, theory, contemporary social problems, development, social stratification and critical engagement are among the important aims. These are highly theoretical and abstract in nature. They appear at an appropriate level, bridging the conceptual gap between first year and the more advanced application of knowledge required at third year.

The third year is the most advanced year in the undergraduate curriculum and requires higher cognitive skills. Critical analysis/reflection, application of research methods to social issues, and advanced understanding of theory as research models and specialized sociological fields are among the important aims. These are common for all four institutions.

20.   Identify the prescribed and recommended texts

UDW

Sociology I

Prescribed texts : Compiled set of readings.

Recommended texts : Giddens, A. Sociology.

Sociology II

Prescribed texts : Compiled set of readings.

Recommended texts : McKay, V. et al. Health in society.

Sociology III

Prescribed texts : Compiled set of readings.

Recommended texts : Van der Merwe, A. Industrial sociology.

UNIZUL

Sociology I

Prescribed texts : Popenoe: Introduction to sociology – South African text.

Recommended texts : Other first year books – Harlambos, Giddens, Cakoon et al).

Sociology II

Prescribed texts : Compiled set of reading.

Recommended texts : Other texts.

Sociology III

Prescribed texts : Compilation of original articles/chapters.

Romm and Sarakinsky, Social theory.

Recommended texts : A list of 30 books provided in study guide.

UND

Sociology I

Prescribed texts : Giddens, A. Sociology.

Recommended texts : Abercrombie, N. The penguin dictionary of sociology.

Sociology II

Prescribed texts : Compiled set of readings.

Recommended texts : -

Sociology III

Prescribed texts : Compiled set of readings.

Recommended texts : -

UNP

Sociology I

Prescribed texts : Popenoe, Sociology.

Recommended texts : Giddens, Sociology.

Sociology II

Prescribed texts : Coetzee and Groot, Reconstruction, development and people.

Recommended texts : -

Sociology III

Prescribed texts :   Newman: Social research methods.

* Lull, Media: Communication and culture.

* Morey, Izales and Wildshirt, Down to Earth.

* Wuyts et al, Development, Policing and Public Action.

Recommended texts : Other readings.

While texts are meant to offer students a core or central ideas/concepts/theories on the discipline, key issues and relevant material are taken from the prescribed text with recommended texts providing peripheral and additional support. Both are necessary for providing a holistic understanding of the discipline. Difficulty can be encountered in choosing recommended texts. But this can be resolved by searching widely and updating material on a regular basis.

21. **Were students given sufficient guidance in the use of texts and references?**

Table 5.117 : Guidance to the use of texts and references

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
No			✓	
Uncertain				

Explain further

UDW: Reading lists provided.

UNIZUL: Each section had references.

UND: For some students.

UNP: At first level, study skills provided.

Students generally experience enormous difficulty in using texts and locating books. Critical reading is a higher cognitive function and without guidance, students are unable to penetrate the deeper meaning in a text and locate important information. While study skills can assist in this regard (UNP) some students still encounter difficulties (UND). It seems as if students needed to be guided closely in accessing texts and references.

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22. <u>Were these materials easily available?</u>

<u>Table 5.118 : Availability of materials</u>

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
No			✓	
Uncertain				

Explain further

UDW: Sufficient copies in library/reserve section.

UNIZUL: Own book (prescribed) and copies of compiled notes were available.

UND: For some students.

UNP: Bookshop available. Copies of relevant chapters.

The general lack of resources make it difficult for students to access reading materials. Figures suggest that they were available, but at UND it was available for some students. The reserve section in the library is a useful source for those who cannot afford buying books.

23. <u>How were your students expected to distinguish key principles from the mass of content?</u>

UDW: Guidance during lectures.

UNIZUL: Comprehension questions were asked – for each theory/source/issue/ problem which guided their reading.

UND: Guided from course outline and course objectives.

UNP: Identified in lectures.

Often students are overwhelmed by the volume and density of content. This is clearly reflected in incoherently written essays and assignments. A lot of guidance needs to be given in this area. It seems that the lecture is the most appropriate place to highlight key principles combined with comprehension questions and course objectives. This is essential since it clarifies, in the student's mind, pertinent aspects that they should focus on. It also prevents undue wastage of time on irrelevant detail.

24. <u>**Did you provide sufficient opportunities for students to see links between the content of the course and:**</u>

<u>Table 5.119 : Link between content and related material</u>

(i) *<u>Related material</u>*

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓		
No				
Uncertain			✓	✓

Explain further

UDW: Ample examples and listing.

UNIZUL: -

UND: -

UNP: No systematic comparison taken.

(ii) *__Their prior experiences__*

Table 5.120 : Link between content and prior experience

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓		✓
No				
Uncertain			✓	

Explain further

UDW: Relating course material to prior learning life experience.

UNIZUL: -

UND: In some units/courses.

UNP: Many examples given of land issues. During discussion tutorials, attempts

to relate the two.

(iii) *__Their future careers__*

Table 5.121 : Link between content and future careers

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓			
No		✓	✓	
Uncertain				✓

Explain further

UDW: Linking content with certain careers e.g. social work, education.

UNIZUL: Difficult to relate theory to future careers, except social work, communication science, criminology, psychology.

UND: Not a concern.

UNP: The subject does not easily lend itself to career planning.

In order for students to make sense of the content of the course they need to see how its links with their prior experience, related material and future careers. While UNP made no systematic comparison UDW was able to provide ample examples. Furthermore, the discipline lends itself well to linking with prior experience as at UDW, UNIZUL and UNP. However, this was possible for some units at UND. More attempts need to be made to locate the discipline within the lives of students. For UND, it was not important to link the discipline with future concerns since it does not lend itself to career planning (UNP). But successful attempts to link the two were made at UDW and UNIZUL. This is significant since students need to know the utility value of the discipline.

25. **Are the boundaries of the discipline merging with others?**

Table 5.122 : Merging of boundaries

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
No				
Uncertain				

Explain further

UDW: Overlapping with the following: psychology, criminology, social work, education, law, geography, health sciences, political science.

UNIZUL: -

UND: -

UNP: - There is more consciousness of the individual of the social world, so political situations and psychological issues are appearing more and more.

- As the old classical sociology is left behind, there is a move to seek new ideas in other disciplines.

This is a normal trend in current higher education practice where the boundaries of the discipline are merging with others. In particular, they are merging with complementary disciplines in the humanities like psychology, criminology, political science; professions like social work, education and law, and across faculties into the health sciences. This indicates a need for interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary studies.

26. <u>**How relevant is the general content of the course to:**</u>

  5 – Very relevant

  4 – Relevant

  3 – Uncertain

  2 – Irrelevant

  1 – Not at all relevant

Sociology I

Table 5.123 : Relevance of content – Sociology I

CONTENT	UDW					UNIZUL					UND					UNP				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Current social issues	✓					✓							✓			✓				
Solving problems		✓					✓					✓					✓			
Critical thinking		✓					✓					✓					✓			
Political issues	✓						✓						✓					✓		
Economic issues	✓					✓					✓					✓				
Educational issues	✓					✓							✓					✓		
Finding employment			✓				✓							✓				✓		
Other (Please specify)																				

Sociology II

Table 5.124 : Relevance of content – Sociology II

CONTENT	UDW					UNIZUL					UND					UNP				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Current social issues	✓						✓					✓				✓				
Solving problems	✓						✓					✓					✓			
Critical thinking	✓							✓				✓					✓			
Political issues		✓						✓				✓					✓			
Economic issues		✓						✓				✓					✓			
Educational issues		✓											✓					✓		
Finding employment	✓								✓									✓		
Other (Please specify)																				

Sociology III

Table 5.125 : Relevance of content – Sociology III

CONTENT	UDW					UNIZUL					UND					UNP				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Current social issues	✓					✓					✓						✓			
Solving problems	✓						✓					✓				✓				
Critical thinking	✓						✓					✓				✓				
Political issues	✓						✓					✓					✓			
Economic issues	✓						✓					✓					✓			
Educational issues	✓						✓											✓		
Finding employment	✓						✓					✓				✓				
Other (Please specify)																				

Relevance of content can be measured against many criteria. The above are the most salient ones. At level one there is large degree of relevance for the inception of finding employment, political issues and economic issues. At level two content is relevant for all except educational issues and finding employment. At level three content is either very relevant or relevant for all except educational issues. While an in-depth examination of content is not possible, the figures suggest, that in large part, content is relevant with regard to current social issues, solving problems, political and economic issues. This is a positive indication of the worth of the curriculum in terms of the most significant aspects of learning

and societal needs. Furthermore, there is a large measure of relevance in finding employment. Also a positive indication of the relevance of curricular.

27. **If the course is a pre-requisite for another course, are you satisfied that the objectives and content match the expectations of lectures in later courses?**

Sociology I

Table 5.126 : Prerequisite at Level I

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Pre-requisite for which course	Second level	Second level	Second level	Second level

Table 5.127 : Adequacy of prerequisite

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓		
No				
Uncertain			✓	

Explain further

UDW: Natural progression and adequate progression.

UNIZUL: -

UND: Difficult to evaluate but more progress seems inherent.

UNP: -

For the exception of UNP, responses are positive. This is significant since a pre-requisite has to match the demands in later courses. This ensures continuity, disciplined progression and logical development.

Sociology II

Table 5.128 : Prerequisite at Level II

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Pre-requisite for which course	Third level	Third level	Third level	210

Table 5.129 : Adequacy of prerequisite

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓			✓
No				
Uncertain		✓	✓	

Explain further

UDW: Natural and adequate progression.

UNIZUL: -

UND: Progressions

UNP: 210 is a requirement for the major.

Again, the response is positive indicating a natural progression. But for UNIZUL and UND, uncertainty suggests that the link between level two and three is not clear. Attention needs to be paid as to why this is the case.

Sociology III

Table 5.130 : Prerequisite at Level III

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
No				
Uncertain				

Explain further

UDW: Natural/adequate progression. Preparation for honours.

UNIZUL: Should make students think further.

UND: Progression to honours.

UNP: Only 310 which is a requirement for the major.

There is unanimous agreement that the third year prepares students for post-graduate work. This is a positive development since a major in sociology does not really prepare a student for a career. An honours/masters degree in sociology creates more employment opportunities for students.

28.   Is the course intellectually challenging?

Sociology I

Table 5.131 : Intellectual challenge of course – Sociology I

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
No				
Uncertain				

Explain further

UDW: In terms of content, contemporary nature and skills development.

UNIZUL: -

UND: Varies by group. Many historically disadvantaged students are stretched.

           Many non-historically disadvantaged students are not stretched.

UNP: Opens up the conceptual framework.

Sociology II

Table 5.132 : Intellectual challenge of course – Sociology II

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓		✓	✓
No				
Uncertain		✓		

Explain further

UDW: Content, contemporary nature and skills development.

UNIZUL:

UND: Same as above.

UNP: Attempt to locate sociology in the real issues of society.

Sociology III

Table 5.133 : Intellectual challenge of course – Sociology III

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
No				
Uncertain				

Explain further

UDW: As above plus progressive development of skills.

UNIZUL: Should make students think further.

UND: As above.

UNP: Attempts to show how the subject can contribute to society.

For the exception of UNIZUL at level two, the course is intellectually challenging.

Challenges are seen in the following context : skills development, contemporary nature,

social problem-solving, widening conceptual thinking and confronting real life issues. However, where students are largely underprepared challenges can pose as impediments to successful learning (as in UND). Nonetheless, the course has to have a strong component of challenge to students.

29. <u>**Do you think that students are aware of the objectives of the course?**</u>

<u>Table 5.134 : Student awareness of objectives</u>

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓		✓
No				
Uncertain			✓	

Explain further

UDW: A sense that a small percentage grasp the lecturer's emphasis on objectives.

UNIZUL: -

UND: To some degree. Doubt that students have it at their fingertips.

UNP: They are clear.

For the exception of UND, students appear to be aware of course objectives. This is an important first step in guided learning. It also depends largely on clear course material, clear instructions and adequate instructional methods.

5.4.4 *Beliefs and assumptions underlying the course*

30. Why is the course being taught?

UDW

Table 5.135 : Why is it taught? - UDW

Sociology I	Reason
SOC 101-T	Introduction to understanding society.
SOC 103-T	Understanding of contemporary issues.
SOC 102-T	Use of theory to explain scientifically.
SOC 104-T	Understanding development issues.
Sociology II	
Contemporary social theory development	A more advanced interpretation.
Alternative approaches to health and development	Specific understanding. Sociological analysis of health and Development
Gender and development	
Labor and development	
Social problems and development	A more advanced understanding of social problems.
Education and development	
Race, ethnicity and development	
Sociology III	
Research methods	From a basic introduction to a more advanced application and social analysis.
Education and development	Sociological understanding of education and behavior issues.
Gender and development	
Health and development	
Labor and development	A sociological understanding of labor and development issues.
Race, ethnicity and development	
Social problems and development	

UNIZUL

Table 5.136 : Why is it taught? - UNIZUL

Sociology I	Reason
ASY 115	To give an introduction to society's institutions.
ASY 125	Social change, development, poverty or underdevelopment.
Sociology II	
ASY 215	Introduce students to social theory.
ASY 225	The French Revolution and economic development of society with reference to African societies. Sociology of race and class.
Sociology III	
ASY 315	Introduce research methods.
ASY 325	To give students a broad knowledge of theories which can be used to understand South African society.

UND

Table 5.137 : Why is it taught? - UND

Sociology I	Reason
DID SI ISI and RMSS DSOC 1SY2	Foundation for more advanced studies and service course for nurses, social workers, etc.
Sociology II	
DSOC 2SY2 DSOC 2SY2	Study of theory and stratification. Sociology of development.
Sociology III	
DSOC 3SY1 DSOC 3SY2	To allow students to major in sociology.

UNP

<u>Table 5.138 : Why is it taught? - UNP</u>

Sociology I	Reason
110	Introduction to the discipline.
120	Introduction to the discipline.
Sociology II	
221	Introduction to development.
210	Developing the theoretical foundations.
Sociology III	
310	Practical research.
322	Comparative development issues.
330	Rural development.
340	Identifying gender as a sub-discipline.
371	Culture and communication.

It is important to pause and ask why are particular courses taught. At level one the reasons are normally introductory and skills development. At level two it is advanced understanding/interpretation of theoretical issues with a variation in specialist fields. At level three it is a practical/research component within specialized areas/fields that gives meaning to the third level modules. These specialized areas are many and varies, focusing on the most relevant areas.

31. <u>**Rate the importance of the following for the general course. Rate 1 to 5 (5 = most important and 1 = least important)**</u>

<u>Table 5.139 : Knowledge, skills, values, attitudes</u>

ITEM	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
*Knowledge – subject matter and discipline specific	5	4	5	4
*Adequate conceptual understanding – facilitating communication within the discourse of the discipline	5	5	4	4
*Skills – reading, writing and computer literacy	5	3	3	4
*Values – honesty, respect, dedication and commitment		2	-	3
*Attitudes – positive and caring		1	-	3

UDW: Computer literacy is considered to be important.

UNIZUL: -

UND: Varies for each level.

UNP: -

Knowledge, adequate conceptual understanding and skills are rated important for the general course. Values and attitudes are lowly rated indicating the premium placed on knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills development. This rating also varies for each level (UND).

32. **How much potential does the subject matter in the general course have for presenting new problems thereby stimulating new ways of observation and judgement which will expand the areas of further experience?**

Table 5.140 : Subject matter versus new problems

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5 – A great deal	✓	✓	✓	✓
4 – Some				
3 – Uncertain				
2 – A little				
1 – None				

UND: Whole point of 1B

Given the level of underpreparedness among first entry students, subject matter has to be designed and presented in a way that enriches student learning by stimulating new ways of observation and judgement. This can be incorporated throughout the undergraduate

curriculum or in an introductory module (UND). Figures indicate that there is a great deal of potential in the subject matter to achieve this end.

33. Would you say that the subject matter increases the competence of students in such areas of:

3 – Yes

2 – No

1 – Uncertain

Table 5.141 : Subject matter and competence

	UDW			UNIZUL			UND			UNP		
	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1
Planning and policy making	✓			✓			✓				✓	
Use of appropriate resources	✓				✓			✓		✓		
Persistence of a task	✓			✓		✓					✓	
Coping with new ideas	✓			✓			✓			✓		
Coping with conflicting opinions And theories	✓			✓			✓			✓		
Coping with different people And cultures	✓			✓			✓			✓		
Taking responsibility for others' welfare	✓		✓			✓		✓				

For subject matter to be able to play a meaningful role in the lives of students, it has to increase their competence in important areas such as those listed above. For UDW this is largely positive. It would appear that more attention needs to be given to the use of appropriate resources, taking responsibility for others' welfare, persistence at a task and planning and policy making when designing a course. The latter is especially significant given that graduates in sociology branch out into such areas in the public and private sector.

34.   What are the dominant forms of inquiry in the course?

3 – Scientific

2 – Non-scientific

1 – Other (please specify)

Table 5.142 : Forms of inquiry

	UDW			UNIZUL			UND			UNP		
	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1
Sociology I	✓								sociological		✓	
Sociology II	✓										✓	
Sociology III	✓			✓						✓		

The early developments in sociology as a discipline was scientific in nature. Forms of inquiry imitated those in the sciences. Gradually, humanistic and subjective forms of inquiry began emerging within the discourse of the discipline. The figures indicate that both the scientific and non-scientific forms of inquiry are common to the discipline. The scientific is favored at third year for UDW, UNIZUL and UNP. The need for scientific inquiry is driven by the need for truth, fact and objectivity. But sociology is largely subjective in nature. And this calls for other forms of inquiry as well. UND calls this 'sociological'.

5.4.5 *Method of instruction*

35. **Which of the following methods of instruction are used?**

Table 5.143 : Method of instruction

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Lectures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tutorials	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seminars	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consultation												
Computer Assisted learning												
Other (please specify)	work-sheets										practical	

Lectures are the most common method of instruction, followed by consultations and tutorials. They seem to form an integrated whole or combination of teaching methods that combine to bear a meaningful learning.

36. **How frequently are they used?**

5 – Daily

4 – Weekly

3 – Fortnightly

2 – Monthly

1 – Other

Sociology I

Table 5.144 : Frequency of instruction – Sociology I

	UDW					UNIZUL					UND					UNP				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Lectures	✓					✓					✓						✓			
Tutorials		✓					twice					✓					✓			
Seminars																				
Consultation		✓										✓								
Computer assisted Learning																				
Other (please specify)																				

UDW: Other = Worksheets

              Consultation as needed

UNP: Consultation: as appropriate

Sociology II

Table 5.145 : Frequency of instruction – Sociology II

	UDW					UNIZUL					UND					UNP				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Lectures	✓					✓					✓						✓			
Tutorials												✓					✓			
Seminars																				
Consultation																				
Computer assisted Learning																				
Other (please specify)																				

UDW: Consultation as needed.

UNIZUL: -

UND: Consultation as needed.

UNP: Consultation as needed.

Sociology III

Table 5.146 : Frequency of instruction – Sociology III

	UDW					UNIZUL					UND					UNP				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Lectures	✓					✓					✓						✓			
Tutorials		✓					✓					✓					✓			
Seminars																		✓		
Consultation						✓														
Computer assisted Learning																				
Other (please specify)																				

UDW: Consultation as needed.

UNIZUL: -

UND: Practicals.

UNP: Consultation as appropriate.

The frequency of methods is based on available resources, time and availability of staff. Lectures are given daily since they are economical and user-effective. Tutorials are common at first year and provided on a weekly basis while consultation is provided as needed. Seminars are provided at level three. While frequency of use is important, quality teaching is far more important.

37. **Are the methods of instruction compatible with**

(i) *The objectives of the course:*

Table 5.147 : Methods of instruction versus objectives

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
No				
Uncertain				

UDW: Given the circumstances and the resources.

UNIZUL: -

UND: At all levels some effort to link are made.

UNP:

Course objectives determine the kind of learning experiences required.   One such experience is instructional method. There are indications that both are largely compatible.

(ii)   Diverse needs of students

Table 5.148 : Methods of instruction versus diverse needs of students

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓		✓
No				
Uncertain			✓	

Explain further

UDW: Consultation to meet needs otherwise not met.

UNIZUL: Tutors should afford students opportunity to work in small groups.

UND: Perhaps brighter students are sufficiently stretched. Don't know all their

         diverse needs.

Student diversity has begun to challenge instructional methods adopted at university. More and more a learner centered approach to learning has been encouraged. Traditional forms of teaching do not necessarily fulfil the learning needs of students. Even though UDW, UNIZUL and UNP appear positive, this does not necessarily mean that the instructional

methods used are adequate. Furthermore, UND recognizes that they do not know all the diverse needs. This is an interesting recognition and one that needs to be explored in more detail.

(iii) Assessment forms

Table 5.149 : Methods of instruction versus assessment forms

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓		✓	✓
No		✓		
Uncertain				

Explain further

UDW: Large numbers still doing essay-type questions.

UNIZUL: Students given opportunity to do self-study work in tutorials and classes.

UND: Exams/tests are designed in part to fit objectives.

Amid the variety of assessment forms available, exams, tests and essay-type questions are still, in large measure, the popular forms. Again, while they may appear to be compatible with course objectives, there is still room for improvement. Independent study (as in UNIZUL) should be combined with self-assessment that is determined and planned by lecturers concerned.

38. <u>**Do you feel that instructional methods used   promote effective learning in students?**</u>

<u>**Table 5.150 : Instructional methods versus effective learning**</u>

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓		✓
No				
Uncertain			✓	

<u>**Explain further**</u>

UDW: Variety of methods: OHP, worksheets.

UNIZUL: Course designed to promote self-study rather than formal instruction.

UND: Barriers in 'student culture' are so deep that immense difficulty in penetrating/overcoming these.

Effective learning can be defined in different ways. The only indicator of effective learning are test scores and grades. While these may indicate that effective learning has taken place, uncertainty (as in UND) do exist. These concerns arise form a student culture that perceives learning in a way not always compatible the demands of university. On the other hand, this is a common problem across the country. On the other hand, curricular need to be reviewed and adapted to creatively respond to overcoming barriers in student learning.

39. **How would you rate the effectiveness of lectures in relation to imparting the following types of knowledge?**

5 – Very effective

4 – Effective

3 – Uncertain

2 – Ineffective

1 – Not at all effective

Table 5.151 : Lectures versus types of knowledge

	UDW					UNIZUL					UND					UNP				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Factual information	✓					✓					✓					✓				
General principles	✓						✓				✓						✓			
Surveying themes that Unite various topics or Aspects of the subject	✓						✓				✓						✓			
Teaching the application Of discipline-based principles	✓						✓				✓						✓			
Demonstrating strategies And skills of problem-Solving	✓						✓				✓								✓	

A lecture can only convey particular forms of knowledge and information. This is so because of large numbers, limited time and mass volume of information. Figures indicate that it is effective in imparting factual information, general principles, surveying themes and teaching the application of discipline-based principles. Lectures therefore serve a limited purpose and need to be complemented by other forms of teaching.

40. **How would you rate the effectiveness of small group discussion (seminars and tutorials) in relation to imparting the following types of knowledge?**

Table 5.152 : Small group discussions versus types of knowledge

	UDW					UNIZUL					UND					UNP				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Promoting understanding of a body of knowledge	✓					✓											✓			
Promoting relational Thinking	✓						✓										✓			
Practising skills like: Intellectual Verbal Computational Social	✓					✓														
Practising the application of principles to familiar and unfamiliar situations	✓					✓										✓				
Exploring personal and professional attitudes and Values	✓					✓										✓	✓			
Promoting two-way Exchange of information in the teaching-learning process	✓					✓										✓				

UND: Not enough information to answer.

Outside any formal evaluation of small group learning, judgements are difficult to give. But figures suggest that tutorials have a great capacity for promoting deep, meaningful, reflective and enduring learning. Furthermore, it promotes peer interaction and peer resourcing. Both are necessary for meaningful and effective learning.

41. **Which is the preferred method of instruction?**

Table 5.153 : Preferred method of instruction

	SOCIOLOGY I				SOCIOLOGY II				SOCIOLOGY III			
	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Lectures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Tutorials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seminars									✓			✓
Consultation	✓				✓				✓	✓		✓
Other (please specify)	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓			
A combination	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	

Please provide reasons for the above choices:

UDW: Most practical way of facilitating learning and teaching large groups.

UND: For obvious reasons

The lecture and tutorial are by far the most preferred method of instruction. This is obviously for practical reasons. Consultations are also preferred but only if circumstances allow for it. Nonetheless, there is agreement that a combination of instructional methods will serve to reinforce learning.

5.4.6 *Learning*

42. **Sociology has its own distinctive brand of thinking, inquiry and learning. Do you agree?**

Table 5.154 : Sociology versus distinctive brand of thinking

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓		✓
No				
Uncertain			✓	

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Explain further

UDW: Subject matter lends itself to the above.

UND: Sure, but it is partially shared.

UNP: It is a discipline with a tradition.

As a discipline and school of thought, sociology has its own distinctive brand of thinking. However, it does share similarities with other disciplines as well. But, it is a discipline with a tradition (UNP). A tradition rooted in analyzing social behavior in both a historical and contemporary context. To this end, it is able to locate specific aspects of society and subject it to intense scrutiny and analysis and thereby influence policy and planning. It plays a pivotal role in contributing towards contemporary debate and thereby adding to the body of knowledge of sociology.

__To what degree is the following present in the course?__

5 – A great deal

4 – Some

3 – Average

2 – A little

1 – Not at all

Table 5.155 : Lecturer centredness

	UDW					UNIZUL					UND					UNP				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Focus on content	✓					✓					✓					✓				
Emphasis on knowing facts Only		✓											✓						✓	
Students work as individuals often in competition with each other					✓			✓					✓						✓	
Students highly dependent			✓					✓					✓				✓			
Learning objectives Imposed			✓														✓			
Assessment by written Exams	✓		✓				✓					✓				✓				
Knowledge handed down From subject to novice			✓													✓				
Lecturers predominate as mode of curriculum delivery	✓						✓	✓				✓				✓				
			✓				✓					✓				✓				

UND: Class bias and lecturer/student ratio affects class bias which affects answers to these questions.

In interpreting this, the researcher would like to take into account, the comment made by UND. While a learner centered approach is preferred, it is not always possible given the shortage of resources. This has, to some extent, contributed, to the focus on lecturer as expert and the student as dependent learners. However, physical constraints should not hamper efforts at promoting a holistic learning environment.

4.3.2 *To what degree is the following present in the course?*

Table 5.156 : Learner centredness

	UDW					UNIZUL					UND					UNP				
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Focus on progress	✓							✓				✓					✓			
Emphasis on knowing how	✓							✓				✓					✓			
Students work in groups, teams collectively and co-operatively				✓				✓				✓					✓			
Students highly independent			✓					✓					✓					✓		
Objectives negotiated					✓			✓						✓						✓
Assessment varied				✓				✓					✓				✓			
Students actively generate and synthesize knowledge from many sources				✓				✓				✓					✓			
Lecture sessions are Flexible					✓			✓											✓	
Lecturer facilitator and a resource for students' learning in partnership				✓				✓				✓								

These figures indicate that there is some balance between a lecture centered approach and a student centered approach to learning. However, assessment practices are still very mechanistic and the lecturer is still the expert. Students are still dependent and course objectives are unilaterally decided by lecturers. Not that this is a problem but students need to be brought in to the process of determining learning outcomes since they are in a position to evaluate the curriculum in relation to their own needs. The flexibility of the teaching-learning process ensures relevance, accountability and assures quality.

5.4.7 *Assessment*

44. **Indicate which of the following forms of assessment are used and indicate its frequency**

    5 - Daily

    4 – Weekly

    3 – Fortnightly

    2 – Monthly

    1 – End of Term

    0 – End of Semester

Table 5.157 : Form and frequency of assessment

FORM	SOCIOLOGY I						SOCIOLOGY II						SOCIOLOGY III					
	5	4	3	2	1	0	5	4	3	2	1	0	5	4	3	2	1	0
Tests			*	+	✓					+	✓					•*+	✓	
Exams				*		✓ +					*	✓ +					*	✓ +
Orals																		
Case Studies																		
Projects					•					•						•	✓	+
Dissertations																		
Essays			•	*		✓				+				*		*+		
Fieldwork																+		
Practical skills and competencies		•	+						+									
Reviews																		
Seen written exams																		
Strategic plans																		
Literature searches																		*+
Portfolios																		
Learning contracts																		
Other (please specify)																		

✓ : UDW

• : UNIZUL

* : UND

+ : UNP

Tests, exams and essays are the popular and economic forms of assessment, normally used on a monthly basis. Practical skills and competencies seem to be more frequently assessed. These lend themselves well to self-assessment. Fieldwork, projects – and literature searches are appropriate at third year. Yet, the range of assessment practices available point to the need for more innovative forms of assessment. At the heart of the curriculum is the need to promote learning. While assessment measures learning, true learning begins after assessment. This means appropriate forms as opposed to traditional forms need to be identified. These appear in the above list. They incorporate elements of continuous assessment, self/peer assessment, independent learning, self-reflective learning and life-long learning. Furthermore, they have the capacity to promote independent and meaningful learning. To this end, all forms of assessment need to be explored.

45.   **Identify the extent to which the following is assessed in the general course?**

   5 – A great deal

   4 – Some

   3 – Average

   2 – A little

   1 – Not at all

Table 5.158 : Criteria for assessment

	Aspect	UDW					UNIZUL					UND					UNP				
		5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Cognitive Learning	Subject-matter and content	✓					✓						✓				✓				
	Skills-reading and writing	✓					✓								✓		✓				
	Verbal skills-communication					✓				✓					✓						✓
	Rationality-logical thinking analysis synthesis	✓					✓						✓					✓			
	Intellectual perspective-application of cultural diversity		✓			✓	✓							✓				✓			
	Aesthetic sensibility					✓			✓						✓						✓
	Creativity, imagination		✓				✓							✓					✓		
	Intellectual integrity		✓				✓								✓				✓		
	Lifelong-learning					✓	✓								✓				✓		
Emotional and moral development	Self-awareness							✓					✓					✓			
	Psychological well-being					✓		✓							✓						✓
	Human-understanding		✓				✓						✓								✓
	Values and morals		✓						✓				✓								✓
Practical Competence	Application of knowledge	✓					✓								✓		✓	✓			
	Negotiation				✓					✓					✓				✓		
	Motivation, initiative	✓						✓							✓				✓		
	Resourcefulness	✓						✓							✓						
	Leadership					✓	✓								✓						
	Citizenship					✓				✓					✓						
Other (please specify)																					

The primary focus of assessment in higher education is cognitive learning as in subject-matter, skills, logic, creativity, critical thinking, application and other related skills. These appear to a large extent within the formal curriculum. Practical competence features minimally in assessment except for motivation and resourcefulness that feature strongly at UDW and UNIZUL. These competencies need to be viewed in association with forms of assessment and frequency of assessment. Particular forms of assessment can only test particular competencies. For example, tests mainly assess subject recall whereas a portfolio

combines a multiplicity of competencies ranging from the cognitive, emotional to the practical.

It would seem that while lecturers are clear on what competencies they are assessing, they are not using adequate forms of assessment that are conducive both to promoting meaningful student learning and consolidating all aspects of the curriculum.

46. **Are you satisfied that the system of assessment which is used in this course in an adequate indication of each student's progress towards the goal which you identified in the first section?**

Table 5.159 : Assessment and student progress

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓		
No				
Uncertain			✓	✓

Please elaborate

UDW: Given constraints (large numbers, resources) other forms cannot be easily implemented.

UNIZUL: The course was designed for self-study. But students needed to be forced to comply – this does not create a positive learning situation.

UND: Too difficult to ascertain.

UNP: It is too exam based. Difficult to change.

These responses support the comments in the previous question. Physical constraints hamper the use of innovative forms of assessment. Difficulties exist in promoting self-study. Given this, difficulties to exist in ascertaining the adequacy of the system of

assessment. The key issue is: Are tests, exams, essays an adequate reflection of student learning? This is a debatable issue and the current study only serves to add to this debate.

47.   Indicate your preference

Table 5.160 : Preference of assessment

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Formative assessment (continuous)		✓		
Summative (end of course)				
Both	✓		✓	✓
Neither				

Elaborate

UDW: In terms of content : allow for early detection of problems.

UNIZUL: Students can improve steadily.

UND: Formative evaluation is better but not always practicable.

UNP: Ideal to have both but not always possible.

Though both forms of assessment are preferred practical constraints defeat attempts at continuous assessment. Nonetheless, there is acknowledgement of the merit in formative assessment. One way of working around the shortage of resources is to make extensive use of both peer and self-assessment practices. This would also promote independent self-study.

5.4.8 *Focus and coherence*

48. Given the purpose of the general course and the type of subject matter being learnt, is there a logical order for the treatment of topics?

Table 5.161 : Logical treatment of topics

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓		✓
No				
Uncertain			X	

Please explain further:

UDW: Cumulative development of knowledge and progressive development of skills.

UNIZUL: -

UND: Some parts are logically sequenced. Others more arbitrary.

The logical, coherent and cumulative learning process is dependent on a logical structuring and sequencing of topics. Knowledge develops simultaneously and progressively with skills. At the same time other topics are difficult to measure. This can be addressed by continuous evaluation of the course by a range of stakeholders from students to curriculum specialists. The need for treating topics logically is essential for two reasons. One is to facilitate teaching in a coherent manner. The other is to facilitate learning in a non-fragmentary way. This gives the discipline and the curriculum its core, centre and wholeness.

49. **How will you know whether the course is progressing satisfactorily?**

UDW: Assessment and student feedback via class representatives, individuals, staff and tutors.

UNIZUL: Student reaction and students' fortnightly assignments indicate understanding etcetera.

UND: Only by gut feeling of lecturing staff's subjective feelings.

UNP: Through testing of each stage.

Even though assessment in exams and tests indicate progression of the course it is extremely limited in its capacity to provide only valuable information. Using subjective and individual student feedback provides a narrow one-sided view. Ideally, the course should be addressed by a team of experts and stakeholders on a yearly basis (at least). This course assessment should include an extensive list of criteria designed to specifically address the needs of the course, students, the institution and society. This system of appraisal has the potential of detecting problems early on, provides opportunities for development and basically responds to the call for relevance and accountability.

50. <u>**Is provision made within and between courses in the undergraduate curriculum for:**</u>

3 – Yes

2 – No

1 – Uncertain

<u>Table 5.162 : Continuity/sequence/integration of subject matter</u>

	UDW			UNIZUL			UND			UNP		
	3	**2**	**1**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Continuity	✓			✓			✓					
Sequence	✓			✓			✓					
Integration of subject-matter	✓			✓			✓					

Please explain further:

UDW: Style of lecturing and knowledge based on communicating with colleagues.

UND: More within the between.]

UNP: Overall design.

It is apparent that in the initial design of courses care is taken to ensure continuity, sequence and integration of subject-matter. It is also apparent that this is more easily attained within courses rather than between courses. There seems to be a natural logic that drives the construction of the undergraduate curriculum which ensures continuity, sequence and integration.

51. Which of the following best describes the way in which the curriculum is designed/organized?

Table 5.163 : Organization of curriculum

Category	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
The curriculum is designed around a focus or content especially facts, basic skills and values. Facts are usually grouped into topics.				
Central concepts in the discipline serve as the organizing elements of the curriculum. These fundamental concepts serve as a starting point deriving the more specific content around these basic ideas and organizing the content around them. The pattern of learning is one of concept-and-inquiry.	✓	✓	✓	✓
The focus is on student experience where content is sequenced according to the way it will be used in dealing with everyday problems, needs and issues.				
The focus is on behaviors described by written objectives.				
The focus is on superior direct concepts that subsume other more specific content.				
Other (please specify)				

It seems as if the curriculum takes as its starting point the central concepts of the discipline. This indicates that the cognitive aspect is given priority over the behavioral and experiential forms of learning. The pattern of learning is one of concept and inquiry. Yet, the discipline is such that it lends itself well to promoting experiential learning. Furthermore, behavioral description of objectives also facilitate independent learning since it allows students to measure what they have learnt. The organization of the curriculum needs to be far more cognizant of educational theories of teaching and learning.

52.   Is there an overlap with other disciplines?

Table 5.164 : Overlap with other disciplines

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓
No				
Uncertain				

If yes, how would this affect the independence of the discipline and hence the sociology undergraduate curriculum?

UDW: May overlap, analysis differs greatly.

UNIZUL: It shouldn't as one approach is different to issues/problems.

UND: Cannot remain independent given the huge areas of overlap.

UNP: Not a problem, simply reinforces and shows linkages with other approaches.

The overlap with other disciplines is seen as a healthy, organic development and evolution of the discipline. This overlap is inevitable. It is driven by a need for academic coherence, occupational relevance and knowledge application (Parekh, 1998:3). Within the context of organisational restructuring of the academic sector, this overlap will facilitate the creation of programme based learning necessary for addressing issues of resource shortages, developing particular competencies in students and employability.

53. **Is the content of the curriculum structured on the basis of:**

Table 5.165 : Structure of curriculum

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Historical events				
Organised around particular themes		✓		✓
Both	✓			
Other (please specify)			✓	

Please explain further:

UDW: To understand present and past.

UNIZUL: Various approaches are covered; functionalist, conflict, exchange and micro.

UND: Some progression in terms of difficulty/skills.

UNP: Tendency for it to be historically guided.

The discipline best lends itself to being structured around particular themes. But, given the nature of student underpreparedness, skills development further dictates the structure of the curriculum.

5.4.9 Vocational relevance

54. **Is there evidence of employers' reaction to the capabilities of graduates from this subject?**

Table 5.166 : Vocational relevance

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes				
No	✓	✓	✓	✓
Uncertain				

Please explain further:

UDW: No statistics.

UNP: No systematic investigation of the issue.

Being a discipline in the humanities that is not professionally oriented makes it difficult to identify specific paths to employment. Nevertheless, attempts need to be made regarding graduate performance in the public and private sector. This will serve to highlight both strengths and weaknesses and develop the course.

55.   **Are there any indications of the level of success graduates in sociology have in gaining employment on qualifying in the subject area?**

Table 5.167 : Success of graduates and employment

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes				
No		✓	✓	✓
Uncertain	✓			

Please explain further:

UDW: We know that students are absorbed, difficult to establish whether specifically because of course.

UND: HSRC data available but has not been examined.

UNP: No research in the area.

This question follows from the previous one. The response is similar and for reasons already mentioned, it is difficult to ascertain graduate success in gaining employment. But indications are that sociology graduates do get employed in related fields such as social

work, law, education, industry, human resource development, public relations and academic teaching and research.

56. **On the basis of the above information, how would you describe the level of success graduates in sociology have in gaining employment on qualifying in the subject area?**

Table 5.168 : Level of success in graduate employment

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5 – Very high success				
4 – Some success				
3 – Average	✓	✓		
2 – Little success				
1 – Very little success				

Please explain further:

UDW: Little feedback, only incidental

UND: Not sure

UNP: Not clear

Again, there are no real figures to indicate the level of graduate success. Difficult to ascertain this since a major in sociology does not lead a professional qualification. It would be useful if the Human Sciences Research Council could furnish figures to this effect.

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5.4.10 *Resources*

57. **What level of provision exists in the university (library, computers, lecture venues) as far as your subject area is concerned?**

Table 5.169 : Infra-structural support

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
5 – Very high	✓			✓
4 – High				
3 – Average		✓		
2 – Low				
1 – Very low				

Please explain further:

UDW: Venues are very good, library is average and computers are low.

UNIZUL: Venues are a problem, library sources are limiting and computer courses are

not obligatory.

UND: Not sure.

UNP: Excellent library and computer facilities.

Historically black universities are under-resourced and this is clear form the above figures. While venues are very good at UDW they are poor at UNIZUL. UNIZUL and UDW both suffer with poor library facilities and computer facilities whereas UND and UNP (both historically white universities) both enjoy excellent resources. Adequate resources are essential for supporting and promoting learning. Therefore, as part of the restructuring funding for universities attention should be given to upgrading existing facilities at HBUs.

5.4.11 *Quality assurance*

58.   Has the sociology undergraduate curriculum been reviewed and updated in the past three years?

Table 5.170 : Review of curriculum

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓	✓	
No				✓
Uncertain				

Please explain further:

UDW: Done in 1995.

UNIZUL: Sociology is updated yearly.

UND: Continuous especially since driven by changing faculty context.

UNP: Major changes in 1994, same changes since then.

The curriculum should be updated at least every three years. The reasons being that the content of the discipline changes rapidly, teaching technologies improve all the time, student needs vary and socio-economic changes require relevance. Furthermore, there is a need to guard against teaching irrelevant and outdated stuff. Besides, sociology is rooted in a social reality that is changing rapidly.

5.4.12 *Academic staff*

59. **Are there any staff development activities?**

Table 5.171 : Staff development actvities

	UDW	**UNIZUL**	**UND**	**UNP**
Yes	✓		✓	✓
No		✓		
Uncertain				

If yes, how adequate are these staff development activities?

UDW: More opportunities should be provided.

UND: Not very good.

UNP: Good.

It seems as if staff development activities are not very adequate (except for UNP). As UNIZUL they do not exist at all. Yet, this is a crucial component of the teaching/learning process. Moreso in the current context of rapid changes. However, many academics do not seem eager to accept this. This is based on the distinction between lecturing, research and teaching. Lecturers perceive themselves as academics involved purely in lecturing and research. There is thus a need to challenge the mindset of academics if the university is serious about staff development activities. In addition, a central university policy on staff development would serve to take the process forward in a credible manner.

60. <u>Are staff satisfied with the teaching situation?</u>

<u>Table 5.172 : Staff satisfaction</u>

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓			✓
No		✓		
Uncertain			✓	

<u>Please explain further:</u>

UDW: But large classes impact on teaching, learning methodologies.

UNIZUL: Staff are overworked, no student assistants and little time to do research.

UND: Don't know..

One of the requirements for job performance is high staff morale. For the exception of UNIZUL, there seems to be some satisfaction (UDW and UNP). However, staff dissatisfaction seems to arise from large classes, few resources, lack of personnel and less time for research. Furthermore, these hamper experimentation and implementation of new teaching/learning methodologies. Uncertainty at UND indicates that there are no figures to indicate level of staff satisfaction.

61. <u>Are staff prepared to undertake re-curriculation of programmes and subjects?</u>

<u>Table 5.173 : Recurriculation of programmes</u>

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes	✓	✓		
No				
Uncertain			✓	✓

Please explain further:

UDW: Want to be responsive to student needs and develop the discipline.

UND: Some are and some are not.

This question has direct links with staff development. The two cannot be separated. It is only with staff development that lecturers are prepared and equipped to deal with issues of recurriculation. Surprisingly staff at both the HBUs are perpared to undertake recurriculation whereas the HWUs appear uncertain. This is an essential process and needs to be integrated (together with staff development) into the job definition of academics.

62.   Are staff qualified to undertake recurriculation of programmes and subjects?

Table 5.174 : Recurriculation of programmes

	UDW	UNIZUL	UND	UNP
Yes		✓		
No	✓			
Uncertain			✓	✓

Please explain further:

UDW: Not curriculum experts but prepared to do it in consultation.

UNIZUL: Experience is central since we know what works and what doesn't.

UND: Mixed.

This question follows from the previous one and the figures support the comments and suggestions made. For the exception of UNIZUL, staff at other institutions are not qualified to undertake recurriculation. This can be addressed through a well designed staff development programme.

63.   Other comments

UDW: Questionnaire provided food for thought.

UNIZUL: Any "new" lecturer should be exposed to a year of "learning" how to lecture, evaluate etcetera. Some universities make it obligatory – this helps new lecturers and old one's to re-evaluate themselves and their skills.

It is not surprising that staff development has been identified as an important area of concern. This suggests the need for more attention and resources being invested in this area.

5.5   *Summary*

This is by far the most significant chapter. It provides an in-depth and extensive assessment of the sociology undergraduate curriculum. The assessment is carried out at two levels. Level one examines the views of students and their experiences of the course. This is done retrospectively. Level two examines the views of those who are directly involved in the implementation and teaching of the course. Both these views combine to provide a comprehensive assessment of the undergraduate curriculum against specific criteria. For students these criteria include demographic details, content/relevance of curriculum, focus and coherence, instructional methods, assessment forms, vocational relevance, resources and quality assurance. Staff were expected to assess the course against the following criteria: content, beliefs and assumptions underlying the course, focus and coherence, instructional methods, assessment forms and staff expertise. On the whole, the results for both staff and student corroborate each other. There is conclusive support for the relevance of the curriculum. However, more attention needs to be paid to the following

components of the curriculum, namely, instructional methods, design and assessment forms.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUMMARY

6.1 Introduction

The depth and extensiveness of this study has great benefit for curriculum development and assessment in higher education both nationally and regionally. The undergraduate curriculum is presently in a state of rapid restructuring. The value of the current study, therefore, lies in its ability to point a way forward not only for the discipline of sociology but for the humanities as well. Of significance, is the assessment of the undergraduate curriculum, within the KwaZulu-Natal region, against specific criteria that are applicable across a wide range of educational programmes. While the current study focuses specifically on the sociology undergraduate curriculum, it shares common curriculum assumptions with other disciplines as well. This becomes clear in the conclusions drawn and the recommendations put forth.

6.2 Conclusions

The following are the major conclusions drawn from this study.

6.2.1 Continuous assessment of the undergraduate curriculum

This was the first time that a study of this nature was carried out. Indications are that it was long overdue and that it needs to be integrated into the formal undergraduate curriculum. In

other words, there should be an organic link between curriculum assessment, quality assurance and relevance/accountability.

6.2.2 ***Who should assess?*** This is a political issue. An assessment of this nature should ideally be carried out by a range of experts from educationists, curriculum specialists, subject specialists, students and other related specialists. This would serve to ensure a holistic and balanced approach to curriculum assessment.

6.2.3 ***Why curriculum assessment?*** The reasons are obvious but affected people need to be assured that curriculum assessment is part of the process of assuring quality in higher education. The process needs to be given legitimacy and credibility by the state.

6.2.4 ***What to assess?*** An extensive list of criteria can be identified for assessment. But, for the sake of mutual participation and respect, these criteria should be identified jointly by the relevant parties concerned. This sort of collaboration opens up the space for healthy debate and engagement. Furthermore, an assessor from the outside is a perceived threat to the department/university. Therefore, for the sake of growth and development mutual trust is required.

6.2.5 ***What to look for in assessing the undergraduate curriculum?*** The following are the most pertinent aspects of the undergraduate curriculum: content, assumptions underlying content, focus and coherence of units, appropriate instructional methods, appropriate forms of assessment, staff development and infrastructural support. While these

form the core issues around assessment, additional areas such as quality assurance should be included.

6.2.6 *__The changing nature of the discipline:__* The discipline is in a state of continuous change. This has implications for the form curricular assumes. Furthermore, it is changing in a parallel fashion to changes in society. Therefore, at the second and third level of the sociology undergraduate curriculum a variety of socially relevant modules are being offered. In addition to this, the discipline is merging with others in the faculty of arts and across other faculties. The focus is more on being functionally and economically relevant rather than remaining a pure academic discipline. This is evident for UDW, UND and UNP.

6.2.7 *__The need for regional coherence:__* Recognition has been given for multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary programmes. However, possibilities for inter-regional co-operation around similar programmes should also be explored. These can be pitched at different levels and around particular themes. It would allow for expertise to develop in particular areas and for students to selectively access these.

6.2.8 *__Contextualizing the curriculum:__* Given the nature of student diversity, underpreparedness, shortage of resources and other related challenges, any construction of the undergraduate curriculum should take these factors into account. This means, bringing to the awareness of lecturers, the need to integrate the above in every course design.

6.2.9 *Clarifying the undergraduate curriculum:* There is a need to clarify the purpose of the undergraduate curriculum, in particular sociology. This clarification needs to be made against the following criteria: cognitive, psychological, affective, aesthetics, economical and social. This means that the discipline and its manifestation within the undergraduate curriculum needs to defend its existence in an academically coherent way. Yet, the current study indicates that students have a positive experience of the curriculum.

6.2.10 *Academic staff development:* Given the many challenges within higher education, academics are faced with a situation of not knowing how to deal with teaching and learning issues. This can be addressed through a continuous process of training and retraining. Ideally, it should be integrated with endeavours on curriculum development and curriculum design.

6.2.11 *The HBU/HWU disparity:* There are visible disparities on the quality and quantity of resources with HWUs being better resources than HBUs. This has clear implications for curriculum practice. UNIZUL is especially under-resourced in terms of curricular offerings, lack of staff and lack of infrastructural support

6.3 *Recommendations*

The following recommendations have been made at three levels: the national, regional and faculty/departmental level.

6.3.1 ***The national level:*** There is a need for a national policy to guide assessment practices of the undergraduate curriculum. In fact, this should extend to all aspects of the higher education system. This policy should be clear on:

* A principled approach to assessment taking into account historical imbalances, that is between HBUs and HWUs.

* A focus on establishing equity with regard to curricular offerings, student enrolment and redress/bridging programmes.

* Governance, ownership and control of the assessment process in terms of relevance and accountability.

* Simultaneously centralizing and decentralizing the process of assessment. In other words, allowing the process of filter down to the micro level of separate disciplines.

* National goals for programmes based on interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary combinations.

* Building into the assessment process mechanisms to deal with irregular and non-productive offerings.

* Setting guidelines for performance appraisal and academic staff development that impinge on the nature of the undergraduate curriculum.

* Guidelines for institutions on how to proceed with this assessment, how to update and review the undergraduate curriculum.

* Recognising and rewarding quality programmes.

* Guidelines for institutions on how to proceed with comparative assessment of curricular.

The proposed role of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Higher Education Council (HEC) as an umbrella body for quality assurance in higher education should be established. Assessment of the undergraduate curriculum should be guided by this body. Special attention should be paid to:

*   formulating criteria in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders from academics to students;

*   identifying a procedure that is acceptable and credible to all stakeholders;

*   democratising the process of assessment by including institutional self-evaluation, faculty self-evaluation, department/discipline self-evaluation; and

*   justifying the existence of disciplines.

6.3.2 *The regional level*

The four universities in the KwaZulu-Natal region should, in collaboration with each other, identify:

*   Regional needs for the implementation of a cost-effective undergraduate curriculum;

*   Ensure that the regional plan reflects the goals of the broad national plan;

*   Identify common programmes with a view to ensuring equity, redressing past imbalances, promoting resource sharing and increasing articulation between institutions;

*   Carrying out joint assessment of programmes, courses, and disciplines with a view to highlighting areas of interinstitutional co-operation;

*   Jointly producing resource-based courses and course materials; and

*   Using esati (Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions) as a vehicle for driving the process of inter-regional collaboration.

6.3.3   *The undergraduate curriculum*

The undergraduate curriculum in general has to be located within the following context of underprepared students, large numbers, dwindling resources, market relevance, academic staff development and infra-structural support. Given the above needs, the undergraduate curriculum would have to incorporate a great deal of initial skills development. This is normally referred as a foundation programme that focuses primarily on knowledge development, conceptual development and academic skills as a basis for further study. If the need arises, the undergraduate degree should be extended to accommodate for varying levels of preparedness.

6.3.4   *The sociology undergraduate curriculum*

In addition to a foundation, discipline specific module for sociology, the sociology undergraduate curriculum should include an intense language and skills development module that would set the basis or foundation for successful learning at levels one, two and three. This could be a university wide, faculty specific and/or discipline specific offering. UND does offer a faculty wide foundation module and it is recommended that UDW, UNIZUL and UNP does the same. This is essential in the light of underprepared students and the

second language barrier. This should be offered at the first year, be a prerequisite for the major and be credit bearing.

6.3.4.1 *Selection criteria*

The university admissions policy should determine student enrolment in the course. Some kind of university policy should guide the ratio of staff to students since this influences quality of learning.

6.3.4.2 *Constructing the course*

Ideally the course should be designed by a range of experts. This would respond to the particular kinds of academic difficulties experienced by both students and staff. These experts include:

*   subject specialists who are the best people to decide on content, research and relevance;

*   AD personnel who are able to structure the course by integrating specific skills (reading, comprehension, writing) necessary to address the learning needs of underprepared students;

*   Language specialists who would enable the curriculum to accommodate for second language difficulties;

*   Curriculum specialists who are in a position to suggest new teaching methodologies, assessment forms and course material; and

*   Students who are in the best position to provide constructive feedback on how and why the course can be improved, adapted and redesigned.

6.3.4.3   *Content*

Among the range of criteria that the sociology undergraduate curriculum could be measured, against the following are the most significant.

*   relevance;

*   marketability;

*   practical value;

*   academic value;

*   social value;

*   volume and difficulty;

*   course diversity;

*   research applicability;

*   interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary combinations; and

*   focus and coherence between units at each level and between courses from levels one, two and three.

Level one: This level should include an introductory module with strong components of conceptual development, skills development, and a basic introduction in research. While UND offers a module on skills development and conceptual development that is also a pre-requisite for the major, these are absent at the other three universities. It is recommended

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that UDW, UNIZUL, UNP begin to formalize these introductory, foundation modules into the sociology undergraduate curriculum.

Attempts should also be made to highlight or explain the link between sociology and career opportunities.

Level two: The strong focus on developing a theoretical understanding of the discipline with attempts made at linking theory with research should remain. Being the intermediate stage between levels one and three, it plays a crucial role in addressing the academic needs of both the student and the discipline. The introduction of specialized fields within sociology should remain. However, UNIZUL needs to offer a wider variety of specialized areas within sociology. It is recommended that the following should continue to be offered at all four universities from second year since it allows for a better informed career decision. These include social/rural development, industrial/labour studies, politics/gender and crime/deviance. It is also recommended that a practical research course be made compulsory.

At the moment courses appear to be taught as separate disciplines. It would seem that course overlap is not consciously brought to the attention of students. Since second year appears to direct career choices, students should be informed about inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary specializations. This would facilitate student decision making and justify the existence of the discipline against the context of skills that are vocationally applicable.

Level three: While the discipline feeds into other related professional qualifications like social work, psychology and law, greater articulation needs to be made with disciplines such as criminology and anthropology. Across the faculty, it needs to articulate far more closely with industrial and labor studies and explore other intra faculty mergers. These opportunities present themselves with changes in the economy, society and the institution. The practical research course should remain as a compulsory component and should form at least 50% of the third year course requirement.

Since infra-structural constraints may limit the number of specialized fields offered at each university, it is recommended that students be allowed to access modules, not offered in their departments, from the other universities in the region. Alternately, these four universities could reach some kind of consensus on similar course offerings and make arrangements for teaching them at particular times by particular people. For example, third year sociology students from UDW could register for the module on sociology of language at UND. The university should then recognize this as a legitimate credit. This kind of arrangement would reduce overlap of courses and serve to streamline the undergraduate degree.

6.3.4.4 *Instructional methods*

In addition to the lecture, much more attention needs to be given to small group learning. At first year, the tutorial system needs to be fully integrated into the assessment process of the formal curriculum. This does not exist at the four universities as part of the duty

performed requirements. Therefore, greater recognition needs to be given to the tutorial system as an important form of supplemental instruction designed to meet the needs of underprepared students. Furthermore, there is a need to shift from a lecture centered approach to learning to a learner centered approach and the tutorial group does precisely this.

At second and third year, small group learning should take the form of group projects, group assignments and group practicals. While this happens at UNIZUL, UND and UNP, it should play a stronger role in promoting and assessing student learning.

Course material should continue to be updated and reviewed regularly. This would ensure that appropriate, relevant and educationally sound information is taught.

6.3.4.5 *Assessment*

True learning begins after assessment. Therefore, in addition to tests, exams, essays and practicals, the following forms of assessment need to be incorporated into the sociology undergraduate curriculum. Indications are, that because they include elements of continuous assessment, they act as powerful forces of learning, growth and development. Far too little attention is given to this important component of the curriculum.

(i) *Learning contracts:* This is especially relevant at first-year where a great deal of developmental work has to be done. Essentially, it is based on a learner centered

approach to learning and lends itself well to tutorial group learning. At the core of the learning contract, students negotiate a tailored learning programme with their tutors that is adapted to their specific learning needs. Learning is then continuously addressed and readdressed through a combination of peer, self and expert assessment. The purpose of assessment should not be punitive but developmental.

The significance of introducing the learning contract at first-year is its ability to promote:

* independent learning necessary for success at university;

* assuming ownership and responsibility of learning necessary for promoting life-long learning;

* self-reflective learning necessary for growth in adult learners;

* self-paced learning that helps to build confidence; setting a strong foundation/basis from which to deal with more demanding academic issues; and the testing of a wide variety of skills.

(ii) ***Literature searches:*** At second year, students should be assessed on their ability to locate specific information. This ability is crucial for the undertaking of research. This is a middle order skill and one that prepares the student for the academic demands of the third year.

(iii) ***Portfolios:*** At second and third year a variety of higher level skills are required over a longer period of time. Students should be in a position to indicate, in a specific manner, the kind of skills they have developed over a period of time and the

relevance of these skills for employability. Furthermore, the portfolio serves as an initial preparation for a career. Specific skills would include, literature searches, research proposals, reports, research projects, assignments, seminars, etcetera.

(iv) *Seen written tests:* This tests the students' higher ability, to integrate, interpret and consolidate information. Students are given the question before-hand. The response is not straightforward but requires a critical and reasoned approach. Whereas tests and exams can promote rote-learning, a seen written test is unable to encourage rote learning. It emphasizes reasoning ability. It should be given at third year.

6.3.4.6   *Resources*

For the above recommendations to materialize, careful organization and planning is required. Additional resources and infra-structural support is needed, especially at HBUs, where the resource shortage is most severe. These resources include additional staff (both academic and non-academic especially at UNIZUL), upgrading library facilities (especially at UDW and UNIZUL), providing computer facilities (at UNIZUL) and upgrading lecture venues (at UNIZUL). Staff should also be assisted, financially, in upgrading their skills and qualifications.

6.3.4.7   *Academic staff development*

The need for academic staff development is urgent. In addition to academic qualifications and experience a teaching qualification in "higher" education should be compulsory for all lecturers. These qualifications are offered at various universities. Curriculum assessment should form part of the performance appraisal of individual academics and departments.

6.3.5   *The faculty level*

At the level of the faculty a curriculum review committee needs to be established with the purpose of:

*   Assessing faculty undergraduate curricular;

*   Reviewing curricular performance appraisal;

*   Auditing individual academics and departments;

*   Creating opportunities for inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary combinations;

*   Assisting academics with curriculum development;

*   Introducing new teaching methodologies to academic staff; and

*   Working towards justifying the existence of disciplines in the faculty.

6.4 *Summary*

The current study on the sociology undergraduate curriculum has managed to highlight the component parts of the curriculum within the context of the discipline, the educational requirements and socio-economic demands. The component parts of the sociology undergraduate curriculum include learning, teaching, knowledge, society and resources. The focus and coherence of these components have been assessed at the four universities in the eastern seaboard region – UDW, UNIZUL, UND and UNP. This has been an extensive study incorporating the views of both student and staff in assessing the sociology curriculum from levels one to three. In particular, attention has been given to the quality of the undergraduate curriculum, relevance of content and justifying the existence of the discipline. This regional comparative study has indicated a need for a continuous and comprehensive assessment of the sociology undergraduate curriculum. In general the curriculum has been highly rated. This is largely driven by a need to respond to calls for socio-economic relevance, vocational relevance, educational relevance, academic relevance and financial relevance across the higher education sector. The current study therefore addresses many of the issues debated and discussed in the academic restructuring of higher education across the country.

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University of
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APPENDIX I

COURSE EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SOCIOLOGY

You have reached your final year of study in Sociology. You are therefore in a position to share your views and experiences regarding the course and discipline of Sociology from levels 1, 2 and 3. This questionnaire is part of a doctoral dissertation. *"AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SOCIOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM AT THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE EASTERN SEABOARD REGION."* This questionnaire focuses on particular areas of the course ranging from teaching, learning, content, assessment and social/market relevance. Your response is therefore invaluable. Please answer the following questions as fully as possible.

THANK YOU

SHAHEEDA ESSACK

THIS IS AN ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A

1. **Age**

17 – 20	
21 –25	
26 – 30	
30+	

2. **Gender**

Male	
Female	

3. **Year of study at the institution**

1st	
2nd	
3rd	
4th	
5th	
Final	

4. **Courses registered for:**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. **Have you failed any year of Sociology?**

Yes	
No	

If yes, which year?_____
Elaborate:_____

_____
_____
_____

6. Indicate your first and second language.

	FIRST	SECOND
1. English		
2. Afrikaans		
3. S. Sotho		
4. N.Sotho		
5. Tswana		
6. Sipedi		
7. Xhosa		
8. Zulu		
9. Swazi		
10. Other		

7.   Why did you decide to major in Sociology?

SECTION B

Simply tick ( ) the number for each statement that most accurately reflects your view.

CONTENT

8. How do you feel about the content of the course?

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Very positive			
4- Positive			
3-Neutral			
2-Negative			
1-Very negative			

9. How would you describe the workload?

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Very light			
4-Light			
3-Reasonable			
2-Heavy			
1-Very heavy			

10. How would you describe the degree of difficulty?

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Very easy			
4-Easy			
3-Reasonable			
2-Difficult			
1-Very difficult			

11. **I understood/understand the subject matter.**

	Sociology 1	*Sociology 2*	*Sociology 3*
5-Strongl agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

12. **The course is challenging.**

	Sociology 1	*Sociology 2*	*Sociology 2*
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

13. **I clearly understood/understand the objectives of the course.**

	Sociology 1	*Sociology 2*	*Sociology 3*
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

14. **The course objectives are clearly consistent.**

	Sociology 1	*Sociology 2*	*Sociology 3*
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

15.   The course objectives are clearly stated.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

16.   The content covered in the course clearly matches the objectives.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

17.   Course materials are well prepared

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

18.   I have learnt/am learning something valuable.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

19.   The recommended readings contributed towards understanding the course.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

20.   Topics chosen were appropriate to the course.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

21.   Course content stimulated student interest in the area.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

22.   Assignments were relevant to the course.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

23. The sheer volume of work to be got through means you can't comprehend it all thoroughly.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

24. If you consider the workload "a little too heavy" or "much too heavy", please indicate which of the following factors contributed to the excessive workload. You may tick more than one box if you wish.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
The amount of material covered.			
The difficulty of the material covered.			
A lack of structure to the material.			
Uncertainty as to what is required.			
The number of contact hours required.			
The amount of written work required.			
The amount of reading required.			
Other (Please specify)			

25. Course material was not too difficult for me.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

26. Application of research findings were adequately examined.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

27. The course gave adequate background of ideas and concepts.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

28. The course gave different points of view.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

29. The course discussed currents developments.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

FOCUS AND COHERENCE

30. Units for each course fitted well together.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

31. The course helped me appreciate different perspectives.

	Sociology 1	*Sociology 2*	*Sociology 3*
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

32. As the course progressed links between units emerged.

	Sociology 1	*Sociology 2*	*Sociology 3*
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

33. There is a great deal of continuity between the sections at each level.

	Sociology 1	*Sociology 2*	*Sociology 3*
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

34. The subject matter is well integrated for each level.

	Sociology 1	*Sociology 2*	*Sociology 3*
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

35. **The goals and objectives for each level of Sociology was appropriate for the level at which it was taught.**

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

36. **The course was poorly coordinated.**

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

37. **The pace at which the course was taught was:**

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Too fast			
4-Fast			
3-About right			
2-Slow			
1-Too slow			

38. **The different sections for each level appear in a logical order.**

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Slowly disagree			

39. The course appeared to be well organized.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Slowly disagree			

40. The course handouts were clear and useful.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Slowly disagree			

41. Course assignments schedules were easy to follow.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Slowly disagree			

42. How would you rate the coordination of subject-matter between lectures, seminars and practicals which formed your course?

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Very good			
4-Good			
3-Average			
2-Poor			
1-Very poor			

43. Were there suitable numbers of lectures for your requirements on the course?

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Far too many			
4-Many			
3-Average			
2-Few			
1-Far to few			

44. Were there suitable numbers of seminars/tutorials for your requirements on the course?

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Far too many			
4-Many			
3-Average			
2-Few			
1-Far to few			

45. Were there suitable numbers of assignments for your requirements on the course?

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Far too many			
4-Many			
3-Average			
2-Few			
1-Far to few			

46. Were there suitable numbers of practicals/projects for your requirements on the course?

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Far too many			
4-Many			
3-Average			
2-Few			
1-Far to few			

47. There is a strong continuity between levels 1 & 2.

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Elaborate:_____

_____

_____

_____

48. There is a strong continuity between levels 2 & 3.

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Elaborate:_____

_____

_____

_____

LEARNING

49. The course seems to encourage us to develop our own academic interests as far as possible.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

50. We are generally given enough time to understand the things we have to learn.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

51. It is often hard to discover what is expected of you in the course?

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

52. Feedback on student work is provided only in the form of marks and grades.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

53. Students are given a great deal of choice over how they are going to learn.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

54. The course instilled positive values regarding social issues.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

55.   Rate your preference of teaching methods for each year of study.
      (1 = most preferred; 5 = least preferred)

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
Lectures			
Tutorials (+-12)			
Seminars			
Practicals			
Consultations			

56.   Describe the general quality of teaching.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Very high			
4-High			
3-Average			
2-Low			
1-Very low			

57.   Which of the following teaching aids do you find useful in teaching?

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
Handouts			
Overhead projector			
Slide projector			
T.V./Video			
Other			
All			

58.   Which teaching methods were used for each level of sociology?

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
Lectures			
Tutorials			
Seminars			
Practicals			
Consultations			
Other			

59. **Were they appropriately used for the different years of study?**
Elaborate:_____

_____

_____

ASSESSMENT

60. **Feedback on assignments was fair and useful.**

	Sociology 1	*Sociology 2*	*Sociology 3*
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

61. **Please place these assessment methods in your order of preference from 1-5.**
(1 = most preferred; 5 = least preferred)

Examinations	
Tests	
Assignments	
Practicals	
Projects	
Orals	
Other (Please specify)	

62. **How often would you like to be assessed?**

Weekly	
Fortnightly	
Monthly	
End of term	
End of semester	
End of year	

63. Assignments added to course understanding.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

64. Exams reflected important aspects of the course.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

65. Feedback on assignments and tests provided useful guidance.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

66. Identify which of the following aspects were tested (tests, exams and Assignments for each level).

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
Content and subject knowledge only			
Application of principles to a practical context			
Analysis of ideas/theories.			
Critical thinking			
Logical thinking			
Appreciation of cultural diversity			
Imagination and originality in formulating ideas and hypothesis			
Truthfulness			
Accuracy in enquiry			
Ability to learn independently			
Ability to locate information			
Social awareness of value of education			
Human understanding and respect for others			
Awareness of moral issues and traditions			
Awareness of diversity of religious and other thought			
Awareness of social issues			
Commitments to democracy			
Knowledge of major systems of governments			
Ability to make sound career decisions			
Knowledge of the labor-market			
Employability skills			

67. Identify the level at which the following should be included in any assessment practice within the sociology undergraduate curriculum.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
Content and subject knowledge only			
Application of principles to a practical context			
Analysis of ideas/theories.			
Critical thinking			
Logical thinking			
Appreciation of cultural diversity			
Imagination and originality in formulating ideas and hypothesis			
Truthfulness			
Accuracy in enquiry			
Ability to learn independently			
Ability to locate information			
Social awareness of value of education			
Human understanding and respect for others			
Awareness of moral issues and traditions			
Awareness of diversity of religious and other thought			
Awareness of social issues			
Commitments to democracy			
Knowledge of major systems of governments			
Ability to make sound career decisions			
Knowledge of the labor-market			
Employability skills			

Other comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

RESOURCES

68. How would you rate the availability of resources you may have needed for your course?

	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Library books					
Lab/Workshop facilities					
Computer facilities					
Suitable lecture venues					
Appropriate learning materials					

69. Lecturers were available outside class when you needed to see them.

	Sociology 1	*Sociology 2*	*Sociology 3*
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

VOCATIONAL RELEVANCE

70. The content of the course has strong links with society.

	Sociology 1	*Sociology 2*	*Sociology 3*
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

71. The goals and objectives of sociology are consistent with the mission statement of the university.

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Elaborate:_____

_____

20

72. The course will prepare me for a career.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

QUALITY ASSURANCE

73. Please indicate your overall view of the quality of the course in each year of study.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

74. Which unit/subject do you regard as having been the most significant in each year of study?

Unit/Subject	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3

Elaborate:_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

75. Which subject/unit do you regard as having been the least significant in each year of study?

Unit/Subject	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3

76. Staff were well qualified and equipped to teach the course.

	Sociology 1	Sociology 2	Sociology 3
5-Strongly agree			
4-Agree			
3-Uncertain			
2-Disagree			
1-Strongly disagree			

77. Please state the two main sources of difficulty you encountered in pursuing Sociology.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

78. How worthwhile was this course in comparison to other courses at this university?

5 – Very worthwhile	
4 – Just worthwhile	
3 – Uncertain	
2 – Useless	
1 – Very useless	

22

79. In general the course was valuable to me.

5 – Strongly agree	
4 – Agree	
3 – Uncertain	
2 – Disagree	
1 – Strongly disagree	

80. At the moment the sociology course is made up of a number of compulsory and elective units. Please indicate which (if any) of the units should remain compulsory.

81. Other comments

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

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Durban-Westville

APPENDIX II

TO : Dr. L-H.P. Stears
Head of Department
Department of Sociology
University of Durban-Westville

FROM : Shaheeda Essack

This questionnaire is part of a doctoral dissertation on the sociology undergraduate
curriculum. I am registered at the University of Durban-Westville in the Department of
Sociology. The topic of the dissertation is: "AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SOCIOLOGY
UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM AT THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE EASTERN
SEABOARD REGION". Since the University of Durban-Westville is part of the region,
your participation is vital. As per your permission granted in August 1997 to undertake
this study, I hereby request the completion of this questionnaire.

The questionnaire is divided into Section A and B. Both sections contain specific criteria
against which the undergraduate curriculum is assessed. These criteria include :
demographic details, content of the curriculum, beliefs and assumptions underlying the
curriculum, instructional methods, assessment forms, quality assurance vocational
relevance and staff development. This questionnaire can be completed by the relevant
staff members, course coordinators and/or the head of department . In completing the
questionnaire you are free to consult with AD personnel and refer to other research
undertaken in your department.

For any queries, please contact Dr. L-H.P. Stears at 031 - 2044523.

Thank you for your participation.

Yours sincerely

S. Essack

Shaheeda Essack

COURSE/STAFF PROFILE

1. Name of Section/Unit	Duration	Semester offered	Student Enrolment	Credits
Level One South African Society (History) Soc 101-T South African Society (Current issues) Soc 103-T Social Theory (Classical) Soc 102-T Development issues (Mainstream) Soc 104-T				
Sociology Two Contemporary Social Theory Alternative approaches to development Health and Development Gender and Development Labour and Development Social problems & Development Education & Development Race Ethnicity & Development				
Sociology Three Research methods Research methods Education & Development Gender & Development Health & Development Labour & Development Race, Ethnicity & Development Social Problems & Development				

Other Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Number of lecturers involved in teaching

Year	Number
First	
Second	
Third	

3. Indicate the following for each member of staff involved in the teaching of the programme. Refer to the staff member as 1, 2, 3 ... Do not mention the staff member's name.

Staff Member	Qualifications	Experience	Teaching Qualification

CONSTRUCTING THE CURRICULUM

4. **Which of the following people were involved in the construction of the course? Explain their role.**

Person	Tick ( )	Role
Employer/Industry		
Lecturer		
Student/Learner		
Subject Specialists		
Educational Specialists		
Curriculum Specialists		
AD Personnel		
Language Specialists		
Other (Please Specify)		

5. **In your opinion, which of the above-mentioned people should be involved in developing a course? Explain further.**

Person	Tick ( )	Reason
Employer/Industry		
Lecturer		
Student/Learner		
Subject Specialists		
Educational Specialists		
Curriculum Specialists		
AD Personnel		
Language Specialists		
Other (Please Specify)		

6. **What was the starting point in constructing the course?**

Subject matter		
Student needs		
Market needs		
Discipline needs		
All of the above		
None of the above		
A combination (Please specify)		
Other (Please specify)		

7. **How long did it take to design the course?**

Less than 3 months	
Between 3-6 months	
Between 6-9 months	
Between 9-12 months	
Between 12-15 months	
Between 15-18 months	

8. **Was there a particular approach used in constructing the course?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

9. **What were the three most important factors taken into account when constructing the course?**

(I)_____

_____

(II)_____

_____

_____

(III)_____

_____

_____

_____

4

10. In your opinion, are lecturers adequately equipped in constructing a course?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. How important is it for lecturers to have a background knowledge in educational theories of teaching and learning when designing a course?

5 - Very important	
4 - Important	
3 - Uncertain	
2 - Unimportant	
1 - Not at all important	

12. Explain the process of deciding who teaches what in the course?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. Were there any problems experienced in constructing the course?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

CONTENT

14. **What are the primary ways in which the course (subject- matter) represents itself to students?**

Worksheets	
Workbooks	
Study guides	
Prescribed textbooks	
Handouts	
Other (please Specify)	

15. **Describe three general aims of:**

Sociology I

(I)_____

_____

_____

_____

(II)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(III)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

(I)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(II)_____

_____

(III)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology III

(I)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

16. **What knowledge or skills do you expect of students when they enroll for the course?**

Sociology I

Knowledge:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Skills:

_____
_____
_____
_____

7

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

17.   **What new knowledge, skills and attitudes do you expect students to develop during the course?**

Sociology I

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

18.   For students to develop the above attributes what experience(s) do you need to provide for them during the course?

Sociology I

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

19.   **What are the three most important things that you expect students to gain from the course?**

Sociology I

(I)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology II

(I)_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)_____
_____
_____

(III)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

(I)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(II)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(III)_____

_____

_____

_____

20.   Identify the prescribed and recommended texts

Sociology I

Prescribed texts:

_____

_____

_____

Recommended texts:

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Prescribed texts:

_____

Recommended texts:

_____

_____

Sociology III

Prescribed texts:

_____

_____

_____

Recommended texts:

_____

_____

_____

21. **Were students given sufficient guidance in the use of texts and references?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

22. **Were these materials easily available?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

13

_____

_____

23. **How were your students expected to distinguish key principles from the mass of content?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

24. **Did you provide sufficient opportunities for students to see links between the content of the course and:**

i) **Related material:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

ii) **Their prior experiences:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

iii) **Their future careers:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

25. **Are the boundaries of the discipline merging with others?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

26. **How relevant is the general content of the course to:**

Sociology I

	Very relevant 5	Relevant 4	Uncertain 3	Irrelevant 2	Not at all relevant 1
Current social issues					
Solving problems					
Critical thinking					
Political issues					
Economic issues					
Educational issues					
Finding employment					
Other (please specify)					

Sociology II

	Very relevant 5	Relevant 4	Uncertain 3	Irrelevant 2	Not at all relevant 1
Current social issues					
Solving problems					
Critical thinking					
Political issues					
Economic issues					
Educational issues					
Finding employment					
Other (please specify)					

Sociology III

	Very relevant 5	Relevant 4	Uncertain 3	Irrelevant 2	Not at all relevant 1
Current social issues					
Solving problems					
Critical thinking					
Political issues					
Economic issues					
Educational issues					
Finding employment					
Other (please specify)					

27. **If the course is a prerequisite for another course, are you satisfied that the objectives and content match the expectations of lectures in later courses?**

Sociology I

Prerequisite for which course? _____

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

Sociology II

Prerequisite for which course?_____ _____ _____ _____

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

28.   Is the course intellectually challenging?

Sociology I

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

29. **Do you think that students are aware of the objectives of the course?**

Sociology I

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

18

Sociology II

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE COURSE

30.   Why is the course being taught?

Sociology One	Reason
Soc 101-T	
Soc 103-T	
Soc 102 -T	
Soc 104-T	
Sociology Two	
Contemporary Social Theory	
Alternative approaches to development	
Health and Development	
Gender and Development	
Labour and Development	
Social problems & Development	
Education & Development	
Race Ethnicity & Development	

Sociology Three	
Research methods	
Research methods	
Education & Development	
Gender & Development	
Health & Development	
Labour & Development	
Race, Ethnicity & Development	
Social Problems & Development	

31. **Rate the importance of the following for the general course. Rate 1 to 5 (5 = most important and 1 = least important).**

* Knowledge - subject matter & discipline specific	
* Adequate conceptual understanding - Facilitating communication within the discourse of the discipline	
* Skills - reading, writing & computer literacy	
* Values - honesty, respect, dedication & commitment	
* Attitudes - positive and caring	

32. **How much potential does the subject matter in the general course have for presenting new problems thereby stimulating new ways of observation and judgement which will expand the areas of further experience?**

5 - A great deal	
4 - Some	
3- Uncertain	
2 - A little	
1 - None	

33. **Would you say that the subject matter increases the competence of students in such areas of:**

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Planning & policy making			
Use of appropriate resources			
Persistence at a task			
Coping with new ideas			
Coping with conflicting opinions & theories			
Coping with different people and cultures			
Taking responsibilities for others' welfare			

34. **What are the dominant forms of inquiry in the course?**

	Scientific	Non-scientific	Other (Please specify)
Sociology I			
Sociology II			
Sociology III			

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

35. **Which of the following methods of instruction are used?**

	Sociology I	Sociology II	Sociology III
Lectures			
Tutorials			
Seminars			
Consultation			
Computer assisted learning			
Other (Please specify)			

36.   How frequently are they used?

Sociology I

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other
Lectures					
Tutorials					
Seminars					
Consultation					
Computer assisted learning					
Other (Please specify)					

Sociology II

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other
Lectures					
Tutorials					
Seminars					
Consultation					
Computer assisted learning					
Other (Please specify)					

Sociology III

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other
Lectures					
Tutorials					
Seminars					
Consultation					
Computer assisted learning					
Other (Please specify)					

37.   Are the methods of instruction compatible with:

I)   The objectives of the course:

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

II) Diverse needs of students:

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

III) Assessment forms:

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

38. Do you feel that the instructional methods used promote effective learning in students?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

39. **How would you rate the effectiveness of lectures in relation to imparting the following types of knowledge?**

	Very effective 5	Effective 4	Uncertain 3	Ineffective 2	Not at all effective 1
Factual information					
General principles					
Surveying themes that unite various topics or aspects of the subject					
Teaching the application of discipline-based principles					
Demonstrating strategies & skills of problem-solving					

40. **How would you rate the effectiveness of small group discussion (seminars and tutorials) in relation to imparting the following types of knowledge?**

	Very effective 5	Effective 4	Uncertain 3	Ineffective 2	Not at all effective 1
Promoting understanding of a body of knowledge					
Promoting relational thinking					
Practising skills like: Intellectual Verbal Computational Social					
Practising the application of principles to familiar & unfamiliar situations					
Exploring personal & professional attitudes & values					
Promoting two-way exchange of information in the teaching-learning process.					

41. **Which is the preferred method of instruction?**

	Sociology I	Sociology II	Sociology III
Lectures			
Tutorials			
Seminars			
Consultation			
Other (Please specify)			
A combination			

Please provide reasons for the above choices:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

LEARNING

42. **Sociology has its own distinctive brand of thinking, inquiry and learning. Do you agree?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

26

43.1   To what degree is the following present in the course?

	A great deal 5	Some 4	Average 3	A little 2	Not at all 1
Focus on content					
Emphasis on knowing facts only					
Students work as individuals often in competition with each other.					
Students highly dependent					
Learning objectives imposed					
Assessment by written exams					
Knowledge handed down from subject to novice					
Lectures predominate as mode of curriculum delivery					
Lecturer role is that of expert					

43.2   To what degree is the following present in the course?

	A great deal 5	Some 4	Average 3	A little 2	Not at all 1
Focus on process					
Emphasizes knowing how					
Students work in groups, teams collectively & co-operatively.					
Students highly independent					
Objectives negotiated					
Assessment varied					
Students actively generate & synthesize knowledge from many sources.					
Lecture sessions are flexible					
Lecturer is facilitator and a resource for students' learning in partnership					

ASSESSMENT

44. Indicate which of the following forms of assessment are used and indicate its frequency.

Form	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	End of Term	End of Semester
Tests						
Exams						
Orals						
Case studies						
Projects						
Dissertation						
Essays						
Fieldwork						
Practical skills & competencies						
Reviews						
Seen written exams						
Strategic plans						
Literature searches						
Portfolios						
Learning contracts						
Other (Please specify)						

Sociology II

Form	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	End of Term	End of Semester
Tests						
Exams						
Orals						
Case studies						
Projects						
Dissertation						
Essays						
Fieldwork						
Practical skills & competencies						
Reviews						
Seen written exams						
Strategic plans						
Literature searches						
Portfolios						
Learning contracts						
Other (Please specify)						

Sociology III

Form	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	End of Term	End of Semester
Tests						
Exams						
Orals						
Case studies						
Projects						
Dissertation						
Essays						
Fieldwork						
Practical skills & competencies						
Reviews						
Seen written exams						
Strategic plans						
Literature searches						
Portfolios						
Learning contracts						
Other (Please specify)						

45. **Identify the extent to which the following is assessed in the general course?**

	Aspect	A great deal	Some	Average	A little	Not at all
Cognitive Learning	Subject-matter & content					
	Skills-reading & writing					
	Verbal skills-communication					
	Rationality-logical thinking analysis synthesis					
	Intellectual perspective-application of cultural diversity					
	Aesthetic sensibility					
	Creativity, imagination					
	Intellectual integrity					
	Lifelong-learning					
Emotional & Moral development	Self-awareness					
	Psychological well-being					
	Human-understanding					
	Values & morals					
Practical competence	Application of knowledge					
	Negotiation					
	Motivation, initiative					
	Resourcefulness					
	Leadership					
	Citizenship					
Other (please specify)						

46. **Are you satisfied that the system of assessment which is used in this course is an adequate indication of each student's progress towards the goal which you identified in the first section?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please elaborate:

_____

_____

_____

_____

47.   Indicate your preference

Formative assessment (continuous)	
Summative (end of course)	
Both	
Neither	

Elaborate:

_____

_____

_____

_____

FOCUS AND COHERENCE

48.   Given the purpose of the general course and the type of subject matter being learned, is there a logical order for the treatment of topics?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

49.   How will you know whether the course is progressing satisfactorily?

_____

_____

_____

_____

50. Is provision made within and between courses in the undergraduate curriculum for:

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Continuity			
Sequence			
Integration of subject-matter			

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

51. Which of the following best describes the way in which the curriculum is designed/organized?

Category	Tick
The curriculum is designed around a focus or content especially facts, basic skills and values. Facts are usually grouped into topics.	
Central concepts in the discipline serve as the organizing elements of the curriculum. These fundamental concepts serve as a starting point deriving the more specific content around these basic ideas and organizing the content around them. The pattern of learning is one of concept-and-inquiry.	
The focus is on student experience where content is sequenced according to the way it will be used in dealing with everyday problems, needs & issues.	
The focus is on behaviors described by written objectives.	
The focus is on superior direct concepts that subsume other more specific content.	
Other (please specify)	

52. Is there an overlap with other disciplines?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

32

If yes, how would this affect the independence of the discipline and hence the sociology undergraduate curriculum?

_____

_____

_____

_____

53.   Is the content of the curriculum structured on the basis of :

Historical events	
Organized around particular themes	
Both	
Other (Please specify)	

VOCATIONAL RELEVANCE

54.   Is there evidence of employers' reaction to the capabilities of graduates from this subject areas?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

55.   Are there any indications of the level of success graduates in Sociology have in gaining employment on qualifying in the subject area?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

56. On the basis of the above information, how would you describe the level of success graduates in Sociology have in gaining employment on qualifying in the subject area?

5 -Very high success	
4 -Some success	
3 -Average	
2 -Little success	
1 -Very little success	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

RESOURCES

57. What level of provision exists in the university (library, computers, lecture venues) as far as your subject area is concerned?

5 - Very high	
4 - High	
3 - Average	
2 - Low	
1 - Very low	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

QUALITY ASSURANCE

58. **Has the Sociology undergraduate curriculum been reviewed and updated in the past three years?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

ACADEMIC STAFF

59. **Are there any staff development activities?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

If yes, how adequate are these staff development activities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

60. **Are staff satisfied with the teaching situation?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

61.   Are staff prepared to undertake recurriculation of programmes and subjects?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

62.   Are staff qualified to undertake recurriculation of programmes and subjects?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

63.   Other comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

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Durban-Westville

APPENDIX III

TO   :   Prof. H. Vilakazie
           Head of Department
           Department of Sociology
           University of Zululand

FROM :   Shaheeda Essack

This questionnaire is part of a doctoral dissertation on the sociology undergraduate curriculum. I am registered at the University of Durban-Westville in the Department of Sociology. The topic of the dissertation is : "AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SOCIOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM AT THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE EASTERN SEABOARD REGION". Since the University of Zululand is part of the region, your participation is vital. As per your permission granted in August 1997 to undertake this study in your department, I hereby request the completion of this questionnaire.

The questionnaire is divided into Section A and B. Both sections contain specific criteria against which the undergraduate curriculum is assessed. These criteria include: demographic details, content of the curriculum, beliefs and assumptions underlying the curriculum, instructional methods, assessment forms, quality assurance, vocational relevance and staff development. This questionnaire can be completed by the relevant staff members concerned, course coordinators and/or the head of department. In completing the questionnaire you are free to consult with AD personnel and refer to other research undertaken in your department/faculty.

For any queries, please contact Dr. L-H.P. Stears at 031 - 2044523.

Thank you for your participation.

Yours sincerely

Shaheeda Essack

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

SECTION A

COURSE/STAFF PROFILE

1. Name of Section/Unit	Duration	Semester offered	Student enrolment	Credits
Sociology 1 ASY 115 Introduction to Sociology ASY 125 Different Theoretical Schools of Sociology				
Sociology 2 ASY 215 History of Sociological Thought ASY 225 The French Revolution				
Sociology 3 ASY 315 Research Methodology ASY 325 Contemporary Sociology Theory				

Other Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

1

2. **Number of lecturers involved in teaching**

Year	Number
First	
Second	
Third	

3. **Indicate the following for each member of staff involved in the teaching of the programme. Refer to the staff member as 1, 2, 3 ... Do not mention the staff member's name.**

Staff Member	Qualifications	Experience	Teaching Qualification

SECTION B

CONSTRUCTING THE CURRICULUM

4. **Which of the following people were involved in the construction of the course? Explain their role.**

Person	Tick ( )	Role
Employer/Industry		
Lecturer		
Student/Learner		
Subject Specialists		
Educational Specialists		
Curriculum Specialists		
AD Personnel		
Language Specialists		
Other (Please Specify)		

5. **In your opinion, which of the above-mentioned people should be involved in developing a course? Explain further.**

Person	Tick ( )	Reason
Employer/Industry		
Lecturer		
Student/Learner		
Subject Specialists		
Educational Specialists		
Curriculum Specialists		
AD Personnel		
Language Specialists		
Other (Please Specify)		

3

6. **What was the starting point in constructing the course?**

Subject matter		
Student needs		
Market needs		
Discipline needs		
All of the above		
None of the above		
A combination (Please specify)		
Other (Please specify)		

7. **How long did it take to design the course?**

Less than 3 months	
Between 3-6 months	
Between 6-9 months	
Between 9-12 months	
Between 12-15 months	
Between 15-18 months	

8. **Was there a particular approach used in constructing the course?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. **What were the three most important factors taken into account when constructing the course?**

(I)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(II)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)

_____
_____
_____
_____

IS YOUR ~~~~ WELL STARTED
IN FACE THE CHALLENGES Of
Your ......

10. In your opinion, ~~are~~ lecturers adequately equipped in constructing a course?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

11. How important is it for lecturers to have a background knowledge in educational theories of teaching and learning when designing a course?

5 - Very important	
4 – Important	
3 – Uncertain	
2 – Unimportant	
1 - Not at all important	

12. Explain the process of deciding who teaches what in the course?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13.   Were there any problems experienced in constructing the course?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

CONTENT

14.   What are the primary ways in which the course (subject -matter) represents itself to students?

Worksheets	
Workbooks	
Study guides	
Prescribed textbooks	
Handouts	
Other (please Specify)	

15.   **Describe three general aims of:**

Sociology I

(I)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(II)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(III)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

(I)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology III

(I)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)

_____
_____
_____
_____

16. **What knowledge or skills do you expect of students when they enroll for the course?**

Sociology I

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

17.   **What new knowledge, skills and attitudes do you expect   students to develop during the course?**

Sociology I

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Knowledge:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Skills:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Attitudes:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology III

Knowledge:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Skills:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Attitudes:

_____
_____
_____
_____

18. **For students to develop the above attributes what experience(s) do you need to provide for them during the course?**

<u>Sociology I</u>

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

<u>Sociology II</u>

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

<u>Sociology III</u>

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

19. **What are the three most important things that you expect students to gain from the course?**

<u>Sociology I</u>

(I)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(II)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(III)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology II

(I)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology III

(I)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)

_____
_____
_____
_____

20.   Identify the prescribed and recommended texts

Sociology I

Prescribed texts:

_____

_____

_____

Recommended texts:

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Prescribed texts:

_____

_____

_____

Recommended texts:

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Prescribed texts:

_____

_____

_____

Recommended texts:

_____

_____

_____

21. Were students given sufficient guidance in the use of texts and references?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

22. Were these materials easily available?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

23. How were your students expected to distinguish key principles from the mass of content?

_____

_____

_____

_____

24. Did you provide sufficient opportunities for students to see links between the content of the course and:

I) **Related material:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

II)   **Their prior experiences:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

(III)   **Their future careers:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

25.   **Are the boundaries of the discipline merging with others?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

26.   How relevant is the general content of the course to:

Sociology I

	Very relevant 5	Relevant 4	Uncertain 3	Irrelevant 2	Not at all relevant 1
Current social issues					
Solving problems					
Critical thinking					
Political issues					
Economic issues					
Educational issues					
Finding employment					
Other (please specify)					

Sociology II

	Very relevant 5	Relevant 4	Uncertain 3	Irrelevant 2	Not at all relevant 1
Current social issues					
Solving problems					
Critical thinking					
Political issues					
Economic issues					
Educational issues					
Finding employment					
Other (please specify)					

Sociology III

	Very relevant 5	Relevant 4	Uncertain 3	Irrelevant 2	Not at all relevant 1
Current social issues					
Solving problems					
Critical thinking					
Political issues					
Economic issues					
Educational issues					
Finding employment					
Other (please specify)					

27. **If the course is a prerequisite for another course, are you satisfied that the objectives and content match the expectations of lectures in later courses?**

Sociology I

Prerequisite for which course? ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Prerequisite for which course?___ ___ ___ ___ ___

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Prerequisite for which course?___ ___ ___ ___

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

28.   Is the course intellectually challenging?

Sociology I

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

29. **Do you think that students are aware of the objectives of the course?**

<u>Sociology I</u>

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

<u>Sociology II</u>

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

<u>Sociology III</u>

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE COURSE

30.   Why is the course being taught?

Sociology One	Reason
ASY 115	
ASY 125	
Sociology Two	
ASY 215	
ASY 225	
Sociology Three	
ASY 315	
ASY 325	

31.   Rate the importance of the following for the general course.   Rate 1 to 5 (5 = most important and 1 = least important).

* Knowledge – subject matter & discipline specific	
* Adequate conceptual understanding – Facilitating communication within the discourse of the discipline	
* Skills - reading, writing & computer literacy	
* Values - honesty, respect, dedication & commitment	
* Attitudes – positive and caring	

32. **How much potential does the subject matter in the general course have for presenting new problems thereby stimulating new ways of observation and judgement which will expand the areas of further experience?**

5 - A great deal	
4 – Some	
3 – Uncertain	
2 - A little	
1 – None	

33. **Would you say that the subject matter increases the competence of students in such areas of:**

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Planning & policy making			
Use of appropriate resources			
Persistence at a task			
Coping with new ideas			
Coping with conflicting opinions & theories			
Coping with different people and cultures			
Taking responsibilities for others' welfare			

34. **What are the dominant forms of inquiry in the course?**

	Scientific	Non-scientific	Other (Please specify)
Sociology I			
Sociology II			
Sociology III			

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

35. **Which of the following methods of instruction are used?**

	Sociology I	Sociology II	Sociology III
Lectures			
Tutorials			
Seminars			
Consultation			
Computer assisted learning			
Other (Please specify)			

21

36. **How frequently are they used?**

Sociology I

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other
Lectures					
Tutorials					
Seminars					
Consultation					
Computer assisted learning					
Other (Please specify)					

Sociology II

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other
Lectures					
Tutorials					
Seminars					
Consultation					
Computer assisted learning					
Other (Please specify)					

Sociology III

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other
Lectures					
Tutorials					
Seminars					
Consultation					
Computer assisted learning					
Other (Please specify)					

37. **Are the methods of instruction compatible with:**

I) **The objectives of the course:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

II)   Diverse needs of students:

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

III)   Assessment forms:

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

38.   Do you feel that the instructional methods used promote effective learning in students?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

39. How would you rate the effectiveness of lectures in relation to imparting the following types of knowledge?

	Very effective 5	Effective 4	Uncertain 3	Ineffective 2	Not at all effective 1
Factual information					
General principles					
Surveying themes that unite various topics or aspects of the subject					
Teaching the application of discipline-based principles					
Demonstrating strategies & skills of problem-solving					

40. How would you rate the effectiveness of small group discussion (seminars and tutorials) in relation to imparting the following types of knowledge?

	Very effective 5	Effective 4	Uncertain 3	Ineffective 2	Not at all effective 1
Promoting understanding of a body of knowledge					
Promoting relational thinking					
Practising skills like: Intellectual Verbal Computational Social					
Practising the application of principles to familiar & unfamiliar situations					
Exploring personal & professional attitudes & values					
Promoting two-way exchange of information in the teaching-learning process.					

41. **Which is the preferred method of instruction?**

	Sociology I	Sociology II	Sociology III
Lectures			
Tutorials			
Seminars			
Consultation			
Other (Please specify)			
A combination			

Please provide reasons for the above choices:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

LEARNING

42. **Sociology has its own distinctive brand of thinking, inquiry and learning. Do you agree?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

43.1 To what degree is the following present in the course?

	A great deal 5	Some 4	Average 3	A little 2	Not at all 1
Focus on content					
Emphasis on knowing facts only					
Students work as individuals often in competition with each other.					
Students highly dependent					
Learning objectives imposed					
Assessment by written exams					
Knowledge handed down from subject to novice					
Lectures predominate as mode of curriculum delivery					
Lecturer role is that of expert					

43.2 To what degree is the following present in the course?

	A great deal 5	Some 4	Average 3	A little 2	Not at all 1
Focus on process					
Emphasizes knowing how					
Students work in groups, teams collectively & co-operatively.					
Students highly independent					
Objectives negotiated					
Assessment varied					
Students actively generate & synthesize knowledge from many sources.					
Lecture sessions are flexible					
Lecturer is facilitator and a resource for students' learning in partnership					

ASSESSMENT

44.   Indicate which of the following forms of assessment are used and indicate its frequency.

Form	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	End of Term	End of Semester
Tests						
Exams						
Orals						
Case studies						
Projects						
Dissertation						
Essays						
Fieldwork						
Practical skills & competencies						
Reviews						
Seen written exams						
Strategic plans						
Literature searches						
Portfolios						
Learning contracts						
Other (Please specify)						

Sociology II

Form	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	End of Term	End of Semester
Tests						
Exams						
Orals						
Case studies						
Projects						
Dissertation						
Essays						
Fieldwork						
Practical skills & competencies						
Reviews						
Seen written exams						
Strategic plans						
Literature searches						
Portfolios						
Learning contracts						
Other (Please specify)						

Sociology III

Form	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	End of Term	End of Semester
Tests						
Exams						
Orals						
Case studies						
Projects						
Dissertation						
Essays						
Fieldwork						
Practical skills & competencies						
Reviews						
Seen written exams						
Strategic plans						
Literature searches						
Portfolios						
Learning contracts						
Other (Please specify)						

45. Identify the extent to which the following is assessed in the general course?

	Aspect	A great deal 5	Some 4	Average 3	A little 2	Not at all 1
Cognitive Learning	Subject-matter & content					
	Skills-reading & writing					
	Verbal skills-communication					
	Rationality-logical thinking analysis synthesis					
	Intellectual perspective-application of cultural diversity					
	Aesthetic sensibility					
	Creativity, imagination					
	Intellectual integrity					
	Lifelong-learning					
Emotional & Moral development	Self-awareness					
	Psychological well-being					
	Human-understanding					
	Values & morals					
Practical competence	Application of knowledge					
	Negotiation					
	Motivation, initiative					
	Resourcefulness					
	Leadership					
	Citizenship					
Other (please specify)						

46. Are you satisfied that the system of assessment which is used in this course is an adequate indication of each student's progress towards the goal which you identified in the first section?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please elaborate

_____
_____
_____
_____

47.   **Indicate your preference**

Formative assessment (continuous)	
Summative (end of course)	
Both	
Neither	

Elaborate:

_____
_____
_____
_____

FOCUS AND COHERENCE

48.   **Given the purpose of the general course and the type of subject -matter being learned, is there a logical order for the treatment of topics?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____
_____

49.   **How will you know whether the course is progressing satisfactorily?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

50. **Is provision made within and between courses in the undergraduate curriculum for:**

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Continuity			
Sequence			
Integration of subject-matter			

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

51. **Which of the following best describes the way in which the curriculum is designed/organized?**

Category	Tick
The curriculum is designed around a focus or content especially facts, basic skills and values. Facts are usually grouped into topics.	
Central concepts in the discipline serve as the organizing elements of the curriculum. These fundamental concepts serve as a starting point deriving the more specific content around these basic ideas and organizing the content around them. The pattern of learning is one of concept-and-inquiry.	
The focus is on student experience where content is sequenced according to the way it will be used in dealing with everyday problems, needs & issues.	
The focus is on behaviors described by written objectives.	
The focus is on superior direct concepts that subsume other more specific content.	
Other (please specify)	

52. **Is there an overlap with other disciplines?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

If yes, how would this affect the independence of the discipline and hence the sociology undergraduate curriculum?

_____

_____

53. **Is the content of the curriculum structured on the basis of:**

Historical events	
Organized around particular themes	
Both	
Other (Please specify)	

VOCATIONAL RELEVANCE

54. **Is there evidence of employers' reaction to the capabilities of graduates from this subject areas?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

55. **Are there any indications of the level of success graduates in Sociology have in gaining employment on qualifying in the subject area?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

56. On the basis of the above information, how would you describe the level of success graduates in Sociology have in gaining   employment on qualifying in the subject area?

5 - Very high success	
4 - Some success	
3 - Average	
2 - Little success	
1 - Very little success	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

RESOURCES

57. What level of provision exists in the university (library, computers, lecture venues) as far as your subject area is concerned?

5 - Very high	
4 - High	
3 - Average	
2 - Low	
1 - Very low	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

QUALITY ASSURANCE

58. Has the Sociology undergraduate curriculum been reviewed and updated in the past three years?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

ACADEMIC STAFF

59.   Are there any staff development activities?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

If yes, how adequate are these staff development activities?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

60.   Are staff satisfied with the teaching situation?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

61.   Are staff prepared to undertake recurriculation of programmes and subjects?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

62. **Are staff qualified to undertake recurriculation of programmes and subjects?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

63. **Other comments:**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

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**University of
Durban-Westville**

APPENDIX IV

TO :   Prof. C. Crothers
           Head of Department
           Department of Sociology
           University of Natal - Durban

FROM :   Shaheeda Essack

This questionnaire is part of a doctoral dissertation on the sociology undergraduate curriculum. I am registered at the University of Durban-Westville in the Department of Sociology. The topic of the dissertation is: "AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SOCIOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM AT THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE EASTERN SEABOARD REGION." Since the University of Natal - Durban is part of the region your participation is vital. As per your request granted in August 1997 I hereby request the completion of this questionnaire.

The questionnaire is divided into Section A and Section B. Both sections contain specific criteria against which the undergraduate curriculum is assessed. These criteria include: demographic details, content of the curriculum, beliefs and assumptions underlying the curriculum, instructional methods, assessment forms, quality assurance, vocational relevance and staff development. This questionnaire can be completed by the relevant staff members, course coordinators and/or the head of department. In completing the questionnaire you are free to consult with AD personnel and refer to other research undertaken in the department.

For any queries, please contact Dr. L-H.P. Stears at 031 - 2044523.

Thank you for your participation.

Yours sincerely

Shaheeda Essack

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL
DURBAN

SECTION A

COURSE/STAFF PROFILE

1. Name of Section/Unit	Duration	Semester offered	Student enrolment	Credits
Sociology 1 DIDS1 IS1 Individual, Society and State DSOC 1SY2- Sociology 1B Introduction to Sociology				
Sociology 2 DSOC 2SY1- Sociology 2A Classical Sociological Theory and Social Stratification DSOC 2SY2 - Sociology 2B The Sociology of Development				
Sociology 3 DSOC 3SY1 - Sociology 3A Contemporary Sociological Theory and Research Methodology DSOC 3SY2 - Sociology 3B Research Methodology and Special Sociological fields				

Other Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Number of lecturers involved in teaching

Year	Number
First	
Second	
Third	

3. Indicate the following for each member of staff involved in the teaching of the programme. Refer to the staff member as 1, 2, 3 ... Do not mention the staff member's name.

Staff Member	Qualifications	Experience	Teaching Qualification

SECTION B

CONSTRUCTING THE CURRICULUM

4.   Which of the following people were involved in the   construction of the course? Explain their role.

Person	Tick ( )	Role
Employer/Industry		
Lecturer		
Student/Learner		
Subject Specialists		
Educational Specialists		
Curriculum Specialists		
AD Personnel		
Language Specialists		
Other (Please Specify)		

5.   In your opinion, which of the above-mentioned people should   be involved in developing a course? Explain further.

Person	Tick ( )	Reason
Employer/Industry		
Lecturer		
Student/Learner		
Subject Specialists		
Educational Specialists		
Curriculum Specialists		
AD Personnel		
Language Specialists		
Other (Please Specify)		

6.   **What was the starting point in constructing the course?**

Subject matter		
Student needs		
Market needs		
Discipline needs		
All of the above		
None of the above		
A combination (Please specify)		
Other (Please specify)		

7.   **How long did it take to design the course?**

Less than 3 months	
Between 3-6 months	
Between 6-9 months	
Between 9-12 months	
Between 12-15 months	
Between 15-18 months	

8.   **Was there a particular approach used in constructing the course?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

9.   **What were the three most important factors taken into account when constructing the course?**

(I)_____

_____

_____

(II)_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

10.   In your opinion, are lecturers adequately equipped in constructing a course?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	·

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

11.   How important is it for lecturers to have a background knowledge in educational theories of teaching and learning when designing a course?

5 - Very important	
4 - Important	
3 - Uncertain	
2 - Unimportant	
1 - Not at all important	

12.   Explain the process of deciding who teaches what in the course?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13.   Were there any problems experienced in constructing the course?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

.

CONTENT

14. **What are the primary ways in which the course (subject- matter) represents itself to students?**

Worksheets	
Workbooks	
Study guides	
Prescribed textbooks	
Handouts	
Other (please Specify)	

15. **Describe three general aims of:**

Sociology I

(I)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology II

(I)

(II)

(III)

Sociology III

(I)

(II)

(III)

16. **What knowledge or skills do you expect of students when they enrol for the course?**

Sociology I

Knowledge:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Skills:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Attitudes:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology II

Knowledge:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Skills:

_____
_____
_____

Attitudes:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology III

Knowledge:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Skills:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Attitudes:

_____
_____
_____
_____

17.   **What new knowledge, skills and attitudes do you expect students to develop during the course?**

Sociology I

Knowledge:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Skills:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Attitudes:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology II

Knowledge:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Skills:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Attitudes:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology III

Knowledge:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Skills:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Attitudes:

_____
_____
_____
_____

18. For students to develop the above attributes what experience(s) do you need to provide for them during the course?

<u>Sociology I</u>

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

<u>Sociology II</u>

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

<u>Sociology III</u>

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

19. What are the three most important things that you expect students to gain from the course?

<u>Sociology I</u>

(I)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

(I)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(II)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(III)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

(I)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(II)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(III)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

20.   Identify the prescribed and recommended texts

Sociology I

Prescribed texts:

_____

_____

_____

Recommended texts:

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Prescribed texts:

_____

_____

_____

Recommended texts:

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Prescribed texts:

_____

_____

_____

Recommended texts:

_____

_____

_____

21. Were students given sufficient guidance in the use of texts and references?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

22. Were these materials easily available?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

23. How were your students expected to distinguish key principles from the mass of content?

_____

_____

_____

_____

24. Did you provide sufficient opportunities for students to see links between the content of the course and:

i) **Related material:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

ii)　　**Their prior experiences:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

iii)　　**Their future careers:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

25.　　Are the boundaries of the discipline merging with others?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

26.   How relevant is the general content of the course to:

Sociology I

	Very relevant 5	Relevant 4	Uncertain 3	Irrelevant 2	Not at all relevant 1
Current social issues					
Solving problems					
Critical thinking					
Political issues					
Economic issues					
Educational issues					
Finding employment					
Other (please specify)					

Sociology II

	Very relevant 5	Relevant 4	Uncertain 3	Irrelevant 2	Not at all relevant 1
Current social issues					
Solving problems					
Critical thinking					
Political issues					
Economic issues					
Educational issues					
Finding employment					
Other (please specify)					

Sociology III

	Very relevant 5	Relevant 4	Uncertain 3	Irrelevant 2	Not at all relevant 1
Current social issues					
Solving problems					
Critical thinking					
Political issues					
Economic issues					
Educational issues					
Finding employment					
Other (please specify)					

27. **If the course is a prerequisite for another course, are you satisfied that the objectives and content match the expectations of lectures in later courses?**

Sociology I

Prerequisite for which course? _____

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Prerequisite for which course?_____

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

28.   Is the course intellectually challenging?

Sociology I

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

18

29. Do you think that students are aware of the objectives of the   course?

Sociology I

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE COURSE

30. Why is the course being taught?

Sociology One	Reason
DID S1 IS1	
DSOC 1SY2	
Sociology Two	
DSOC 2SY2	
DSOC 2SY2	
	✦
Sociology Three	
DSOC 3SY1	
DSOC 3SY2	

31. Rate the importance of the following for the general course. Rate 1 to 5 (5 = most important and 1 = least important).

* Knowledge - subject matter & discipline specific	
* Adequate conceptual understanding - Facilitating communication within the discourse of the discipline	
* Skills - reading, writing & computer literacy	
* Values - honesty, respect, dedication & commitment	
* Attitudes - positive and caring	

32. How much potential does the subject matter in the general course have for presenting new problems thereby stimulating new ways of observation and judgement which will expand the areas of further experience?

5 - A great deal	
4 – Some	
3- Uncertain	
2 - A little	
1 – None	

33. Would you say that the subject matter increases the competence of students in such areas of:

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Planning & policy making			
Use of appropriate resources			
Persistence at a task			
Coping with new ideas			
Coping with conflicting opinions & theories			
Coping with different people and cultures			
Taking responsibilities for others' welfare			

34. What are the dominant forms of inquiry in the course?

	Scientific	Non-scientific	Other (Please specify)
Sociology I			
Sociology II			
Sociology III			

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

35. Which of the following methods of instruction are used?

	Sociology I	Sociology II	Sociology III
Lectures			
Tutorials			
Seminars			
Consultation			
Computer assisted learning			
Other (Please specify)			

21

36. **How frequently are they used?**

Sociology I

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other
Lectures					
Tutorials					
Seminars					
Consultation					
Computer assisted learning					
Other (Please specify)					

Sociology II

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other
Lectures					
Tutorials					
Seminars					
Consultation					
Computer assisted learning					✦
Other (Please specify)					

Sociology III

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other
Lectures					
Tutorials					
Seminars					
Consultation					
Computer assisted learning					
Other (Please specify)					

37. **Are the methods of instruction compatible with:**

I) **The objectives of the course:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

II)   **Diverse needs of students:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

III)   **Assessment forms:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further

_____

_____

_____

_____

38.   **Do you feel that the instructional methods used promote effective learning in students?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

39. **How would you rate the effectiveness of lectures in relation to imparting the following types of knowledge?**

	Very effective 5	Effective 4	Uncertain 3	Ineffective 2	Not at all effective 1
Factual information					
General principles					
Surveying themes that unite various topics or aspects of the subject					
Teaching the application of discipline-based principles					
Demonstrating strategies & skills of problem-solving					

40. **How would you rate the effectiveness of small group discussion (seminars and tutorials) in relation to imparting the following types of knowledge?**

	Very effective 5	Effective 4	Uncertain 3	Ineffective 2	Not at all effective 1
Promoting understanding of a body of knowledge					
Promoting relational thinking					
Practising skills like: Intellectual Verbal Computational Social					
Practising the application of principles to familiar & unfamiliar situations					
Exploring personal & professional attitudes & values					
Promoting two-way exchange of information in the teaching-learning process.					

41. **Which is the preferred method of instruction?**

	Sociology I	Sociology II	Sociology III
Lectures			
Tutorials			
Seminars			
Consultation			
Other (Please specify)			
A combination			

Please provide reasons for the above choices:

_____

_____

_____

LEARNING

42.   **Sociology has its own distinctive brand of thinking, inquiry and learning. Do you agree?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

43.1   To what degree is the following present in the course?

	A great deal 5	Some 4	Average 3	A little 2	Not at all 1
Focus on content					
Emphasis on knowing facts only					
Students work as individuals often in competition with each other.					
Students highly dependent					
Learning objectives imposed					
Assessment by written exams					
Knowledge handed down from subject to novice					
Lectures predominate as mode of curriculum delivery					
Lecturer role is that of expert					

43.2 To what degree is the following present in the course?

	A great deal 5	Some 4	Average 3	A little 2	Not at all 1
Focus on process					
Emphasises knowing how					
Students work in groups, teams collectively & co-operatively.					
Students highly independent					
Objectives negotiated					
Assessment varied					
Students actively generate & synthesise knowledge from many sources.					
Lecture sessions are flexible					
Lecturer is facilitator and a resource for students' learning in partnership					

ASSESSMENT

44. Indicate which of the following forms of assessment are used and indicate its frequency.

Form	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	End of Term	End of Semester
Tests						
Exams						
Orals						
Case studies						
Projects						
Dissertation						
Essays						
Fieldwork						
Practical skills & competencies						
Reviews						
Seen written exams						
Strategic plans						
Literature searches						
Portfolios						
Learning contracts						
Other (Please specify)						

Sociology II

Form	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	End of Term	End of Semester
Tests						
Exams						
Orals						
Case studies						
Projects						
Dissertation						
Essays						
Fieldwork						
Practical skills & competencies						
Reviews						
Seen written exams						
Strategic plans						
Literature searches						
Portfolios						
Learning contracts						
Other (Please specify)						

Sociology III

Form	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	End of Term	End of Semester
Tests						
Exams						
Orals						
Case studies						
Projects						
Dissertation						
Essays						
Fieldwork						
Practical skills & competencies						
Reviews						
Seen written exams						
Strategic plans						
Literature searches						
Portfolios						
Learning contracts						
Other (Please specify)						

45. **Identify the extent to which the following is assessed in the general course?**

	Aspect	A great deal 5	Some 4	Average 3	A little 2	Not at all 1
Cognitive learning	Subject-matter & content					
	Skills-reading & writing					
	Verbal skills-communication					
	Rationality-logical thinking analysis synthesis					
	Intellectual perspective-application of cultural diversity					
	Aesthetic sensibility					
	Creativity, imagination					
	Intellectual integrity					
	Lifelong-learning					
Emotional & Moral development	Self-awareness			✔		
	Psychological well-being					
	Human-understanding					
	Values & morals					
Practical competence	Application of knowledge					
	Negotiation					
	Motivation, initiative					
	Resourcefulness					
	Leadership					
	Citizenship					
Other (please specify)						

46. **Are you satisfied that the system of assessment which is used in this course is an adequate indication of each student's progress towards the goal which you identified in the first section?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

28

Please elaborate:

_____

_____

_____

_____

47.   Indicate your preference

Formative assessment (continuous)	
Summative (end of course)	
Both	
Neither	

Elaborate:

_____

_____

_____

_____

FOCUS AND COHERENCE

48.   Given the purpose of the general course and the type of subject matter being learned, is there a logical order for the treatment of topics?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

49.   How will you know whether the course is progressing satisfactorily?

_____

_____

_____

_____

50. Is provision made within and between courses in the undergraduate curriculum for:

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Continuity			
Sequence			
Integration of subject-matter			

Please explain further:

_____

51. Which of the following best describes the way in which the curriculum is designed/organised?

Category	Tick
The curriculum is designed around a focus or content especially facts, basic skills and values. Facts are usually grouped into topics.	
Central concepts in the discipline serve as the organising elements of the curriculum. These fundamental concepts serve as a starting point deriving the more specific content around these basic ideas and organising the content around them. The pattern of learning is one of concept-and-inquiry.	✔
The focus is on student experience where content is sequenced according to the way it will be used in dealing with everyday problems, needs & issues.	
The focus is on behaviours described by written objectives.	
The focus is on superior direct concepts that subsume other more specific content.	
Other (please specify)	

52. Is there an overlap with other disciplines?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

If yes, how would this affect the independence of the discipline and hence the sociology undergraduate curriculum?

_____
_____
_____
_____

53. **Is the content of the curriculum structured on the basis of:**

Historical events	
Organised around particular themes	
Both	
Other (Please specify)	

VOCATIONAL RELEVANCE

54. **Is there evidence of employers' reaction to the capabilities of graduates from this subject areas?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____
_____
_____

55. **Are there any indications of the level of success graduates in Sociology have in gaining employment on qualifying in the subject area?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____
_____
_____

56. On the basis of the above information, how would you describe the level of success graduates in Sociology have in gaining employment on qualifying in the subject area?

5 - Very high success	
4 - Some success	
3 - Average	
2 - Little success	
1 - Very little success	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

RESOURCES

57. What level of provision exists in the university (library, computers, lecture venues) as far as your subject area is concerned?

5 - Very high	
4 - High	
3 - Average	
2 - Low	
1 - Very low	

Please explain further:

QUALITY ASSURANCE

58. Has the Sociology undergraduate curriculum been reviewed and updated in the past three years?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

ACADEMIC STAFF

59. **Are there any staff development activities?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

If yes, how adequate are these staff development activities?

_____

_____

_____

_____   ✝

_____

_____

60. **Are staff satisfied with the teaching situation?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

61. **Are staff prepared to undertake recurriculation of programmes and subjects?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

62. **Are staff qualified to undertake recurriculation of programmes and subjects?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

63. **Other comments:**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

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University of
Durban-Westville

APPENDIX V

TO   :   Mr. Simon Burton
             Head of Department
             Department of Sociology
             University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg

FROM: Shaheeda Essack

This questionnaire is part of a doctoral dissertation on the sociology undergraduate curriculum. I am registered at the University of Durban-Westville in the Department of Sociology.   The topic of the dissertation is :   "AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SOCIOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM AT THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE EASTERN SEABOARD REGION".   Since the University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg is part of the region your participation is vital. As per your request granted in August 1997 I hereby request the completion of this questionnaire.

The questionnaire is divided in Section A and Section B.   Both sections contain specific criteria against which the undergraduate curriculum is assessed. These criteria include: Demographic details, content of the curriculum, beliefs and assumptions underlying the curriculum, instructional methods, assessment forms, quality assurance, vocational relevance and staff development. This questionnaire can be completed by the relevant staff members, course coordinators and/or the head of department. In completing the questionnaire you are free to consult with AD personnel and refer to other research undertaken in your department.

For any queries, please contact Dr.L-H.P. Stears at 031-2044523.

Thank you for your participation.

Yours sincerely

Shaheeda Essack

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL
PIETERMARITZBURG

SECTION A
COURSE STAFF PROFILE

1. Name of Section/Unit	Duration	Semester offered	Student enrolment	Credits
Soc 100 Sociology 110 Introduction to Sociology Sociology 120 Social Structure, Social Change and South African Society				
Soc 200 Sociology 221 Sociology of Development in South Africa Sociology 210 The Sociological Tradition				
Soc 300 Sociology 310 Practical Course in Research Methods Sociology 322 Social & Economic issues in Third World Development Sociology 330 Sociology of Rural South Africa Sociology 390 Gender Studies Sociology 371 Culture, Communication & Development				

Other Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Number of lecturers involved in teaching

Year	Number
First	
Second	
Third	

3. Indicate the following for each member of staff involved in the teaching of the programme. Refer to the staff member as 1, 2, 3 ... Do not mention the staff member's name.

Staff Member	Qualifications	Experience	Teaching Qualification

SECTION B

CONSTRUCTING THE CURRICULUM

4. **Which of the following people were involved in the construction of the course? Explain their role.**

Person	Tick ( )	Role
Employer/Industry		
Lecturer		
Student/Learner		
Subject Specialists		
Educational Specialists		
Curriculum Specialists		
AD Personnel		
Language Specialists		
Other (Please Specify)		

5. **In your opinion, which of the above-mentioned people should be involved in developing a course? Explain further.**

Person	Tick ( )	Reason
Employer/Industry		
Lecturer		
Student/Learner		
Subject Specialists		
Educational Specialists		
Curriculum Specialists		
AD Personnel		
Language Specialists		
Other (Please Specify)		

6. **What was the starting point in constructing the course?**

Subject matter		
Student needs		
Market needs		
Discipline needs		
All of the above		
None of the above		
A combination (Please specify)		
Other (Please specify)		

7. **How long did it take to design the course?**

Less than 3 months	
Between 3-6 months	
Between 6-9 months	
Between 9-12 months	
Between 12-15 months	
Between 15-18 months	

8. **Was there a particular approach used in constructing the course?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

9. **What were the three most important factors taken into account when constructing the course?**

(I)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)

_____
_____
_____
_____

4

10. **In your opinion, are lecturers adequately equipped in constructing a course?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. **How important is it for lecturers to have a background knowledge in educational theories of teaching and learning when designing a course?**

5 - Very important	
4 - Important	
3 - Uncertain	
2 - Unimportant	
1 - Not at all important	

12. **Explain the process of deciding who teaches what in the course?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. **Were there any problems experienced in constructing the course?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

CONTENT

14. **What are the primary ways in which the course (subject- matter) represents itself to students?**

Worksheets	
Workbooks	
Study guides	
Prescribed textbooks	
Handouts	
Other (please Specify)	

15. **Describe three general aims of:**

Sociology I

(I)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology II
(I)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(III)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

(I)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(II)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(III)

_____

_____

_____

_____

16.   **What knowledge or skills do you expect of students when they enrol for the course?**

Sociology I

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. **What new knowledge, skills and attitudes do you expect students to develop during the course?**

Sociology I

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Knowledge:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skills:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attitudes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. **For students to develop the above attributes what experience(s) do you need to provide for them during the course?**

Sociology I

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

19.   **What are the three most important things that you expect students to gain from the course?**

Sociology I

(I)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology II

(I)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sociology III

(I)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(II)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(III)

_____
_____
_____
_____

20.   Identify the prescribed and recommended texts

Sociology I

Prescribed texts:

_____
_____
_____

Recommended texts:

_____
_____
_____

Sociology II

Prescribed texts:

_____

_____

_____

Recommended texts:

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Prescribed texts:

_____

_____

_____

Recommended texts:

_____

_____

_____

21.   Were students given sufficient guidance in the use of texts and references?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

22.   Were these materials easily available?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

13

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

23. **How were your students expected to distinguish key principles from the mass of content?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

24. **Did you provide sufficient opportunities for students to see links between the content of the course and:**

I) **Related material:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

II) **Their prior experiences:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

III) **Their future careers:**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

25. **Are the boundaries of the discipline merging with others?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15

26. **How relevant is the general content of the course to:**

Sociology I

	Very relevant 5	Relevant 4	Uncertain 3	Irrelevant 2	Not at all relevant 1
Current social issues					
Solving problems					
Critical thinking					
Political issues					
Economic issues					
Educational issues					
Finding employment					
Other (please specify)					

Sociology II

	Very relevant 5	Relevant 4	Uncertain 3	Irrelevant 2	Not at all relevant 1
Current social issues					
Solving problems					
Critical thinking					
Political issues					
Economic issues					
Educational issues					
Finding employment					
Other (please specify)					

Sociology III

	Very relevant 5	Relevant 4	Uncertain 3	Irrelevant 2	Not at all relevant 1
Current social issues					
Solving problems					
Critical thinking					
Political issues					
Economic issues					
Educational issues					
Finding employment					
Other (please specify)					

27. **If the course is a prerequisite for another course, are you satisfied that the objectives and content match the expectations of lectures in later courses?**

Sociology I

Prerequisite for which course? _____

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Prerequisite for which course?_____

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

28.   Is the course intellectually challenging?

<u>Sociology I</u>

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

<u>Sociology II</u>

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

<u>Sociology III</u>

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

29.   **Do you think that students are aware of the objectives of the   course?**

Sociology I

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology II

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sociology III

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE COURSE

30. Why is the course being taught?

Soc 100	Reason
Sociology 110	
Sociology 120	
Soc 200	
Sociology 221	
Sociology 210	
Soc 300	
Sociology 310	
Sociology 322	
Sociology 330	
Sociology 390	
Sociology 371	

31.   Rate the importance of the following for the general course.   Rate 1 to 5 (5 = most important and 1 = least important).

* Knowledge - subject matter & discipline specific	
* Adequate conceptual understanding - Facilitating communication within the discourse of the discipline	
* Skills - reading, writing & computer literacy	
* Values - honesty, respect, dedication & commitment	
* Attitudes - positive and caring	

32.   How much potential does the subject matter in the general course have for presenting new problems thereby stimulating new ways of observation and judgement which will expand the areas of further experience?

5 - A great deal	
4 – Some	
3- Uncertain	
2 - A little	
1 – None	

33.   Would you say that the subject matter increases the competence of students in such areas of:

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Planning & policy making			
Use of appropriate resources			
Persistence at a task			
Coping with new ideas			
Coping with conflicting opinions & theories			
Coping with different people and cultures			
Taking responsibilities for others' welfare			

34.   What are the dominant forms of inquiry in the course?

	Scientific	Non-scientific	Other (Please specify)
Sociology I			
Sociology II			
Sociology III			

21

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

35.   Which of the following methods of instruction are used?

	Sociology I	Sociology II	Sociology III
Lectures			
Tutorials			
Seminars			
Consultation			
Computer assisted learning			
Other (Please specify)			

36.   How frequently are they used?

Sociology I

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other
Lectures					
Tutorials					
Seminars					
Consultation					
Computer assisted learning					
Other (Please specify)					

Sociology II

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other
Lectures					
Tutorials					
Seminars					
Consultation					
Computer assisted learning					
Other (Please specify)					

Sociology III

	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other
Lectures					
Tutorials					
Seminars					
Consultation					
Computer assisted learning					
Other (Please specify)					

37. Are the methods of instruction compatible with:

I) The objectives of the course:

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

II) Diverse needs of students:

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

III) Assessment forms:

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

38. **Do you feel that the instructional methods used promote effective learning in students?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

39. **How would you rate the effectiveness of lectures in relation to imparting the following types of knowledge?**

	Very effective 5	Effective 4	Uncertain 3	Ineffective 2	Not at all effective 1
Factual information					
General principles					
Surveying themes that unite various topics or aspects of the subject					
Teaching the application of discipline-based principles					
Demonstrating strategies & skills of problem-solving					

40. **How would you rate the effectiveness of small group discussion (seminars and tutorials) in relation to imparting the following types of knowledge?**

	Very effective 5	Effective 4	Uncertain 3	Ineffective 2	Not at all effective 1
Promoting understanding of a body of knowledge					
Promoting relational thinking					
Practising skills like: Intellectual Verbal Computational Social					
Practising the application of principles to familiar & unfamiliar situations					
Exploring personal & professional attitudes & values					
Promoting two-way exchange of information in the teaching-learning process.					

41. **Which is the preferred method of instruction?**

	Sociology I	Sociology II	Sociology III
Lectures			
Tutorials			
Seminars			
Consultation			
Other (Please specify)			
A combination			

Please provide reasons for the above choices:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

LEARNING

42.	Sociology has its own distinctive brand of thinking, inquiry and learning. Do you agree?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

43.1	To what degree is the following present in the course?

	A great deal 5	Some 4	Average 3	A little 2	Not at all 1
Focus on content					
Emphasis on knowing facts only					
Students work as individuals often in competition with each other.					
Students highly dependent					
Learning objectives imposed					
Assessment by written exams					
Knowledge handed down from subject to novice					
Lectures predominate as mode of curriculum delivery					
Lecturer role is that of expert					

43.2   To what degree is the following present in the course?

	A great deal 5	Some 4	Average 3	A little 2	Not at all 1
Focus on process					
Emphasises knowing how					
Students work in groups, teams collectively & co-operatively.					
Students highly independent					
Objectives negotiated					
Assessment varied					
Students actively generate & synthesise knowledge from many sources.					
Lecture sessions are flexible					
Lecturer is facilitator and a resource for students' learning in partnership					

ASSESSMENT

44.   Indicate which of the following forms of assessment are used and indicate its frequency.

Form	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	End of Term	End of Semester
Tests						
Exams						
Orals						
Case studies						
Projects						
Dissertation						
Essays						
Fieldwork						
Practical skills & competencies						
Reviews						
Seen written exams						
Strategic plans						
Literature searches						
Portfolios						
Learning contracts						
Other (Please specify)						

Sociology II

Form	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	End of Term	End of Semester
Tests						
Exams						
Orals						
Case studies						
Projects						
Dissertation						
Essays						
Fieldwork						
Practical skills & competencies						
Reviews						
Seen written exams						
Strategic plans						
Literature searches						
Portfolios						
Learning contracts						
Other (Please specify)						

Sociology III

Form	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	End of Term	End of Semester
Tests						
Exams						
Orals						
Case studies						
Projects						
Dissertation						
Essays						
Fieldwork						
Practical skills & competencies						
Reviews						
Seen written exams						
Strategic plans						
Literature searches						
Portfolios						
Learning contracts						
Other (Please specify)						

45.   Identify the extent to which the following is assessed in the general course?

	Aspect	A great deal 5	Some 4	Average 3	A little 2	Not at all 1
Cognitive learning	Subject-matter & content					
	Skills-reading & writing					
	Verbal skills-communication					
	Rationality-logical thinking Analysis Synthesis					
	Intellectual perspective-application of cultural diversity					
	Aesthetic sensibility					
	Creativity, imagination					
	Intellectual integrity					
	Lifelong-learning					
Emotional & Moral development	Self-awareness					
	Psychological well-being					
	Human-understanding					
	Values & morals					
Practical competence	Application of knowledge					
	Negotiation					
	Motivation, initiative					
	Resourcefulness					
	Leadership					
	Citizenship					
Other (please specify)						

46. Are you satisfied that the system of assessment which is used in this course is an adequate indication of each student's progress towards the goal which you identified in the first section?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please elaborate:

_____
_____
_____
_____

47. Indicate your preference

Formative assessment (continuous)	
Summative (end of course)	
Both	
Neither	

Elaborate_____

_____
_____
_____

FOCUS AND COHERENCE

48. Given the purpose of the general course and the type of subject matter being learned, is there a logical order for the treatment of topics?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____
_____
_____

49. How will you know whether the course is progressing satisfactorily?

_____

_____

_____

_____

50. Is provision made within and between courses in the undergraduate curriculum for:

	Yes	No	Uncertain
Continuity			
Sequence			
Integration of subject-matter			

Please explain further

_____

_____

_____

_____

51. Which of the following best describes the way in which the curriculum is designed/organised?

Category	Tick
The curriculum is designed around a focus or content especially facts, basic skills and values. Facts are usually grouped into topics.	
Central concepts in the discipline serve as the organising elements of the curriculum. These fundamental concepts serve as a starting point deriving the more specific content around these basic ideas and organising the content around them. The pattern of learning is one of concept-and-inquiry.	
The focus is on student experience where content is sequenced according to the way it will be used in dealing with everyday problems, needs & issues.	
The focus is on behaviours described by written objectives.	
The focus is on superior direct concepts that subsume other more specific content.	
Other (please specify)	

52. Is there an overlap with other disciplines?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

If yes, how would this affect the independence of the discipline and hence the sociology undergraduate curriculum?

_____

_____

53. Is the content of the curriculum structured on the basis of:

Historical events	
Organised around particular themes	
Both	
Other (Please Specify)	

VOCATIONAL RELEVANCE

54. Is there evidence of employers' reaction to the capabilities of graduates from this subject areas?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

55. Are there any indications of the level of success graduates in Sociology have in gaining employment on qualifying in the subject area?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

56. On the basis of the above information, how would you describe the level of success graduates in Sociology have in gaining employment on qualifying in the subject area?

5 - Very high success	
4 - Some success	
3 - Average	
2 - Little success	
1 - Very little success	

Please explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

RESOURCES

57. What level of provision exists in the university (library, computers, lecture venues) as far as your subject area is concerned?

5 - Very high	
4 - High	
3 - Average	
2 - Low	
1 - Very low	

Please explain further:

_____
_____
_____
_____

QUALITY ASSURANCE

58. Has the Sociology undergraduate curriculum been reviewed and updated in the past three years?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

ACADEMIC STAFF

59. Are there any staff development activities?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

If yes, how adequate are these staff development activities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

60. Are staff satisfied with the teaching situation?

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

61. **Are staff prepared to undertake recurriculation of programmes and subjects?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

62. **Are staff qualified to undertake recurriculation of programmes and subjects?**

Yes	
No	
Uncertain	

Please explain further:

_____

_____

_____

_____

63. **Other comments:**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION