Assessing students' understanding of human behavior: A multidisciplinary out...
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ASSESSING STUDENTS’ UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY OUTCOMES-BASED APPROACH FOR THE DESIGN AND ASSESSMENT OF AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM GOAL*

In this paper, we present a strategy for the curricular design and assessment of one multidisciplinary program goal (understanding human behavior). We show how assessing a desired outcome requires attention to four specific areas: organizational context, the articulation of a learning model, program design and implementation, and outcomes assessment. Our findings, based on multiple indicators gathered over time and including both summative and formative measures, suggest that our graduates are generally achieving the outcomes established for them. We discuss how our results are used to inform decision-makers, and how inconsistencies discovered between the program’s desired outcomes and students’ actual achievements are managed within the framework of the program. Finally, we highlight several lessons learned as a result of this intensive process, linking its benefits to programs within sociology and other disciplines.

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Overall, higher education has lost internal coherence and, with it, external authority. In consequence, it has been increasingly subjected to external oversight and interference. Robert L. Simshheimer (1994:3-4)

At some point during the 20th century, research replaced teaching as the raison d’être of higher education. As with most social transformations, this one was both revolutionary and evolutionary. The impetus for this educational metamorphosis originated out of profound revolutionary changes gripping the larger society, including those characterized by industrialization (Marx [1867] 1906), a bureaucratically organized workday (Weber [1921] 1978), and a gradual shift in the division of labor (Durkheim [1893] 1933) toward principles of scientific management for the workplace (Taylor 1911). The 19th century American college, with its emphasis on curricular breadth and the “educated individual,” gradually evolved into the university, with a curriculum characterized by specialization, scientific knowledge, and professional application (Veysey 1965). This era of curriculum

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reform institutionalized science through the creation of disciplines, majors, and course electives (Handlin and Handlin 1970; Veysey 1965), interjecting a renewed purpose into higher education. Students would henceforth concentrate their studies in an area based on the particular knowledge of a scientific discipline instead of receiving a broad general education (Brubacher and Rudy 1976).

Out of this transformation emerged the laudable graduate research programs that we have come to admire and attempt to emulate at all levels of higher education. With the redefinition of higher education as the harbinger of scientific knowledge, we have witnessed increased pressure toward organizational homogeneity (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Zunz 1998); our curriculum and faculty roles have become increasingly similar irrespective of our institutional contexts or students’ needs. Indeed, many traditional colleges have adopted the organizational structure and name—“university”—of their larger counterparts, whether or not they actually offer advanced graduate instruction. This reorientation toward science has gradually shifted the faculty’s focus, particularly at the undergraduate level, from student learning to the accumulation of grants and publication where the quest for visibility and institutional prominence have become aligned with federal funding (Graham and Diamond 1997) and external performance indicators (Keith 1999; 2001; Keith and Babchuck 1998).

This transformation, while obviously not applicable to every college, has permeated the foundations of higher education; even faculty at colleges offering only baccalaureate and associate degrees find that scientific publication of some type is a necessary, and in many cases sufficient, condition for tenure. In many respects, teaching has been estranged from higher education as one among several conflicting priorities. As a result, the energy with which faculty approach teaching is minimized, often reduced to little more than a block that must be checked to appease the trustees and law-makers who regulate the allocation of financial resources.

Within the last two decades, the pendulum has begun to swing back toward a renewed focus on student learning. Ernest Boyer (1987:2), as president of the Carnegie Foundation, surmised that: “many of the nation’s colleges are more successful in credentialing than in providing a quality education for their students.” He based his conjecture on the belief that competing priorities and conflicting interests have shifted attention away from a focus on student learning, thereby creating further confusion about the purpose of higher education and its relevance to students’ future lives.

These concerns reflect a perceived need for a curriculum intentionally constructed around carefully articulated program goals that both guide assessment strategies and continuously inform faculty about their students’ outcomes. In many respects, this has become somewhat of a revolution itself, with faculty seeking ways to regain control over their professional lives. To illustrate, Banta et al. (1996) suggest that assessment plans are most useful when they are effective (goal-based), efficient (minimizing disruptions and maximizing use of existing indicators), and comprehensive (yielding multiple measures across several time points). Moreover, linking an assessment plan to a curriculum becomes critical if a program or college is to justify why it has structured student experiences in a particular manner (Ratcliffe 1992), especially for purposes of managing program improvement and accountability (Hatfield 2001; Ratcliffe, Lubinescu, and Gaffney 2001).

In this paper, we offer a strategy for curriculum design based on the assessment of students’ achievement of desired program outcomes. Ours is a story of how a multidisciplinary faculty, brought together by seemingly artificial academic divisions reached consensus on the relevance of social and behavioral science disciplines in the education of undergraduate students. We discovered that outcomes assessment around a particular academic program goal directs
attention to four specific areas: organizational context, articulation of a learning model, program design and implementation, and outcomes assessment. We discuss each of these areas, and follow it with a summary of the lessons gleaned from this activity.

Organizational Context

Institutions of higher education are obviously not all the same. Even those within the same Carnegie classification frequently have different constituencies, varied funding agencies, and students with vastly different competencies, backgrounds, and expectations. The tremendous array of variations suggests that student learning outcomes must be tailored to the unique environments in which students learn. Moreover, the dynamics between departments, among faculty, and with administrators are also likely to vary dramatically from one educational environment to another. Consequently, the design and implementation of a curriculum will be context-specific; that is, linked to the unique organizational characteristics that structure learning environments. A brief discussion of the educational environment is important to understanding the design of curricula at specific institutions.

The United States Military Academy (USMA) is the only U.S. institution whose primary mission is to prepare students (cadets) for a career as professional Army officers. Three programs provide the structure for cadet leader development, emphasizing cadets' intellectual foundation, military skills and knowledge, physical fitness, leadership, and character. The system for cadet leader development provides a common experience based on a core curriculum organized to graduate commissioned Army officers to meet the needs of the Army.²

The Military Academy’s academic program must provide cadets with the intellectual foundation necessary to succeed as military officers while also meeting the higher educational standards of institutional and program-level accreditation boards. During the past decade, faculty and administrators associated with the Military Academy have worked together to define what is meant by the Academy’s intellectual foundation goal.³ This work culminated in the articulation of 10 academic program goals—which faculty wrote and the Academy published as a strategic concept paper, Educating Future Army Officers for a Changing World (USMA 2002)—that balance engineering and technology with the behavioral and social sciences.⁴ All new faculty receive a copy of this document upon their arrival at West Point. These 10 goals are integrated by a single overarching purpose: to ensure that USMA graduates can anticipate and respond effectively to the uncertainties of a changing technological, social, political, and economic world.

²The mission of the USMA, as stated in the Academy’s strategic guidance document, West Point 2010 (USMA 2000f:7), is “to educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country; professional growth throughout a career as an officer in the United States Army; and a lifetime of selfless service to the Nation.”

³For a detailed discussion of the recent history of curricular reform at the USMA, we recommend a review of Forsythe and Keith (1999).

⁴The academic program’s 10 goals place an emphasis on (1) engineering and technology, (2) math and science, (3) historical awareness, (4) cultural awareness, (5) understanding human behavior, (6) communication, (7) information technology, (8) creativity, (9) moral awareness, and (10) continued intellectual development. These goals, save for information technology, were first outlined in Educating Army Leaders for the 21st Century (USMA 1998a), and revised to include all 10 goals in Educating Army Officers for a Changing World (USMA 2002).
While two of these 10 goals are particularly relevant to sociology, we will focus on just one of these in this paper: understanding human behavior. A general understanding of human behavior is thought to be essential for the Army officer, who must anticipate and respond to the behavior of enlisted soldiers, the behavior of civilians located around the world, and the interplay of national actors. In particular, Army officers must understand how individuals, groups, and societies pursue social, political, and economic objectives. It is for this reason that we have created a specific focus on human behavior as one of our 10 program goals.

The Learning Model
Our goal of understanding human behavior states that "(g)raduates understand patterns of human behavior, particularly how individuals, organizations, and societies pursue social, political, and economic goals" (USMA 2002). Because Army leadership is ultimately a human endeavor, an understanding of human behavior is critical to the intellectual development of West Point graduates. Throughout their careers, our graduates will guide people within organizations to implement technological, social, political, and economic change; thus, understanding human behavior as it responds to change will always be a fundamental requirement of successful Army officers.

An amplification of the goal's rationale serves as an important first step in justifying its overall importance for our graduates. To this end, we contend that understanding human behavior is important to our graduates for several reasons. First, the social dimension of human behavior helps graduates understand their own motivation and actions as well as the motivation and actions of the individuals, groups, and organizations that they will lead or with whom they will work. This understanding will help them make informed decisions as they lead individuals and units within larger organizations. Second, the political-economic dimension of human behavior helps graduates understand the broad context of their decisions; graduates must appreciate the factors that influence the behavior of states and other international actors as well as the use of foreign policy tools, including the use of force. This includes an awareness of the importance and limitations of military power, the constitutional structure and underlying values of the American political system, and the subordination of the military to civilian authority within that system. Third, the officer dimension of understanding human behavior develops in graduates an understanding of the characteristics of the military profession and the unique role of the military in American society. It is from this understanding that an officer's self-identity can emerge: graduates recognize and communicate the shared values of the profession to reinforce the military's proper contribution to national security missions. These basic dimensions—social, political, economic, and officership—constitute the general goal of understanding human behavior in the Academy.

Perhaps what is less clear from the above description of the goal of understanding human behavior is how these dimensions can be directly assessed within and beyond a curriculum. What is required is a specific set of statements or nominal definitions of what graduates can do upon achievement of this goal. We list here seven expectations of graduates that evidence an understanding of human behavior:

1. Graduates understand their leadership style and how their personality and preferences affect their interactions with subordinates, peers, and supervisors.
2. Graduates understand and can apply theories of individual, group, and societal behavior, especially in the context of the profession of arms. Furthermore, they have adopted a set of effective individual, group, and organizational leadership skills and abilities to prepare them for professional responsibilities in diverse situations and con-
texts throughout their careers.

3. Graduates understand and communicate the role of the officer in the military as a professional.

4. Graduates recognize and are able to explain the differences among social, political, and economic decision-making processes at different levels, with a particular emphasis on how individuals, organizations, and societies make decisions to allocate scarce resources among competing demands.

5. Graduates understand the multilevel processes and values by which we make decisions within the democratic, constitutional structure of the U.S. political system. Accordingly, they realize how broader social, political, and economic contexts of American society affect their behavior as leaders, and can apply that understanding to make necessary changes within their organizations.

6. Graduates understand nation-state behaviors that influence the structure and function of the military and the application of military force, and appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the military’s role as an instrument of policy to protect national and societal interests at home and abroad.

7. Graduates can synthesize the systematic study of human behavior with knowledge of cultural differences to understand how culture affects decisions.

With these expectations in mind, we can begin to design a curriculum that affords cadets the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the goal’s seven dimensions. In effect, we create a “learning model” of the goal—that is, a theory about how the process through which students learn is organized to achieve a desired educational outcome (Forsythe and Keith 1999). The learning model is a blueprint for the curriculum, providing a conceptual foundation to guide the selection and arrangement of student experiences believed to promote goal achievement; it serves as a declaration of the type of student-centered educational outcomes we desire as faculty. A team of faculty works together to create and subsequently assess the relevance of the learning model over time.

The structure of our learning model emphasizes three important elements. First, cadets move through a progression of challenging and diverse experiences that develop their ability to examine behavior at different levels of analysis (individual, group, organizational, societal, and global) within different contexts (social, political, and economic). Second, their experiences emphasize purposeful development in the processes of learning and content of different disciplinary perspectives. Third, within the constraints of our four-year curriculum, cadets’ experiences include various levels of analysis, goals, learning processes, and disciplinary perspectives.

Within this curricular structure, cadets gradually develop outcomes that are consistent with the goal of understanding human behavior; they encounter a process that refines their understanding of human behavior in a manner that is somewhat analogous to Bloom’s taxonomy (1984). For example, the curriculum is designed to ensure that cadets master the process of individual assessment and feedback to enhance their self-awareness and focus them on self-improvement. Moreover, cadets learn and demonstrate comprehension of various theories of human behavior in order to develop a critical appreciation for the insights and limitations of these perspectives. They then apply these theories to practical situations, moving from an initial emphasis on understanding to a greater emphasis on application and evaluation.

Over time, cadets analyze the complexity of human behavior and relationships across various contexts and levels of analysis. As cadets progress, they are able to analyze behavior using an interdisciplinary perspective. Ideally, the cadets will develop a habit of reflection to evaluate their experiences.

With few exceptions, cadets must graduate within four years of admission to the Military Academy.
as well as actively seeking support and feedback for their personal and professional development and understanding of human behavior. Thus, over the course of their development, cadets become increasingly sophisticated and precise in the synthesis and evaluation of material by presenting their analyses of human behavior through discussions, formal presentations, written essays, and research papers.

**Program Design and Implementation**

Clearly, there exist many different ways to link courses together to achieve our desired outcomes; however, a curriculum should conform to a learning model based on what faculty expect to observe in their students through participation in the program. Learning is an evolutionary process. We need to sequence courses together in meaningful ways consistent with the purpose or direction of the learning model. Without such guidance, faculty merely offer instruction in a collection of topical courses. Thus, program design is an intermediate step between the faculty’s articulation of a learning model and their assessment of student outcomes.

Following the articulation of a learning model for the goal of understanding human behavior, we set out to design a curriculum that satisfied the structure, process, and content of this goal. Institutional context is obviously important to this step because the specific disciplines and courses selected may vary from one educational environment to another, depending on the composition and expertise of the faculty on staff. Moreover, our review of human behavior led us to determine that no single discipline has a monopoly on the subject of human behavior; the scope of human behavior reveals itself through the study of history, geography, and literature by emphasizing spatial and temporal differences within American society and among the cultures of the world. Theories of human behavior emerge from the study of psychology, sociology, political science, economics, and philosophy through their focus on the nature of cognition, changing conceptions of the mind, and the social, political, and economic contexts within which human behavior occurs. Similarly, an understanding of decision-making processes at different levels grows through the study of economic, legal, political, and social organizations within American society, the U.S. constitutional system, the military, and the global community. Many of these disciplines analyze human behavior from multiple levels and perspectives, each offering distinct insights (USMA 1996); as such, we believe that the cadets' study of human behavior must include all of these disciplines.

Although their experiences generally build from an understanding of individual behavior to organizational and societal behavior, cadets have a number of parallel experiences that require them to deal simultaneously with different levels of analyses and goals. These concurrent experiences must balance an understanding of both the substance (the breadth of human experience) and theories (frameworks for explaining that experience) most relevant to their professional development. Such development builds on a study of the military as an organization, institution, and profession—especially distinguishing officers as members of a profession—in accordance with the developing concept of officerhood.

Our challenge was to identify and, when necessary, develop courses that coincided with these curricular objectives. Clearly, many courses could be designed that would meet the objectives of the stated program. In order to minimize disruption, our intention was to use, to the extent possible, courses already within the core curriculum. In looking at our existing courses, we identified a set that neatly fell into three catego-
ries, which, when taken together, went a considerable way toward meeting our program needs (USMA 1996). Two existing courses, general psychology and military leadership, provided the necessary link between individual and organization behavior—what we define as a social sequence.

Our assessment revealed that the general psychology course is closely linked to cadets’ leadership experiences during their first two years, which consists of primarily working one-on-one with other individuals. The military leadership course (organizational sociology) builds on these early experiences while preparing cadets for the more demanding leadership challenges they will encounter in their junior and senior years, particularly those of managing individual behavior within organizations. Three other courses, American politics, economic principles, and international relations, were identified as an explicit link for the political and economic behavior aspects of our learning model. The first two courses already served as prerequisites to the international relations course. Cadets also enroll in a course in constitutional law (taken during their senior year) to understand the legal system of the United States and the military. Together, these six courses serve as the foundation of the human behavior goal, reflecting a direct link between the individual and organizational behavior our graduates will experience as officers within various political, economic, and global contexts.

Another set of courses provided an important backdrop to various aspects of human behavior, past and present, but did not formally present theories of human behavior. We identified these as scope courses; they offered material supportive of our goal without necessarily contributing directly to the specific objectives outlined above. For example, physical geography, a course that all cadets take in their sophomore year, concentrates on the military aspects of terrain, environmental stewardship, and cultural geography. In the freshman year, cadets also take two semesters of world history, with a focus on the development and history of major civilizations; cadets deficient in U.S. history must take two semesters of American history instead of world history. Cadets also enroll in two courses of military history in the junior year, which offer a focus on the changing nature of warfare as nations adjust to social, political, economic, and technological developments. A philosophy course helps develop the cadet’s capacity to think clearly and critically using the language, arguments, and methods of moral discourse, particularly in the realm of war and morality. Finally, two semesters of a foreign language, taken during the sophomore year, emphasize a basic language and an introduction to the culture of the native speakers of the language.

These 14 courses provide a framework for assessing cadets’ understanding of human behavior, as presented by the seven dimensions outlined above: The general psychology course underscores cadet understanding of how their leadership styles and personalities influence their interaction with others; the focus of the military leadership course is the understanding of various theories of individual and organizational behavior, particularly in the context of the profession of arms; the international relations course emphasizes how nation-states influence the structure, function, and application of the military; the course on constitutional law instructs cadets on the multilevel processes and values that shape the democratic, constitutional structure of the United States; and finally, two courses, international relations and military leadership, serve as a type of capstone or integrative experience for understanding how social, political, and economic decision-making processes work across different levels of analysis. These scope courses buttress our objectives with a focus on specific contexts that may illustrate human behavior through history and geography.

A group of multidisciplinary faculty working together to manage and assess the program goal analyzed the implementation of material relevant to the goal dimensions
Table 1. Alignment of Goal Dimensions for What Graduates Can Do with Core Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Goal Dimensions—What Graduates Can Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Domain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL100: General Psychology</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL300: Military Leadership</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political-Economic Domain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS201: Economics</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS202: American Politics</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS307: International Relations</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LW403: Constitutional Law</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI107: World History to 1877</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI108: World History since 1877</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EV203: Terrain Analysis</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PY201: Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lx20.: Foreign Language 1</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lx20.: Foreign Language 2</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI301: Military History I</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI302: Military History II</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

within these courses. The faculty team reviewed course syllabi, course products, and student feedback to determine the extent to which material deemed essential for the goals were included in the courses. A content analysis of the course syllabi, presented in Table 1, revealed that the courses as currently structured cover the objectives of the learning model (USMA 1997b; 2000a). The table presents a matrix of the 14 courses (first column) ranged by the seven goal dimensions described above. This strategy ensured that the existing courses covered each goal dimension. It also informed us where to look for course products that reflected cumulative, integrative experiences; for example, the military leadership course covered the first four dimensions, and the international relations course covered dimensions four through seven. As cadets take both courses during junior year, we decided to concentrate on these courses to assess cadet achievement of the seven dimensions of understanding human behavior. The military history courses, also taken during the junior year, are the only other place in the curriculum that covers all aspects of the seven goal dimensions. We selected the military leadership and international relations courses over the military history courses because the former concentrate on theories of human behavior and development while the latter provide historical contexts within which such behavior is manifested.

In sum, we found that cadets generally move through a progression of experiences that develop their ability to examine human behavior at multiple levels (i.e., individual, group, organization, societal, and global). We found that the social sequence (American government, economics, and international relations) thoroughly covers behavior at the individual and group level, requiring only a slight modification of content to include more material at the organizational level. We also found that cadets study political and economic behavior about equally, although cadet inquiry in these areas is largely focused on societal and global.
levels (USMA 1997a).

Outcomes Assessment
We base our assessment of cadets’ goal achievement on an adequate articulation of the goal’s learning model. We have discovered through trial and error that we cannot adequately assess goal achievement in the absence of a rationale and amplification of the goal within the context of the program and institution. The interpretation and implementation of a learning model provides us with a conceptual basis with which to make sense out of assessment findings.

We draw on a set of formative and summative data representative of multiple indicators and systematically gathered over time to assess student learning and achievement. Formative data concerning the learning process (e.g., content analyses of students’ work) determine the extent to which cadets’ development is consistent with the learning model, and what interactive feedback is necessary to assist them achieve program goals. Summative data are frequently gathered only at the end of an activity (e.g., through an exam), and aim at measuring achievement against an established standard. Survey data, which we gather from students, graduates, and their employers, primarily reflect summative data, although we gather these longitudinally in order to determine improvements over time. Summative data offer summary evidence of cadet learning that is more indirect, such as surveys of students and graduates. To this end, we identified several data sources as potentially meaningful, including surveys of students, graduates, and employers as well as content analyses of course products embedded in the curriculum.

Initially, we began with the design of a set of comparable surveys first administered to students and later to graduates and their immediate supervisors. Our intent in approaching assessment in this manner was to understand the “big picture”—that is, to ensure that we are generally on target with a set of program goals, one of which is students’ understanding of human behavior. During the 1996–97 academic year, we designed a freshman survey and aligned it with a greatly modified version of a senior survey. In so doing, we were gathering cross-sectional evidence attesting to cadets’ confidence in various areas associated with the academic program goals (USMA 1997b). In time, we were able to develop longitudinal databases that included cadet’s responses to a set of questionnaire items gathered when they were freshmen and seniors (USMA 1998b; 1999a; 2000b; 2001a).

The goal teams, including those faculty concentrating on the human behavior goal, worked with the Academic Affairs Division in the Dean’s office to develop a set of questionnaire items. The USMA’s Office of Policy, Planning, and Analysis administers all questionnaires; thus, while the academic program can survey cadets during their program. This dramatically reduced our number of cases to roughly a third of the senior class. Because we had not previously administered a freshman survey, we were able to design a sampling strategy that retained the full class. Over time, we have developed a good working relationship with OPA and we are much more aware of the institution’s assessment needs. Currently, representatives of OPA and the three programs are beginning to work together to develop instruments that concurrently address the needs of the Academy and respective programs, resulting in much more thoughtful and meaningful instruments that benefit programs at multiple levels of analysis.

8Surveys of cadets are viewed as institutional documents, and as such fall under the auspices of the USMA’s Office of Policy, Planning, and Analysis (OPA). Early in this process, OPA was less amenable to our requests to change the format of the senior survey. Previously, they had gathered trend data for several years and were reluctant to modify the instrument in ways that might interrupt their analyses. In time, we have been able to make changes to a set of items, but in so doing have added to the length of the survey. OPA’s reaction was to subdivide the survey into three separate versions, one for the academic program, a second for the military program, and a third for the physical education.
freshmen and senior years, the number of questionnaire items are limited to approximately 3 to 5 items per goal because of space limitations on the questionnaire.\textsuperscript{8} Within these constraints, we developed the items presented in Table 2.\textsuperscript{9}

The cross-sections of data from the freshman surveys reveal that first-year students report a high level of confidence in understanding human behavior. The mean across the five years based on a five-point Likert scale is 4.04, with one equal to “not at all confident” and five equal to “very confident.” The corresponding mean for the five years of data gathered from seniors is 4.18. These means are statistically different from one another at $\alpha = .01$, a notable finding considering the very high benchmark established by the freshmen reports.\textsuperscript{10} If we look at the 2000 and 2001 classes, for which longitudinal data is available from a set of cadets surveyed both as freshmen and seniors, we find that means from the self-report data are statistically different (3.89 versus 4.21) at $\alpha = .01$. Hence, based on these cadet responses, we have preliminary evidence that cadets are confident in their understanding of human behavior and that this understanding increases over time.

A second summative measure provides us with information about how recent graduates perform in the field in areas associated with the 10 goals of the Military Academy’s academic program. To balance graduate self-reporting of their performances, we designed a questionnaire to be completed by their immediate supervisors (USMA 1999b; 2000c; 2001b). The questionnaire administered to graduates requires that they report how confident they are in their ability to complete a set of skills. The supervisor’s questionnaire requires that the employers report their confidence in our graduates’ ability to complete tasks.\textsuperscript{11}

The results drawn from the graduate and employer questionnaires for the goal of understanding human behavior are presented in Table 3. Six items reflect the human behavior goal. Graduates’ scores on the six items range between 4.10 and 4.75, with a mean of 4.48 in 1999 and 4.41 in 2000. Graduates report being most confident in their ability to learn from noncommissioned officers in the unit (i.e., senior subordinates) and to communicate effectively with noncommissioned officers. They are least confident in their ability to explain the behavior of soldiers in their units. Employers report trends comparable to those of the

\textsuperscript{8}In 1997 and 1998, the human behavior goal team included two items on the freshman and senior surveys; these had a Cronbach’s alpha in the neighborhood of .78. In 1999, we dropped one of these items because it was a multi-barreled question, asking four questions in one. In its place, we added four new items. The set of items had a reliability coefficient of .87. In 2000, we were required to weigh the needs of this goal with those of others, requiring us to reduce the five items to three. The reliability coefficient improves from .77 to .82 when the last item: “understand the role of the Army officer in a democratic society” is dropped from the scale. Hence, it appears difficult to measure the human behavior goal, as articulated by the learning model, with a single scale of items. We have chosen to represent the goal by two dimensions, human behavior and officership.

\textsuperscript{9}Response rates for the freshman and senior surveys range between 83 and 93 percent for freshmen and 75 to 87 percent for seniors.

\textsuperscript{10}OPA is assigned responsibility for the administration of these surveys. We first administered the graduate and employer surveys at the USMA during 1999 for the class of 1996. We completed our second iteration during 2000 for the class of 1997. The response rate for the 1999 survey of graduates was 60 percent (456 returned out of 764 mailed questionnaires with valid addresses). Upon completion of the instrument, graduates were asked to personally deliver a copy of the employer’s survey to their immediate supervisor. Seventy-eight percent of the 456 graduates who completed the questionnaire agreed to do this, with 87 percent of the supervisors returning it to us (308 returned out of 356 delivered by graduates). The response rate for the 2000 graduate survey was 55 percent (458 returned out of 829 mailed). Seventy-five percent of the 458 graduates who completed the survey delivered a copy to their supervisors; 75 percent of the supervisors returned a copy of the questionnaire to us (245 out of 325 delivered).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>Survey of Freshmen</th>
<th>Survey of Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand the complexities of human behavior across different levels of analysis (e.g., individual, group, organization, societal).</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident in my ability to present sophisticated analyses of human behavior.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident in my ability to understand the complexities of individual behavior.</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident in my ability to understand the complexities of organizational behavior.</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident in my ability to understand the complexities of societal behavior.</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the role of the Army officer in a democratic society.</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Behavior Goal</strong></td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient</strong></td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Cases</strong></td>
<td>773</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Assessing What Graduates Can Do from an Analysis of Post-Graduation Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>Survey of Graduates</th>
<th>Survey of Graduates’ Supervisors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident in my (this graduate’s) ability to explain the behavior of soldiers in my unit.</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident in my (this graduate’s) ability to communicate effectively with enlisted soldiers.</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident in my (this graduate’s) ability to communicate effectively with noncommissioned officers.</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident in my (this graduate’s) ability to tailor leadership skills to the individual soldiers, when appropriate.</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident in my (this graduate’s) ability to learn from noncommissioned officers in the unit.</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident in my (this graduate’s) ability to view the unit’s mission within a broader organizational framework.</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Behavior Goal</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Cases</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
graduates, albeit slightly more attenuated responses than those reported by our graduates. Overall, the scores reported by graduates and supervisors, based on a scale of 1 through 5, are relatively high. To the extent that the items are a valid measure of the goal, we find evidence that graduates have achieved this goal.

The lower scores (as reported by graduates and employers on graduates' ability to explain the behavior of soldiers in their units; see Table 3) are somewhat of a concern to decision-makers at the Academy because of similar findings in the battalion commander focus group interview. Since 1997, a group of Academy representatives has traveled annually to the Army War College (located in Carlisle, Pennsylvania) to interview former battalion commanders. We select six to eight groups (stratified by branch) that include former battalion commanders who recall at least one West Point graduate junior officer who served under their command. Each of the three distinct programs at the Academy (Academic, Military, and Physical Education) is required to interview two groups of commanders, focusing on issues specific to their areas (i.e., graduates' achievement of program goals).

Our annual interviews have routinely supported our survey results of cadets, graduates, and supervisors (see, e.g., USMA 1997c; 1998c; 1999b; 2000d). The value of the focus group interviews is that it allows us insight on issues that are potential concerns. The former battalion commanders have indicated that our graduates, for all of their strengths, are somewhat likely to experience difficulties anticipating the behavior of enlisted soldiers, including problems associated with finances, spousal abuse, alcoholism, and housing. In many respects, our graduates view the soldiers under their command as team players, without a detailed understanding of the ways in which social class and the privileges of rank may affect human behavior. Thus, we may need to look more closely at these issues within the current curriculum.

As summative measures, results from the surveys and focus group interviews offer us an opportunity to assess outcomes generally; however, these measures do not help us understand the process through which student learning occurs. Certainly, we suspect that cadets' involvement in the academic curriculum does enhance their knowledge and skills in ways that are consistent with our goals; nonetheless, the summative measures do not directly assess the developmental process of learning. For this reason, we sought to include direct assessments of the program goal—formative measures—through analysis of measures embedded in course curricula; for example, through an analysis of students' work (see, e.g., Farmer 1988; 1999).

Thus, in our attempt to identify and assess one or more embedded indicators for the goal of understanding human behavior, we sought to identify course products currently implemented throughout the curriculum. From a review of the current syllabi, we learned that all of the courses required a midterm and final exam, and about two-thirds of the courses required a written paper (USMA 2000a). From this information, we were able to identify papers required of students in two courses—military leadership (PL300) and international relations (SS307)—strategically located toward the end of the set of courses comprising the human behavior goal. Our expectation, based on our learning model, was that these courses synthesized and integrated material on various aspects of human behavior across the curriculum, resulting in papers that represented something akin to a culminating or capstone experience.

Having identified which course products to evaluate, we set out to design and pilot a rubric for the two courses. Our rubric for both classes represented a set of qualitative statements demarcating the quality of the students' work with respect to the corresponding dimensions of the goal (as located in the learning model). For the military leadership paper, we directed attention toward three areas: an understanding of behavioral theories, multilevel processes, and
knowledge of culture. For the international relations paper, we focused on decision-making across levels of analyses within American society, the military, and distinct cultures.

The military leadership paper (PL300) is part of a cadet requirement to develop a personal approach to leading in a culturally diverse environment. The cadets are asked to select three leadership principles,12 describe why they chose these principles, and connect them to relevant theories and concepts drawn from course material. They are also required to describe how their leadership philosophy contributes to improving the organizations that they will ultimately lead. (Our rubric for assessing key elements of students’ papers is presented in Appendix A.) Similarly, the international relations paper (SS307) is intended to demonstrate an understanding of different theoretical explanations for why nation-states act in a particular manner. Students select a region of the world other than the United States and look at the decision-making process at multiple levels (individual, group, organizational, societal) within a cultural context. (See Appendix B for our rubric for assessing these papers.)

We assessed a sample of cadets’ papers irrespective of the grade that course instructors assigned. Through a content analysis of the papers, we were looking for evidence that cadets were able to demonstrate achievement of the human behavior goal’s seven dimensions. The PL300 paper, based on its stated objectives, appeared to cover four of the seven goal dimensions, and the SS307 paper appeared to cover five. These course objectives are aligned with the seven goal dimensions in Table 4. Together, the two course papers appear to cover six of the seven goal dimensions, suggesting that they may provide a comprehensive measure of cadets’ achievement of the goal of understanding human behavior.

We obtained a sample of the cadets’ papers, and each member of the goal team analyzed three papers using the respective rubrics developed by the goal team (based on our detailed understanding of the course requirements). As might be expected, we found variation among evaluators for each of the six dimensions under investigation; nonetheless, the resulting patterns provided evidence as to whether the cadets were generally tracking with the desired goal dimensions. These patterns were qualitative, reflecting trends of cadets’ performance outcomes. In Table 4, the alphanumeric code corresponds to either Appendix A or Appendix B, with the number reflecting the order in the respective appendix. The color codes reflect outcomes: green indicates that cadets are generally tracking with the desired outcome, amber acknowledges that they are tracking but need improvement, and red suggests that little or no evidence was found that cadets had achieved the specific dimension.

Our analyses of papers in the two courses suggested that cadets understand and can apply various theories of human behavior across levels of analysis (PL300 A1, SS307 B1). Cadets offer evidence that they understand how decisions are made within the constitutional structure of the United States (SS307 B2) and understand the military’s role as an instrument of foreign policy (SS307 B4). Cadets also demonstrate recognition that leadership is contextual and can generally discuss the broader social, economic, and political contexts of American society (PL300 A2, SS307 B3). However, they appear to be less able to articulate how social, political, economic, or technological factors influence effective leadership outcomes (PL300 A2). Similarly, they have some difficulty discussing the organizational leaders’ responsibility to respond to the external environment either reactively, to protect the organization’s core technical function, or proactively, to maintain continuous improvement of the organization (PL300 A2). Both of these issues speak to

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12Leadership principles are drawn from several sources. For example, Covey (1990) classifies leadership principles along four levels of analysis; Malone (1983) suggests 11 leadership principles; and Smith (1998) offers 20 principles.
the contextual nature of leadership. Cadets’ work generally suggests that they understand how to assess an organization’s culture against the organization’s goals/mission (PL300 A4, SS307 B5) in a manner consistent with Schien (1992). However, they do not typically demonstrate how the supragovernment’s culture can either respond to or resist change through an institutional analysis (PL300 A4) in a manner consistent with Snook (2000). While cadets’ work in SS307 (B5) suggests that they are somewhat cognizant of cultural differences and can show how culture affects decision-making processes, it is less likely to show a general understanding of another population’s culture, particularly within a platoon or company, based on the confounding effects of race, ethnicity, class, and gender (PL300 A4).

An important caveat is in order here. The results of our direct assessments based on the analyses of students’ papers will require further scrutiny before we are confident that the weaknesses identified by this approach can actually be verified. Several factors other than performance may affect the observed results. First, students may not focus on particular dimensions of the goal because it is not clear to them that the course paper requires it. Hence, we must be certain to align the course requirement with the desired learning outcome before determining that our analysis is indicative of a lack of student achievement. Second, our rubric may require modification to ensure that evaluators interpret each of the goal dimensions similarly; some of the observed variation may be due to misunderstanding what is to be measured rather than a lack of student achievement. Third, the manner in which we sample papers will require further scrutiny to determine if the results are due to potential sampling bias. Our preliminary results reveal that the use of a rubric to assess student outcomes directly is potentially useful, but we must be attentive to these methodological concerns before we draw specific conclusions on the substance of the papers.

To summarize, our findings suggest that cadets are generally achieving the dimensions we established for our goal of understanding human behavior. Our indirect measures of student learning, based on surveys of cadets, graduates, employers, and focus group interviews with former battalion commanders, indicate that our program is tracking in the manner desired by the learning model. Cadets report confidence (which increases over time between the freshman and senior years) in all seven dimensions of the program goal, and graduates report confidence (which is largely reinforced by their immediate supervisors) in areas associated with the goal. We find additional support for these dimensions in focus groups with former battalion commanders. While these results are encouraging, we also acknowledge a potential con-
cern in our graduates' ability to anticipate the behavior of soldiers in their units, particularly in the first few months of their field experience. Based on analyses of two course products, our direct measures of student learning suggest that cadets can assess an organization's culture against its goals or mission, but may have some difficulty in understanding how it responds to change. Perhaps more important is the finding that cadets may need to study further how culture affects human behavior, particularly in areas associated with social inequalities. These findings will require us to further examine and possibly refine our learning model and corresponding measures of achievement.

Discussion
As a discipline, sociology has been fraught with disagreements as to its purpose and intended direction, which serves to undermine public and administrative support for sociology (see e.g., Birnbaum 1971; Collins 1986; Gouldner 1970). To this end, Stephen Cole (2001) argues that sociology is a socially constructed discipline, largely oriented toward ideological outcomes rather than an empirical search for “truth”; he contends that sociology lacks an intellectual core. Similarly, Peter Berger (2001) suggests that the failure of sociology rests in its ideological bias as well as its tendency to remain parochial and trivial. Such triviality, Joan Huber (2001) contends, places sociology in the dangerous position of becoming marginalized as an academic discipline because it cannot sustain an intellectual core. When translated to a department or program, these concerns are likely to intensify the problems we discuss here: the lack of curricular coherence and evidence bearing on students' program outcomes (Keith 2000).

We find the difficulty inherent in presenting a coherent program and assessment plan is magnified when disciplinary fields are combined within artificial boundaries in a college or university for administrative purposes. The manner in which faculty make sense of their multidisciplinary division and subsequently convey it to students in a coherent curriculum becomes a momentous challenge, one that often has direct resource implications for the department (Horowitz 1968). In such situations, a program must define its relationship to several disciplines and present the corresponding curriculum to students in a coherent manner that speaks to their needs as well as the colleges' desired outcomes. Moreover, some program goals transcend disciplinary boundaries; for example, a program goal such as understanding human behavior cannot be effectively managed within a single department because it requires students to be exposed to material typically offered by several distinct disciplines.

The work we present in this paper suggests that efforts aimed at broad multidisciplinary goals can be realized only when program directors design and sequence courses together toward a common purpose. While our efforts at curriculum design are most certainly characteristic of a student-centered model, our process draws attention to essential “building-blocks” of disciplines that help faculty make sense of their fields. When discussions of teaching and learning become commonplace at regional and national sociological conferences, the resulting focus may help refine material considered core knowledge in the field. Approached locally, curriculum design lends itself to an assessment of course implementation and student outcomes, which can then inform program directors about their ability to manage a program toward a particular goal. We have found tremendous value in this approach, as our efforts have strengthened our programs, streamlined accountability reporting requirements, and taught us about the process of assessment. Indeed, we can identify 10 lessons that we have learned from our efforts:

1. Different programs/institutions have different purposes for organizing their curricula in a particular manner, and some departments consist of several
distinct disciplines. Organizational contexts—with some environments having different goals or requirements than others—lead to different curricular structures.

2. An articulated mission and set of program goals provides curricular purpose and coherence. When these goals are developed by, or in conjunction with faculty, faculty become stakeholders who recognize the value in assessment.

3. Because the emphasis of assessment is program improvement, this approach builds faculty cohesion.

4. Assessment is an evolving, messy process that often takes years of debate, planning, and coordination. Although we did not get it quite right the first few times, the process offered opportunities for faculty buy-in toward common, student-centered outcomes.

5. We discovered that the design of our curriculum required the articulation of a structure or system that could inform us about program change.

6. Accountability and reporting are inherent to assessment. Through assessment, faculty actually strengthen their resolve and power in negotiating with the administration and external agents, such as the Department of the Army and accreditation associations. When the utility and direction of programs are drawn into question, faculty have a well-defined purpose—linked to college-level goals—and evidence gathered over time, indicating that they are accomplishing what they set out to do.

7. In making an honest attempt to design a curriculum with internal coherence, we discovered that we regained trust from external agents, which further strengthened our ability to manage our own affairs. The Military Academy must answer to a board of visitors (analogous to the trustees), the Department of the Army, the U.S. Congress, the Commission of Higher Education of the Middle States Association, and the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.

8. Our systematic efforts at curriculum design and assessment directly benefit successive cohorts of students through continual curricular improvement.

9. Our assessment results offer important opportunities for faculty development whereby we can discuss how to refine aspects of the curriculum and introduce new faculty to our curriculum through a review of its structure and purpose. Furthermore, discrepancies between courses and goal objectives provide opportunities for professional development; faculty can reflect back upon their educational mission and refine aspects of their courses that do not support the agreed-upon learning objectives of the program.

10. Over time, ensuing discussions and presentations at regional and national levels may help highlight and refine core knowledge structures.

Of course, what works within the context of the U.S. Military Academy may not work in other institutional environments. While many of our educational goals are comparable across institutions of higher education (e.g., communication, critical thinking, cultural perspectives, math and science), our graduates’ destinations, the composition of our faculty, the structure and delegation of authority, and our organizational culture are potentially unique factors. Hence we are not proposing that any institution or program attempt a whole-scale importation of our model into their environment without first understanding the basic assumptions that structure the organization of work, curriculum, or modes of interaction among students, faculty, and administration.

Ours is a system with a strong core curriculum of 26 courses that cut across the social, behavioral, and physical sciences and the humanities while maintaining a strong orientation toward engineering and mathematics. Faculty affiliated with various elective programs (majors) can assume that
all cadets possess this core foundation of knowledge and are therefore able to require considerably less overlap.\textsuperscript{13} In addition, we have an authority structure that encourages cohesion; captains and majors, by definition, will respond favorably to the recommendations of colonels. Nonetheless, our civilian faculty, which constitutes 22 percent of the total faculty, do not necessarily fall within this chain-of-command structure, and the Academy has taken considerable precautions to protect academic freedom. The U.S. Military Academy adheres to the principles of academic freedom outlined by the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of University Professors (2002). Moreover, and as noted in its policy statement on this subject: “The Academy is committed to maintaining an environment in which an individual’s freedom to inquire and to teach is not stifled, either overtly or tacitly. The Academy will not permit adverse actions against individual faculty members engaged in the appropriate exercise of academic freedom” (USMA 2000e: 9).\textsuperscript{14}

Adherence to the AAUP’s statement on academic freedom does not, however, preclude faculty from working together to design and implement a curriculum that is student-centered, goal-based, and purposeful. Rather, one’s challenge in managing issues of curriculum design and assessment is to understand the organizational culture and basic dynamics at play within the environment so that one can determine if the curriculum is driven by a faculty-centered model (where faculty, particularly senior faculty, teach whatever and whenever they want, irrespective of student needs), a discipline-centered model (where faculty identify

\textsuperscript{13}Determining the achievement of core requirements requires continual evaluation and assessment to ensure that this trend continues unabated, thus enabling electives programs an opportunity to build upon this foundation.

\textsuperscript{14}During the past six years, we have annually undertaken a survey of the organizational climate. One question asked of faculty during each of those years is whether or not West Point elements essential to understanding a field of study), or a student-centered model (where faculty define learning objectives for students). Faculty collaboration is possible in any of these three structures, but clearly the potential for conflict is greatest in a faculty-centered model.

Ultimately, the question of curriculum design must come down to institutional purpose—that is, why this program, or why this curricular structure instead of another? Regardless of the institutional structure, faculty must be able to defend their mode of operation in a logical and public debate. An administration can bring faculty together by mandating that the curriculum have a purpose, but faculty alone can determine what purpose makes sense in light of their interests, as well as those of their students and the institution as a whole. If the institution is to be held accountable to its faculty—to ensure that they have the right to pursue their own inquiries in the domains of both teaching and research—then should not faculty be accountable to the institution that employs them—to provide coherence and order to a curricular structure? In particular, to what extent should faculty be accountable to students, whose tuition dollars, when combined with state or institutional endowments, provide the financial support to maintain them? Such questions essentially structure the debate between accreditation and assessment versus the rights of faculty to act in a manner that may actually undermine the institution (such as refusal to teach or attend class).

At West Point, our faculty have reached consensus on the value of a structured, purposeful curriculum. The rules of engagement in place at West Point ensure that faculty ultimately design and implement the

protects their academic freedom; 97% of the respondents answered in the affirmative. Moreover, civilian and military faculty do not differ significantly in these perceptions. Importantly, no faculty member has ever charged West Point of censoring their research or teaching because of a perceived threat to their economic security.
curriculum and that decisions about what we teach or do not teach are discussed in an open forum. In the end, some faculty may ultimately disagree with decisions made about the direction and purpose of the curriculum, whether it be at the program (electives courses) or institutional (core courses) level; nonetheless, all faculty have the opportunity to participate in debate and have their opinions noted for the record. The underlying assumption operating at the Military Academy is that the curriculum is structured to enhance students' achievement of the outcomes faculty have set for them. Administrative interventions will and do occur, often in the form of directives from the U.S. Congress or the Department of the Army. However, while these interventions result in alternative views of the curriculum, faculty will ultimately debate and respond to these external challenges. We have found that our assessment efforts strengthen our resolve because we are able to provide strong evidence that students are achieving the goals established by the faculty, goals that the Department of the Army has already approved.

CONCLUSION

In an effort to regain internal coherence and external authority in higher education, we faculty must become proactive managers of our academic programs and scientific fields. When the image of our field or program is nebulous, we transfer authority to external agents—be they college administrators, accreditation representatives, or the public—who then determine the social value and academic significance of the discipline. Moreover, departments affiliated with disciplines that evince a lack of internal coherence, such as sociology (Birnbaum 1971; Cole 2001; Collins 1986; Gouldner 1970; Woolcock and Kim 2000) run the risk of becoming targets for mergers or elimination. This is especially true for departments located in less-prominent universities, and comprehensive, and community colleges. If academic disciplines such as sociology are to remain strong throughout the 21st century, the substance of their fields must be articulated coherently, which requires substantial planning and discussion among faculty within academic departments and the profession.

Moreover, students are beginning to hold the university accountable for what they learn; we are increasingly accountable to our students, particularly with respect to how and what they are learning. To this end, are we not obligated to ensure that our students' development and learning proceeds in some measured way rather than just assuming that it occurs? We believe that educational institutions ought to be accountable to students, their parents, employers, and the profession for educating the future leaders and citizens of this country. However, we also believe that the emphasis ought to be on program improvement based on a process designed, implemented, and managed by faculty. While administrative interventions may help to frame the debate, we believe that decisions about curricular structure and direction ultimately rest with faculty—based on an awareness of their students' outcomes. We contend that such a focus empowers faculty and provides a renewed purpose for teaching within an institutional context.

APPENDIX A: RUBRIC FOR PL300 PAPER

1. Behavioral Theories
INDICATE THE LEVEL THAT THIS CADET CAN: ...understand and apply theories of individual, group, and societal behavior, especially in the context of the leader and the led. Furthermore, indicate whether they have adopted a set of effective individual, group, and organizational leadership skills that prepare them for professional responsibilities in diverse situations and contexts throughout their careers.

SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FIVE:

___ This paper fully demonstrates an understanding of human behavior as a causal process at three distinct levels of analysis (individual, group, organizational/societal).

___ This paper fully demonstrates an understanding of human behavior as a causal process...
at more than one level of analysis (individual, group, organizational/societal).

This paper fully demonstrates an understanding of human behavior as a causal process at one level of analysis (individual, group, organizational/societal).

This paper partially explains human behavior as a causal process but fails to delineate or recognize the different levels of analysis.

This paper fails to see human behavior as a causal process.

2. Multilevel Processes

INDICATE THE LEVEL THAT THIS CADET CAN: ...realize how broader social, political and economic contexts of American society affect their behavior as leaders, and apply that understanding to make necessary changes within their organizations.

A. SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR:

This paper fully explains the contextual nature of leadership as it operates in a given situation or environment, illustrates the potential forms outside influences can have (either social, political, economic, or technological), as well as the second and third order effects that may affect subordinate organizations.

This paper partially explains (meets 2 of 3 conditions) the contextual nature of leadership as it operates in a given situation or environment, illustrates the potential forms outside influences can have (either social, political, economic, or technological), as well as the second and third order effects that may affect subordinate organizations.

This paper indicates that leadership is contextual.

This paper does not indicate an understanding that leadership has a recursive relationship with the environment/situation.

B. SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THREE:

This paper fully discusses the organizational leader’s responsibility to respond to the external environment, both reactively (to protect the organization’s core technical function) and proactively (to continuously improve the organization).

This paper partially discusses the organizational leader’s responsibility to respond to the external environment, both reactively (to protect the organization’s core technical function) and proactively (to continuously improve the organization).

This paper does not discuss the organizational leader’s responsibility to respond to the external environment, either reactively (to protect the organization’s core technical function) or proactively (to continuously improve the organization).

3. Knowledge of Culture

INDICATE THE LEVEL THAT THIS CADET CAN: ...synthesize the systematic study of human behavior with knowledge of cultural differences to understand how culture affects decisions.

A. SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR:

This paper demonstrates that the cadet fully understands how to assess an organization’s culture against the organization’s goals/missions, and how to respond accordingly in order to change/shape it for congruence with the organization’s goals/missions.

This paper demonstrates that the cadet partially understands how to assess an organization’s culture against the organization’s goals/missions and then how to respond accordingly in order to change/shape it for congruence with the organization’s goals/missions.

This paper demonstrates that the cadet understands how to assess an organization’s culture against the organization’s goals/missions, but does not see their role in changing it as required.

This paper does not demonstrate that the cadet understands how to assess an organization’s culture.

B. SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THREE:

This paper demonstrates that the cadet can fully recognize how the supra-organization’s culture can respond to change/environment either in accordance or not with its stated goals and mission (institutional analysis, structural resistance to change).

This paper demonstrates that the cadet can partially recognize how the supra-organization’s culture can respond to change/environment either in accordance or not with its stated goals and mission (institutional analysis, structural resistance to change).

This paper does not demonstrate that the cadet can recognize how the supra-organization’s culture can respond to change/environment either in accordance or not with its stated goals and mission (institutional analysis, structural resistance to change).

C. SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR:

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This paper demonstrates that the cadet fully understands how to assess a population’s culture (race, ethnicity, nation-state) as it compares/contrasts to their own, how this may affect their mission, and the need to respond to it accordingly.

This paper demonstrates that the cadet partially understands how to assess a population’s culture (race, ethnicity, nation-state) as it compares/contrasts to their own, how this may affect their mission, and the need to respond to it accordingly.

This paper demonstrates that the cadet partially understands how to assess a population’s culture (race, ethnicity, nation-state) as it compares/contrasts to their own.

This paper does not demonstrate that the cadet understands or recognizes another population’s culture (race, ethnicity, nation-state).

APPENDIX B: RUBRIC FOR SS307 PAPER

1. Decision Making

INDICATE THE LEVEL THAT THIS CADET CAN: ...recognize and explain the differences among social, political, and economic decision-making processes at different levels, particularly how individuals, organizations, and societies make decisions to allocate scarce resources among competing demands.

A. SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FIVE:

___ This paper fully explains how decisions are made at more than one level, or in more than one organization.

___ This paper partially explains how decisions are made at more than one level, or in more than one organization.

___ This paper fully explains how decisions are made, but only for one organization or level (i.e., it only discussed a single level or organization).

___ This paper partially explains the way that decisions are made, but only for one organization or level (i.e., it only discussed a single level or organization).

___ This paper does not address the decision making process of any organization.

B. SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR:

___ This paper fully discusses the allocation of scarce resources among competing demands.

___ This paper partially discusses the allocation of scarce resources among competing demands.

___ This paper does not address the allocation of scarce resources among competing demands, but easily could and should have.

___ This paper does not address allocation of scarce resources among competing demands because such a discussion would not have been necessary for this topic or paper.

2. American Society

INDICATE THE LEVEL THAT THIS CADET CAN: ...understand the multilevel process and values that affect decisions made within the democratic, constitutional structure of the U.S. political system. Accordingly, they realize how broader social, political, and economic contexts of American society affect their behavior as leaders, and can apply that understanding to make necessary changes within their organizations.

A. SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR:

___ This paper fully explains how decisions are made within the democratic, constitutional structure of the U.S. political system.

___ This paper partially explains how decisions are made within the democratic, constitutional structure of the U.S. political system.

___ This paper does not address how decisions are made within the democratic, constitutional structure of the U.S. political system, but easily could and should have.

___ This paper does not address how decisions are made within the democratic, constitutional structure of the U.S. political system because such a discussion would not have been necessary for this topic or paper.

B. SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR:

___ This paper fully discusses the broader social, political, and economic contexts of American society.

___ This paper partially discusses the broader social, political, and economic contexts of American society.

___ This paper does not address broader social, political, and economic contexts of American society, but easily could and should have.

___ This paper does not address broader social, political and economic contexts of American society because such a discussion would not have been necessary for this topic or paper.

3. Military

INDICATE THE LEVEL THAT THIS CADET CAN: ...describe and understand nation-state behaviors that influence the structure and function of the military and the application of military force, and appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the military’s role as an instrument.
of policy to protect national and societal interests at home and abroad.

SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR:

This paper demonstrates that the cadet fully understands nation-state behaviors that influence the structure and function of the military and the application of military force, including the strengths and weaknesses of the military's role as an instrument of policy.

This paper demonstrates that the cadet partially understands nation-state behaviors that influence the structure and function of the military and the application of military force, including the strengths and weaknesses of the military's role as an instrument of policy.

This paper does not demonstrate that the cadet understands nation-state behaviors that influence the structure and function of the military and the application of military force, or the strengths and weaknesses of the military's role as an instrument of policy, but they could and should have.

This paper does not demonstrate that the cadet understands nation-state behaviors that influence the structure and function of the military and the application of military force, or the strengths and weaknesses of the military's role as an instrument of policy because such a discussion would not have been necessary for this topic or paper.

4. Culture
INDICATE THE LEVEL THAT THIS CADET CAN: ...synthesize the systematic study of human behavior with knowledge of cultural differences to understand how culture affects decisions.

SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR:

This paper demonstrates that the cadet can fully synthesize the systematic study of human behavior with knowledge of cultural differences to understand how culture affects decisions.

This paper demonstrates that the cadet can partially synthesize the systematic study of human behavior with knowledge of cultural differences to understand how culture affects decisions.

This paper does not demonstrate that the cadet can synthesize the systematic study of human behavior with knowledge of cultural differences to understand how culture affects decisions, but easily could and should have.

This paper does not demonstrate that the cadet can synthesize the systematic study of human behavior with knowledge of cultural differences to understand how culture affects decisions because such a discussion would not have been necessary for this topic or paper.

REFERENCES


Forsythe, George B., and Bruce Keith. 1999.


ASSESSING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PROGRAMS


Bruce Keith is professor of sociology and associate dean for academic affairs. His research includes a focus on studying institutional status and quality in American higher education and the sociology of sociology.

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