

Sociology Teaching and Learning Guide

Overview

Sociology is the rigorous and methodical study of society. Sociologists investigate the structure of groups, organisations, and societies, and how people interact in various contexts. Anthony Giddens (2013) offers the following definition:

Sociology is the study of human social life, groups and societies. It is a dazzling and compelling enterprise, having as its subject matter our own behaviour as human beings. The scope of sociology is extremely wide, ranging from the analysis of passing encounters between individuals in the street up to the investigation of global social processes.

The scope of sociology is extremely wide and may encompass a multitude of topic areas and theoretical perspectives. For instance, sociologists are interested in everything from the fleeting interactions of people in everyday life, to gender representations in the media, to large social processes such as globalisation and migration. As such, sociology may be said to be the broadest of social science disciplines and in many ways complements other disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, geography, history and political science, and even subjects like art and literature. While aiming for scientific objectivity, sociologists generally acknowledge that sociology cannot be viewed as a wholly dis-interested enterprise. Being conducted by people already *involved* in what they study (i.e. society), sociologists acknowledge that values, morals and political perspectives are intertwined with the 'science of society'. Scientific objectivity and rigour is thus a guiding ideal, but it is recognised that no one has a 'God's-eye view' of reality and sociology is an *interpretive* undertaking.

Rationale

Why study sociology?

By studying sociology, students develop a critical awareness and understanding of social issues in both local and global contexts. Building critical capacities for reflecting on society in a scientific manner, studying sociology helps students make sense of the world around them.

Self-knowledge

Sociology helps students see that social structures, institutions and processes have profoundly shaped who they are. The more students know about why they act as they do and the overall workings of society, the more likely they are to be able to influence their own and social futures in an informed and responsible manner.

Understanding others

Sociology helps students understand the situation of other people. Sociology leads to self-knowledge, as the discipline sees selves and others as inextricably connected and mutually constituting. By properly understanding how other members of society live and who they are, sociology allows students to understand and empathise with the problems and challenges other people face and the social conditions that create and perpetuate these.

Developing a sociological imagination

By understanding themselves in relation to other people and larger social institutions and processes, students cultivate a *sociological imagination*. Rather than a routine process of acquiring knowledge, sociology encourages students to break free from their personal circumstances and put things in a wider context. Making the familiar strange and the strange familiar, developing a sociological imagination allows students to see the routine, taken-for-granted world through critical eyes. Using the analytic tools, concepts and theories of sociology, students are able to understand and make connections between private circumstances and public issues.

Promotes ethical and social responsibility

Reflecting critically on the dynamics of a shared world, students are better equipped to think and act in a more socially informed and ethically responsible manner.

Studying sociology encourages students to put themselves in the situation of others, and to imagine how society might be improved.

Key themes

Sociology investigates the structures and behaviours of groups, organisations, and societies, and how people interact in these contexts. The New Zealand sociology curriculum is based on the study of the following key sociological topics, all of which are interrelated on various levels.

Sociological theory

Theories are sets of interrelated ideas and principles that serve to organise our understanding of the world in a systematic way. Theories help us turn what William James called “the buzzing, blooming confusion” of raw reality and sensation into an ordered and consistent pattern. They also define what it is we are interested in understanding and how we make sense of facts. For instance, one of sociology’s ‘founding fathers’, Emile Durkheim, was interested in the causes and rates of suicide across European societies in the late nineteenth century. Through detailed research, Durkheim came up with a theory of suicide that is still influential today. There are various sociological theories and paradigms (e.g. functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, practice theory, feminist theory), but the main foci of sociological theory are social structure, social institutions, social processes and social behaviour.

Social structure

Social structure is the enduring, orderly and patterned relationships that organise social life. Social structure may be thought of as the glue or scaffolding that holds societies together. Without social structure, societies would not exist. Social structures include class, ethnicity, gender and age. Social structure is supported and comprised of institutions like the family, work and the economy, the education system, the legal system, the political system, the health system and social roles and positions within these. These patterned relationships exist over and above the individuals or groups that occupy positions in society at any given time. Because social structure influences the actions of social members, sociological theory is interested in explaining patterned relationships of power and domination.

The idea of social structure points to the way in which societies, and institutions within them, exhibit predictable patterns of organisation, activity and social interaction. This relative stability of organisation and behaviour provides the quality of predictability that people rely on in every day social interaction.

Social Institution

Social institutions are the relatively stable components of a society through which the main activities of society are organised, and social needs (such as those for order, meaning, belief, and reproduction) are met. Social institutions include kinship and marriage, the family, religion, work, education, law and order, and the media. Institutions are organised and shaped by cultural values. Social institutions may be grouped as following:

- a. *kinship institutions* deal with marriage, the family and primary socialisation
- b. *political institutions* regulate access to and the use of power
- c. *cultural institutions* deal with the distribution of social positions and resources
- d. *economic institutions* produce and distribute goods and services

While institutions are relatively stable and persist over time, sociologists also pay attention to changing attitudes and patterns of behaviour that contribute to social change.

Social process

These are the various influences that control and regulate human behaviour, and help to keep societies running more or less smoothly. Two important social processes are socialisation and stratification, though other larger social processes include urbanisation, globalisation and migration. Social processes involve interactions between social structures, institutions, groups and individuals. They can account for both the relative stability and predictability of social life, as well as social change. For instance, through socialisation children develop social and cultural understanding, as they assume roles of daughter or son, student, etc. While variation exists, socialisation is a common process that keeps society functioning in a more or less predictable way. Large-scale processes like globalisation and migration contribute to changes to social structures and institutions as different cultural groups interact and people become dispersed. Social control is another social process by which some social behaviours are normalized and others sanctioned. Theories of crime and deviance emerge from the analysis of social control. Today, we can think of surveillance as part of processes of social control. For example, cameras are often in operation in many public and work places and are used as an indirect form of control.

Sociological enquiry

Sociology is a science of the social world. As a science, conducting research is thus central to sociology. While sociologists may theorise or speculate about social life, they almost always do so, on the basis of data or information derived from research. Put another way, sociologists practice empiricism, meaning they gather information through various forms of observation. Sociologists employ the scientific method in much the same way as other sciences. They follow structured methods and research techniques to find answers to questions about the social world. The enquiry process goes roughly as follows:

1. A sociologist uncovers *questions in need of answers*. These questions can come from issues in larger society, personal experience, or topics of concern within the field of sociology. Often these questions stem from issues that are important to the sociologist doing the research.
2. Recognising that others have possibly done similar or related research in the past, sociologists review the *relevant literature*, seeing what has been learned and how particular topics have been theorised.
3. Researchers often develop *hypotheses* about how social phenomena can be explained and how they relate to one another.
4. Researchers must choose a *research method* that will help them answer the research question. Sociology uses both **qualitative** and **quantitative** methods. Quantitative research typically relies on numerical data gathered from surveys, polls, or other statistical records. For example, Durkheim's research on suicide relied on the use of statistics gathered from various government agencies to see whether the data supported his hypotheses. Qualitative methodologies such as observation and interviews are used by sociologists interested in how people interpret social phenomena, and how this meaning-

making shapes social behaviour. Sociologists select from these and other methods, and often use multiple methods to best answer their research question.

5. Sociologists use their chosen method(s) to *collect data* that helps establish the accuracy of their theoretical arguments and hypotheses. This may involve doing online or library research, or venturing out in the field to collect data through observations, interviews, questionnaires and other means.
6. Researchers *analyse the data* collected and interpret their meaning in light of the original question and hypothesis. Based on evidence, the research may confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis. Sociological enquiry may also generate unforeseen and additional questions, for which the research process may begin all over again.

Key concepts

Society

A society is a system of structured relationships and institutions that involves social processes. There are many definitions of society, but the following are common features:

- An aggregate of people living together in a more or less ordered community.
- A particular community of people living in a country or region, and having shared customs, laws, and organisation.
- A group of people who share a common culture, occupy a particular territorial area and feel themselves to constitute a unified and distinct entity.
- There is cultural and institutional interdependence between members of the society.
- Members of a particular society are, to some extent, differentiated from other communities and groups.

Some societies, like those of hunter-gatherers, are very small, numbering no more than a few dozen people. Others are very large, involving many millions – China and India, for instance, have populations of more than a billion people. Sociology often discusses societies in terms of size or scale, level of complexity (or ‘differentiation’) as well as historical progression. The general sociological distinction between societies is as follows:

Primitive Society

Primitive society refers to both the earliest societies and more contemporary societies which rely on simple technologies and subsistence-based living.

Traditional Society (“Gemeinschaft“, Ferdinand Tonnies)

The term traditional society is usually contrasted with the industrial, urbanised, capitalist ‘modern’ society. Common examples and features are:

- Pre- or non-modern societies
- Hunting and gathering groups
- Medieval European states
- Often religious and non-scientific
- Strong family ties, values and community oriented
- Relationships based upon kinship and guild
- Homogeneous and highly regulated community
- World of close emotional, face-to-face ties
- Attachment to place, strong sense of community
- Prescribed social status

Industrial Society (“*Gesellschaft*” Ferdinand Tonnies)

An industrial society one whose culture, institutions and development are determined by its industrial production processes. Such societies originally arose during the industrial revolution, namely in protestant countries such as England and Germany. Some features of industrial societies are:

- Urbanism
- Relationships based on calculation and rationality
- Industrial life
- Increased mobility
- Heterogeneity
- Impersonality

Post-Industrial Society

A post-industrial society is one in which the majority of those employed are not involved in the production of tangible goods. Examples of post-industrial societies include the United States and Western Europe. The "post-industrial" period is generally seen as occurring after World War II. Some features of post-industrial societies are:

- A rapid increase in the size of the service sector, as opposed to manufacturing
- An increase in the amount of information technologies, leading to an "information age" and a "network society". Information, knowledge and creativity become the new raw materials of such an economy.
- The nature of production is 'post-Fordist'.

Inequality

Inequality refers to the unequal distribution of opportunities, rewards and power among and between individuals, households, and groups. It is a defining feature of all societies. The study of inequalities is a core issue in sociology. Inequality may be seen in terms of differences in wealth and income, access to education and cultural resources and is closely related to power. Inequalities can be seen most clearly in two distinct allocations: who gets what? (inequality of resources) and who does what? (inequalities of opportunities), and across four distinct social levels: individuals, groups, organisations and institutions. Depending on a variety of factors such as social class and status, particular individuals and groups have different and unequal 'life chances'.

Power

Power and inequality are arguably sociology's two central concepts. Although power is conceptualised in a variety of ways, it is most simply defined as the ability to get others to do what you want them to do, even if it is against their will. Power relates to social class, status and social stratification, all of which point to the fact that power is distributed unevenly in societies. Power manifests in various forms, such as economic capital, social prestige and political influence. Yet power may also be seen as the capacity to intervene in society to enact social change (e.g. protests for gay marriage, the occupy movement).

Domination

Domination is rule by coerced or non-coerced compliance. Individuals or groups may exercise power over others – domination – either by brute force or because the power is accepted as legitimate by those who are subject to it.

Legitimacy

Legitimacy refers to the process by which power is not only institutionalised, but more importantly, is given moral grounding. Legitimacy or authority expresses power that is considered socially valid and morally correct. For example, the police force has legitimate authority to 'keep the peace' in society, just as elected governments legitimately govern democratic societies. Violent gangs and warlords may exercise power and domination, but it is not legitimate.

Modernity

Modernity refers to the period following the mid-eighteenth century European Enlightenment, which is characterised by the combination of secularisation, rationalisation, democratisation, individualism and the rise of scientific thinking. Sociology arose in the wake of the industrial revolution and in response to the changes modern European societies were undergoing.

Postmodernity (or late modernity) is often discussed as the state of society beyond the 'modern era' first analysed by classical social theorists such as Marx, Weber and Durkheim. Although modernity is characterized by relatively consistent lifestyles and cultural norms, postmodernity is characterized by eclecticism in terms of what people eat (global cuisine), how people dress, what sort of music they listen to, etc. Postmodern social theory is generally opposed to 'grand narratives' of society and history, and works to deconstruct dominant ideas about social phenomena in order to make room for new and politically progressive perspectives.

Class

All societies have some form of stratification, so that they are organised in layers or strata. Simple societies allocate duties and rights on the basis of age, gender and other categories. Hindu India divides people by caste. Feudal societies divided people by estate and family standing. Modern industrial societies are divided by class. A variety of ways of describing class all have in common attention to the economy and the organisation of production. For Karl Marx and Marxists, the crucial divide is between those who own the means of production (the capitalist class or bourgeoisie), and those who have to live by selling their labour (the proletariat or working class). Although discussions of class have moved on since Marx, this basic division is key to the understanding of societies based on capitalist economies.

Culture

Culture encompasses the language, beliefs, values and norms, customs, roles, knowledge and skills and material objects that combine to make up a way of life of any society. Culture is transmitted to individuals via socialisation processes, beginning in the family, then in a community. While all groups have a culture, many variations exist. For instance, different groups relate to such things as sport, cooking, funeral ceremonies, medicine, marriage, sexual restrictions, fashion and bodily adornment, calendars, dancing, games, greetings, taboos, religion and myths in different ways.

The broadest elements of culture are values, which define what a group or society as a whole considers good, desirable, right or important. For members of a particular culture, values are generally unquestioned and taken as 'natural' or 'common sense'. However, values differ widely. Norms are also a significant and variable aspect of culture. These are informal rules based on values that guide what people do and how they act. Norms tell us what we should and should not do in a given situation. Many norms are informal – that is, not formally codified or written down. The norms that have been codified – that are written down and formally enforced through institutions such as the state – are laws. Most people follow norms and rules primarily because there are sanctions associated with them.

Family/Whanau

Family is a core social institution. At its simplest, the family is an intimate domestic group of people related to each other by decent and legal ties and sexual relations, in which adults are responsible for the care and socialisation of their children (natural or adopted). There are a wide variety of forms the family takes and these vary across time and cultural context. Sociologists distinguish between the nuclear and the extended family.

Socialisation

Socialisation refers to the process by which people learn their culture and acquire a sense of identity. Primary socialisation is the process of acquiring the basic skills needed to function in society during childhood, such as language. This usually takes place in the family. Secondary socialisation takes place outside the family, at school, among friends and peer groups, on sports teams, clubs, and through media exposure. These 'agents of socialisation' are involved with teaching cultural norms and values and contributes to a sense of identity on individuals.

Identity

Identity refers to how individuals see and define themselves and how other people see and define them. Identity formation takes place in the socialisation process and the specific social roles ascribed to individuals (e.g. son/daughter, student, team member). In sociology, the self is understood largely as a product of society and culture.

Ethnicity

Ethnic groups are socially defined on the basis of cultural characteristics such as language, religion, traditions and cultural practices. Ethnic groups have a sense of shared origins or genealogy, and they tend to endure over time. They are recognised as distinct from others not only by those who see themselves as part of the ethnic group but also by outsiders.

Race

Race refers to physical or biological characteristics, such as skin colour or hair texture, as well as a shared lineage. The lines dividing ethnic groups as races are not clear, as races are often ethnic groups and vice versa. While there is some overlap and categorical confusion between race and ethnicity, use of the term 'race' is generally discouraged in the social sciences due to its historical and moral associations, with for example, the Holocaust, as well as doubts about its scientific validity.

Gender

The concept of gender concerns the social and cultural meanings of masculinity and femininity. Gender studies emphasise the way in which being a male or female is learnt through processes of socialisation. Different cultures assign different roles and expectations to men and women. In some societies, women are expected to assume the role of raising children and taking care of the home, while men are expected to be breadwinners. Despite advancements in gender equality in many industrialised countries, women on average earn less in the same jobs as men and men continue to occupy more senior, leadership roles. Power relations are thus at the core of gender perceptions, roles and expectations.

Education

The sociology of education is mostly concerned with schooling, and especially the mass schooling systems of industrialised societies. As a sociological concept, education denotes certain ideologies (dominant ideas), curricula, and pedagogical techniques for the teaching and management of knowledge and the social reproduction of personalities and cultures. The nature and impacts of school learning has been challenged by critical sociologists on various grounds. For instance, statistical and field research in numerous societies has shown a persistent link between social class origins and achievement, suggesting that only limited social mobility occurs through schooling. Advocates of 'de-schooling' argue that as a form of social engineering with a 'hidden curriculum', school education simply produces a docile labour-force essential to the ongoing production of unequal capitalist class relations.

Work

The study of work in industrial societies has been central to sociology since its 19th century inception and is famously associated with the classical sociological theories of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. Paid and unpaid work define individual identity, group life, and indeed, societies as a whole. Broadly speaking, work refers to a set of tasks people carry out, often for a wage (but not always), to produce goods or services for others. Some forms of work receive a payment while others do not, such as within the home and community volunteer work. Work and employment are important sociological considerations in that they have direct implications for nearly all subfields of sociological enquiry. For instance, poverty, access to health care, consumption patterns, gender, ethnic relations, families and social movements are all conditioned by the ways in which societies organize their systems and relations of work. At individual and group levels, particular types of jobs or careers shape our 'life chances', the rewards available to us (economic and social recognition/prestige), experiences of dignity, and the levels of trust and loyalty we feel towards corporate and political orders.

Health

The sociology of health and illness is concerned with the social factors that affect the health and wellbeing of individuals and groups. Sociologists are interested in measuring the distribution of well-being and illness in populations, and seek to identify the social causes of health and illness. Research shows that age, gender, ethnicity, religion and occupation all play a part in health. More critically, sociologists demonstrate that cultures differ markedly in how they respond to physical and psychological problems. For instance, what western medicine treats as 'mental illness' is in many cultures regarded as a spiritual problem to be managed with religious therapies, not clinical diagnoses and prescription drugs. This implies that the very definition of health problems demonstrate considerable cultural variation and are subject to change over time.

Religion

Religion is a social phenomenon consisting of beliefs about the sacred, the experience, practices and rituals that reinforce those beliefs, and the community that shares similar beliefs and practices. Every religion has a set of interrelated beliefs, or ideas that explain the world and identify what should be considered sacred. Religions tend to draw distinctions between what is considered sacred, or of ultimate concern, and what is profane, or the ordinary and mundane. Religions generally offer explanations of creation and order (cosmogony), death, good and evil. Most religions have rituals, or regularly repeated and prescribed practices that serve to symbolise some certain values or beliefs. Secularisation is related to the declining significance of religion in many western societies. Secularization points to the declining power and influence of organised religion, as well as the loss by religion of functions such as education.

Mass Media

Sociology is concerned with various forms of mass communication, such as newspapers, magazines, television, cinema, the radio, music and the internet. Sociological interests in the production and consumption of the mass media include content (what is re-presented and how it is shaped by audience demands or by producer imperatives) and effect (the extent to which people's attitudes, beliefs and behaviour are shaped by the mass media). Sociology is also interested in new or altered forms of sociality that are associated with the internet, such as the ways social networking media greatly expands the ways in which people can relate and interact with each other and respond to information.

Deviance & Crime

Deviance involves the breaking of social rules and cultural norms. It implies violating accepted rules of how 'normal' members of society are expected to act. Deviance differs from crime in the sense that it is not legally sanctioned, whereas crime involves acts which breach a society's legal code. The sociological study of crime is thus similar to the study of health: sociologists investigate the social reasons for higher rates of crime and deviance among certain populations compared to others. Unequal power relations between individuals, groups and classes underlie both deviant and criminal acts, as well as how they are defined and sanctioned. A sanction is defined by Anthony Giddens as "a mode of reward or punishment that reinforces socially expected forms of behaviour".

Globalisation

Globalisation is the result of various social processes through which the planet is becoming increasingly interconnected due to cross-border activities and relationships. Globalisation signifies changes to social structures and institutions as different groups and organisations operate internationally and goods, capital and people increasingly move around the world.

Urbanisation

Urbanisation refers to the development of towns and cities and the process by which an increasing percentage of a society's population comes to be located in relatively densely populated urban areas. The urbanisation process has been central to the sociological analysis of modernisation. Sociologists may be interested, among other things, in how economic capital and power come to be located in cities, as opposed to rural areas.

Key sociological theories and paradigms

The table below offers a simple breakdown of major sociological theories (adapted from Ritzer, 2013: 52).

Structural/Functional Theories	Conflict/Critical Theories	Inter/actionist Theories
Structural functionalism	Conflict theory	Symbolic interactionism
Structuralism	Critical theory	Social constructionism
	Feminist theory	Ethnomethodology
	Queer theory	Exchange theory
	Critical theories of colonialism, race and racism	Rational choice theory
	Postmodern theory	

Structural-functionalism

Focuses on social structures and the functions such structures perform. Functionalist theory stresses that human behaviour is governed by relatively stable social structures. It underlines how social structures maintain or undermine social stability. It emphasises that social structures are based mainly on shared values or preferences and suggests that re-establishing equilibrium can best solve most social problems. As such, structural-functionalism tends to emphasise what is positive about society and be relatively politically conservative. Functionalism is often associated with the work of Durkheim, Parsons, and Merton.

Structuralism differs somewhat from structural-functionalism. There is still a focus on structures, but not necessarily their functions. Structuralism is more interested in the social impact of hidden or underlying structures, such as the global economic order or gender relations. It adopts a view that hidden structures determine the social world. Structuralism originally comes from linguistics and anthropology; specifically the insight that the way people speak and express themselves is determined by underlying grammatical systems.

Conflict/Critical Theory

Generally focuses on macro structures, such as relations between classes. It shows how major patterns of inequality define societies and determine power structures and outcomes. It stresses how members of privileged groups try to maintain their advantages while subordinate groups struggle to increase theirs. It typically leads to the suggestion that reducing or eliminating privilege will lower the level of conflict and increase total human welfare.

Conflict theory originated in the work of Karl Marx, who analysed the Industrial Revolution and proposed grand, sweeping arguments about the way societies develop (captured in his grand theory, historical materialism). Class conflict, or the struggle between classes to resist and overcome the opposition of other classes, lies at the centre of Marx's thought. In his major work, *Capital*, Marx argued that capitalism would produce such misery and collective strength among workers that they would eventually revolt, take state power and create a classless society (i.e. communist utopia) in which production would be based on human need and enjoyment rather than profit. Max Weber and C. Wright Mills are other important sociologists associated with conflict theory. While their theories are related to Marx's in their concern with inequality, power and struggle, they are less focused on class.

Symbolic Interactionism

Focuses on interpersonal communication in everyday social settings. It emphasises that an adequate explanation of social behaviour requires an understanding of the subjective meanings people attach to their social circumstances. It stresses that people help to create their social circumstances and do not merely react to them or 'function' within a closed system. By stressing the subjective meanings people create in everyday social life, symbolic interactionism examines how meaning is created and reproduced in everyday settings. Symbolic interactionism is typically associated with American sociologists George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman, as well as Max Weber, who emphasised the importance of meanings and values in explaining social action.

Social Constructionism

Argues that seemingly 'natural' or innate features of society are created and sustained, primarily by social processes that vary historically and culturally. There is a strong focus on the subjective side of social life, as well as the processes and practices people enact to maintain social structures and institutions. This theory is most famously associated with Berger and Luckmann's 1967 treatise, *The Social Construction of Reality*. For social constructivists, concepts and categories like 'gender' or 'nature' have no empirical basis outside of the social realm; that is, they are nothing more than social constructions.

Feminist theory

Claims that patriarchy is important in determining a person's opportunities in life. It holds that male domination and female subordination are determined not by biological considerations, but by structures of power and social convention that are male dominated. It examines the operation of patriarchy in both micro and macro-level settings, and contends that existing patterns of gender inequality should be changed for the benefit of all members of society. As such, feminism is politically progressive and often radical.

Key competencies

The New Zealand Curriculum identifies five key competencies that people use to live, learn, work and contribute as active members of their communities. These are:

- thinking
- using language, symbols, and texts
- managing self
- relating to others
- participating and contributing

Thinking

Students studying sociology develop capacities for critical and reflective thinking that allows them to better understand the workings of society.

Language

Students become familiar with key sociological concepts and language, being able to accurately apply these to given social phenomena and contexts.

Managing self

Sociology encourages students to become more self-reflective and critically aware of the social environment in which they participate. Understanding the social influences on human behaviour helps students better manage themselves to be more enterprising, resourceful, reliable, and resilient.

Relating to others

Effective teaching and learning of sociology increases students' awareness and empathetic understanding of the situations of others.

Participating and contributing

Through heightened sociological knowledge and awareness, students are prepared to interact in their communities with greater levels of social and ethical responsibility.

A more detailed discussion of these Key Competencies can be found at <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Key-competencies>

Learning and Achievement Objectives/Outcomes

At the respective 3 levels, students will gain sociological knowledge, skills, and experience to:

(Level 1 NZQF)

- a. Understand how the social world can be investigated and explained sociologically.
- b. Understand how individuals are influenced by social institutions, social structures and social processes and the implications these have for individuals and society.

(Level 2 NZQF)

- a. Understand how the social world is investigated and explained sociologically and that this can be done in a variety of ways.
- b. Understand how social forces shape contemporary society and how individuals and groups react and contribute to change.

(Level 3 NZQF)

- a. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of different sociological theories and methods for explaining society, and apply these to social issues.
- b. Understand how social institutions, social structures and social processes contribute to differences and divisions in society.

Specifically, based on the 18 sociology unit standards, the following learning outcomes should be achieved:

Level 1

- Be able to explain sociological theories
- Be able to describe social institutions
- Be able to describe social structures
- Be able to describe social processes
- Be able to conduct a directed qualitative sociological enquiry
- Be able to conduct a directed quantitative sociological enquiry

Level 2

- Be able to examine sociological theories
- Be able to examine social institutions
- Be able to examine social structures
- Be able to examine social processes
- Be able to conduct guided qualitative sociological enquiry
- Be able to conduct a guided quantitative sociological enquiry

Level 3

- Be able to evaluate sociological theories
- Be able to evaluate social institutions
- Be able to evaluate social structures
- Be able to evaluate social processes
- Be able to conduct an independent qualitative sociological enquiry
- Be able to conduct an independent quantitative sociological enquiry

Learning programme design

A sociology programme will assess a selection from the 18 Unit Standards. Across levels 1-3, the units cover sociological theories, social institutions, social structures, social processes, and qualitative and quantitative sociological research.

A programme should be flexible enough to allow for students to begin studying sociology at any year level. There are no pre-requisites for any of the sociology unit standards.

When planning, teachers should incorporate the following components:

- Key sociological concepts
- Key competencies
- Learning outcomes derived from sociology achievement objectives
- Appropriate contexts, topics and examples

Engaging learning programmes are based on effective pedagogy

Engaging learning programmes depend on effective pedagogy. When planning, keep in mind the four 'mechanisms' as identified in *Effective Pedagogy in Social Sciences/Tikanga ā Iwi: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES)*: connection, alignment, community, and interest.

Connection

Encourage students to use their own experiences as a point of comparison when learning about other people's experiences in different times, places, and cultures. When choosing contexts and resources, make diversity visible and avoid biased and stereotypical representations. Students need to feel that what they are learning connects with and values their experiences.

Alignment

Align activities and resources so students are able to develop understandings of the key concepts and the aspects: thinking critically about sources and examining values.

Make the aims of the programme transparent to students. Avoid pre-programming learning opportunities to the extent that they cannot be changed in response to feedback from assessment. Provide opportunities for students to revisit important content and processes. Focus assessment on valued learning and success criteria.

Community

Design programmes to develop students' interaction skills and use inclusive practices that acknowledge multiple abilities and contributions. There are opportunities for teachers to develop tasks and experiences that enable student–student interaction. Wherever possible, involve students in making decisions about their learning. Give students opportunities to identify possible roles for themselves to think critically and to participate using authentic sociological contexts.

Interest

Offer learning experiences that are sensitive to students' differing interests, motivations, and responses and provide a variety of experiences that become memorable anchors for learning and subsequent recall. Local contexts in which students feel a direct stake can engage them with their community and provide bridges to global issues.

Sociology's place in and connection with education in schools

Sociology is broad in scope and can be applied to all aspects of society. Sociology therefore complements subjects not only in the social sciences, but in the humanities and the natural sciences. In 2007, *The Times Higher Education Guide* published a list of 'The most cited authors of books in the Humanities' (including philosophy and psychology). Seven of the top ten are listed as sociologists: Michel Foucault (1), Pierre Bourdieu (2), Anthony Giddens (5), Erving Goffman (6), Jürgen Habermas (7), Max Weber (8) and Bruno Latour (10). Sociology has particularly close connections with subjects concerned with social enquiry, such as history, political science, economics, media studies and geography. Yet sociology could also be connected with English literature and art history. For example, sociological analysis could be applied to gender roles or representations in novels and works of art.

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