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INTERPRET A TABLE

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SUGGESTED CITATION

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Abstract

Students are asked to interpret a table and apply course concepts in their analysis. The assignment gives students an opportunity to practice writing and data analsyis. The assignment is used in an Introduction to Sociology course, but could be adapted to other courses focused on Race and Ethnicity, Stratification, Research Methods, and Education. The assignment is used in a community college and has been used successfully both in face-to-face courses and online courses.

Details

Subject Areas: Introduction to Sociology/Social Problems

Resource Types: Assignment

Class Levels: College 100

Class Sizes: Any

Learning Goals and Assessments

LEARNING GOALS

Students will interpret data presented to them in a table.

Students will apply information they learned regarding stratification to new information regarding social structure.

ASSESSMENTS

Written submission

Multiple choice exam questions

Resource Files

DOCX
DOCX

TECHNIQUE: INTERPRET A TABLE

AS USED BY: Stephanie Medley-Rath, PhD
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COURSE: Introduction to Sociology

TEACHING/LEARNING GOAL:
1. *Goal 1:* Students will interpret data presented to them in a table.
2. *Goal 2:* Students will apply information they learned regarding stratification to new information about educational inequality.

TEACHING OBJECTIVE:
- Interpretation and analysis of data
- Application of course concepts

ANTICIPATED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- Students will be able to interpret data found in a table.
- Students will analyze the data found in a table.
- Students will apply course concepts to the data found in a table.

RELATED SYLLABUS
The **Online Introduction to Sociology Syllabus** is under review at TRAILS.

REFERENCES:
National Center for Education Statistics. 2014. "Status Dropout Rates." Retrieved May 23, 2014 (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_coj.asp).

MATERIALS NEEDED:
- None

ESTIMATED TIME:
- Students will complete the assignment outside of class. I provide instruction documents for all homework at the beginning of the semester. I go over the instruction details 1-2 class meetings prior to the due date. Reserve 10-15 minutes to go over the instructions.
- Reserve 10-20 minutes to go over the assignment either after it has been collected or after it has been graded and returned to students.

PROCEDURE:
For the Instructor:
- I assign the individual writing assignment in the last third of the semester, which is after we have completed the major section on stratification and either before or at the beginning of our unit on education.

- I require students to use APA format because most of my students are not sociology majors. I would give students the option of using APA or ASA format if more students are sociology majors or require them to only use ASA format if most of the students are sociology majors.

For the Students:
- Student procedures are laid out in the assignment document.

INTERPRETATION:
In general, most students are able to correctly identify the statistical data. More students have difficulty applying course materials to their interpretation of the data. They are better at drawing on issues of stratification (which they have already been tested on), than they are at applying new material on education that has only just been introduced to them or requires them to complete the assigned reading.

POSSIBLE PITFALLS:
- Students do not address all portions of the assignment. They may fail to use paragraphs to structure their paper. Students may only answer the first part of each question.
- Students use their opinion to answer the question rather than drawing on course materials or couching their opinion in scholarly research.

ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES:
Multiple Choice Exam Question:

[Table 1 from the assignment instructions could be reprinted in the exam for question 1.]

1. Which racial/ethnic group has the highest dropout rate?
   a. Blacks
   b. Whites
   c. Hispanics
   d. Asians
   Correct answer: C
2. The low dropout rate among white students could be attributed to:
   a. Attending better funded schools.
   b. A higher likelihood of having their race/ethnicity being represented in the curriculum.
   c. Higher expectations placed on them (i.e., teachers believing the white students are better students compared to black or Hispanic students).
   d. All of the above
   Correct answer: D

Interpret a Table

In this activity, you are to interpret a table[1] about race and high school dropout rates.

Table 1. High School Dropout Rate for White, Black, and Hispanic Students in 1990 and 2012

Year	Racial/Ethnic Group		
	White	Black	Hispanic
1990	9.00	13.00	32.00
2012	4.00	8.00	13.00

Using complete sentences, answer the following questions to interpret Table 1:
1. Which racial/ethnic group had the highest dropout rate in 1990? What was the percentage?
2. High school dropout rates have declined for all racial/ethnic groups between 1990 and 2012. Which group had the lowest dropout rate in 2012? What was the percentage?
3. Which group had the largest decline in dropout rate between 1990 and 2012? What was the percentage decrease?
4. The high school dropout rate for Hispanics is about three times as high as it is for whites. Explain why you think this is based on what you have learned in this class. Specifically, consider the role of stratification and the institution of education. Why is the dropout rate so much higher for Hispanics compared to other groups?

Additional expectations for this assignment:

- Your responses should be between 150-300 words (1/2-1 complete pages). If you do not reach 150 words, you most likely have not answered the prompt and will not earn full credit. You will lose points based on what remains unanswered and lose points for length.
- You need to demonstrate that you understand the course material in your submissions. This means you should go beyond the prompt and refer to other course materials (assigned readings, audio recordings/lecture, and so on) in your answer.
- Be very careful when including your opinion in your answer. Be sure to ground any opinions you include in the course material or back it up with reputable outside references. You will be asked to back up your opinions with research, so keep this in mind when answering the prompts.
- Use paragraphs to organize your writing. In general, use a paragraph to address each question in the prompt.

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[1] Data comes from: National Center for Education Statistics. 2014. "Status Dropout Rates." Retrieved May 23, 2014 (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_coj.asp).

- If you state information as fact, you must provide a reference using APA format. You do need to include a reference to your textbooks and any other sources you use to answer the prompt.
- You need to include any information that is directly quoted with an in-text citation regardless of where it came from.
- Your submission will be graded for spelling and grammar. Take your time. Proofread. Use spell check. Read your work out loud to catch errors.

Grading Rubric

Criteria	Instructor Feedback	Points Possible	Points Earned
Content (100%)			
Shows good effort to engage with the material (Response should go beyond the prompt and refer to other course materials—assigned readings, audio recordings/lecture, and so on. Any opinion is grounded in course material or supported with reputable references.)		**25**	
Which group has the highest dropout rate in 1990? What was the percentage?		**25**	
High school dropout rates have declined for all racial/ethnic groups. Which group had the lowest dropout rate in 2010? What was the percentage?		**25**	
The high school dropout rate for Hispanics is about three times as high as it is for whites. Explain why you think that is based on what you have learned in this class. Why is the dropout rate so much higher for Hispanics compared to other groups? (Refer to course materials)		**25**	
Format (Failure to adhere to proper formatting does not earn points, but will cause points to be deducted)			
Meets word count (150-300 words)		**(-5)**	
Uses paragraphs to organize writing		**(-5)**	
Fewer than two spelling or grammatical errors per page		**(-5)**	
Any references adhere to APA format		**(-5)**	
	Total	**100**	