

A wide-angle photograph of a modern university campus. In the foreground, a long, paved walkway leads towards a large, multi-story building with a glass facade. The walkway is lined with young trees planted in circular concrete planters. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. The overall scene is clean and well-maintained.

UC Merced Sociology Graduates Using their Education in Careers or Education: Results from an Alumni Survey

UC
M
E
R
C
E
D

Sociology Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of a BA in Sociology, Students will:

- 1 - Think critically about the causes and consequences of social inequality.
- 2 - Design and evaluate empirical sociological research.
- 3 - Explain and apply the major theoretical perspectives in sociology.
- 4 - Communicate orally and in writing about sociological concepts.
- 5 - Use their sociological education outside the undergraduate classroom, particularly in their careers or future study.

Assessment Method

We conducted two surveys in August 2014 using Qualtrics.

Survey 1: UC Merced Sociology Alumni

Emailed survey link to 74 Sociology alumni
39.2% response rate of those e-mailed. N = 29.
71% response rate from those who opened email.

Survey 2: Current UC Merced Sociology Majors, Juniors and Seniors

Emailed survey link to 116 current sociology majors
53.4% responded. N = 62.

Direct Evidence

Alumni Survey – Respondent reports of current activities – job or grad school

Indirect Evidence

Alumni Survey - questions asking how useful various skills and knowledge acquired in sociology courses are to their current job or graduate school

Current Student Survey – similar questions about how useful sociology skills and knowledge are to current activities. – Results not presented today.

Graduating Senior Survey – 44 graduating seniors asked how proficient there are in PLO. – Results not presented today.

Q1. We'd like to get a sense of what you have been doing since receiving your bachelor's degree in sociology. As of the week of May 5, 2014, were you employed, at school, both, or doing something else?

Please select all that apply: (additional instructions to respondent deleted)

Working at a job or unpaid internship (1)

Enrolled for classes at a college or university (2)

Other, please describe (3) _____

If Working at a job or unpaid ... Is Not Selected, Then Skip To takeclasses

Q2 How many hours did you usually work during a typical week on the job you held the week of May 5, 2014? _____

Q3 What company, organization, or agency employed you during the week of May 5, 2014?

most If you had more than one job: record the employer for whom you worked the hours that week.

Employer or organization name (1) _____

Department or Division (2) _____

City or town (3) _____

State or foreign country (4) _____

Prefer not to answer (5)

Q4. Employment Activities Which of the following categories best reflects that employer's main business or industry during the week of May 5, 2014?

(Please select only one response. If your employer had more than one type of business, please answer for the type of business primarily performed at the location where you worked.)

Biotechnology (1)

Construction or mining (2)

Education (3)

Finance, insurance, or real estate services (4)

Health services (5)

Information technology or computer services (6)

Other services (e.g., social, legal, business) (7)

Manufacturing (8)

Public administration/government (9)

Research, please specify: (10) _____

Transportation services, utilities, or communications (11)

Wholesale or retail trade, including food services (restaurants, bars, night clubs, etc.) (12)

Other, please specify: (13) _____

Q7 How useful are the following sociology-related skills in the performance of your job?

	Not at all useful (1)	Somewhat Useful (2)	Very useful (3)
Collect data (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use software (EXCEL, SPSS, SAS, STATA) to analyze data (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interpret the results of any type of data gathering (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop evidence-based arguments (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use the computer to gather information on the results of others' research (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write a report (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Give an oral presentation (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engage in discussions at work using concepts or information from sociology classes (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use information about social inequality you learned in sociology classes in your work (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Apply theoretical perspectives in sociology to issues at work (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9 Between completing your bachelor's degree in sociology and the week of May 5, 2014, did you take any college or university courses or enroll in a college or university for any other reason, such as completing a master's PhD, medical, or law degree?

Yes (1)

No (2) If No Is Selected, Then Skip To How satisfied are you with the traini...

Q10 Did you obtain a degree?

Yes (1)

No, and I do not expect to (2)

No, but I expect to (3)

Don't Know (4)

If No, and I do not expect to Is Selected, Then Skip To How satisfied are you with the traini...

Q11 What degree did you obtain or do you expect to obtain? (Check all that apply.)

Bachelor's degree (1)

Post-baccalaureate certificate (2)

Master's degree (including MBA) (3)

Post master's certificate (4)

Doctorate (Ph.D., D.S.C., D.Sc., Ed.D.) (5)

Other professional degree (JD, LLB, ThD, MD, DDS, etc.), please specify: (6)

Q12 Please describe your primary field of study: _____

Q13 From which college or university did you take classes after completing your BA? If you took classes at more than one institution, list that from which you obtained or expect to obtain a degree.

College or University Name: (1) _____

City/Town (2) _____

State/Foreign Country (3) _____

Q14 How useful are the following sociology-related skills in your coursework?

Q16 How satisfied are you with the training supplied by the UC Merced undergraduate sociology program in the following areas?

	Very satisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Somewhat dissatisfied (3)	Very dissatisfied (4)
Speaking skills (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing skills (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Analytical skills (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Critical thinking skills (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge of sociological theories (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge related to inequality (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Results – Direct Evidence

84% of alumni are currently working

Most common jobs: education (35% of alumni), social and legal services (19%), research (12%), and environmental non-profits (8%).

Employers include school districts across California, various Law Offices, United Way, the University of California at Berkeley and at Merced, and others.

Results

21% of alumni are in graduate school.

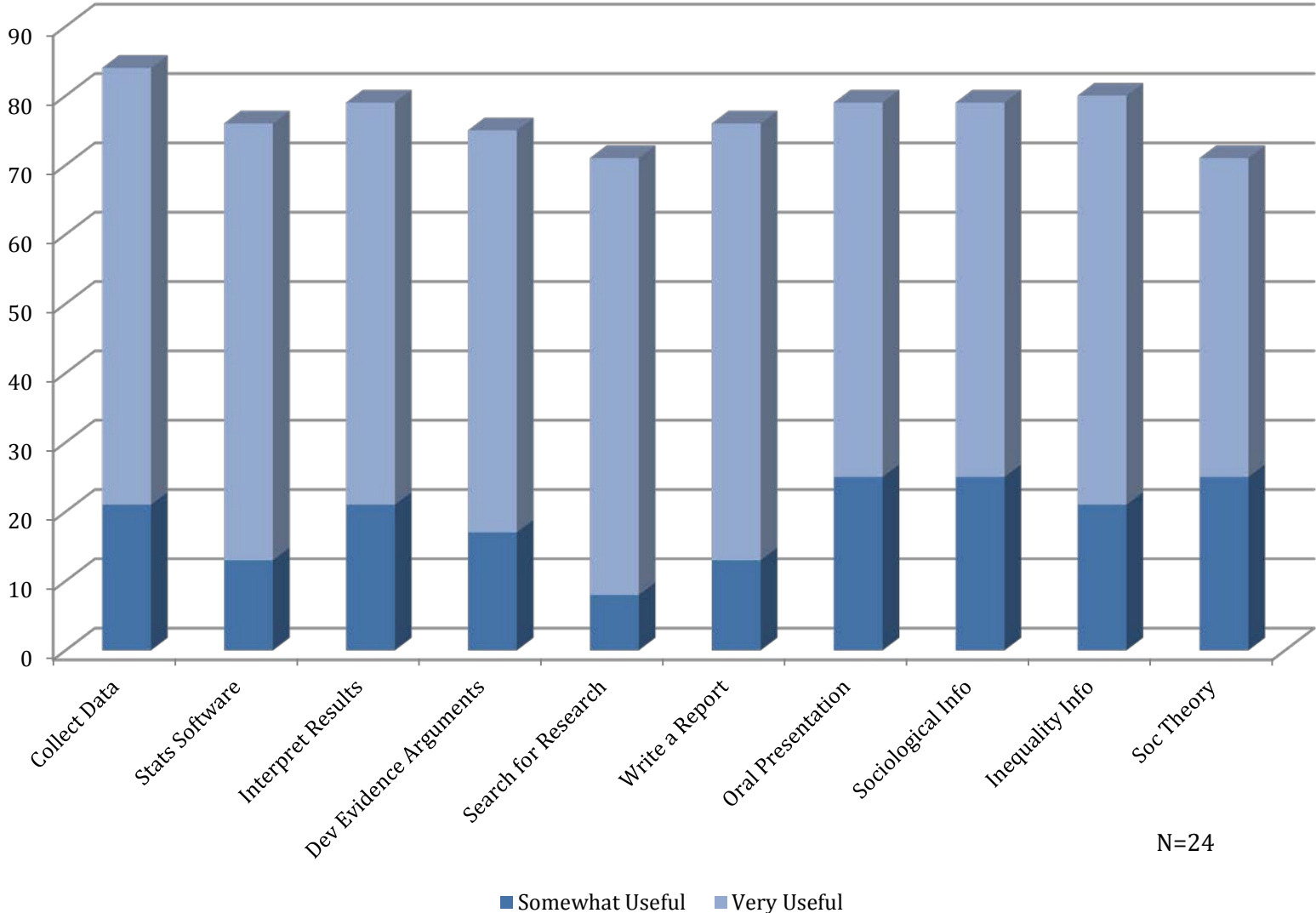
They are studying sociology, education, social work and criminology.

Universities include Stanford, UC Irvine, UC Merced, Cal State Fresno and Cal State Stanislaus.

The background of the slide features a large, faint, golden-yellow seal of the University of California, Merced. The seal is circular and contains the text "CALIFORNIA" at the top and "MERCED" at the bottom. In the center, there is a figure holding a torch, and a banner below it reads "LET THERE BE LIGHT".

Results – Indirect Evidence

Figure 1. How Useful Are Sociological Skills at Work?



N=24

Figure 2. How Useful are Sociological Skills in Graduate School?

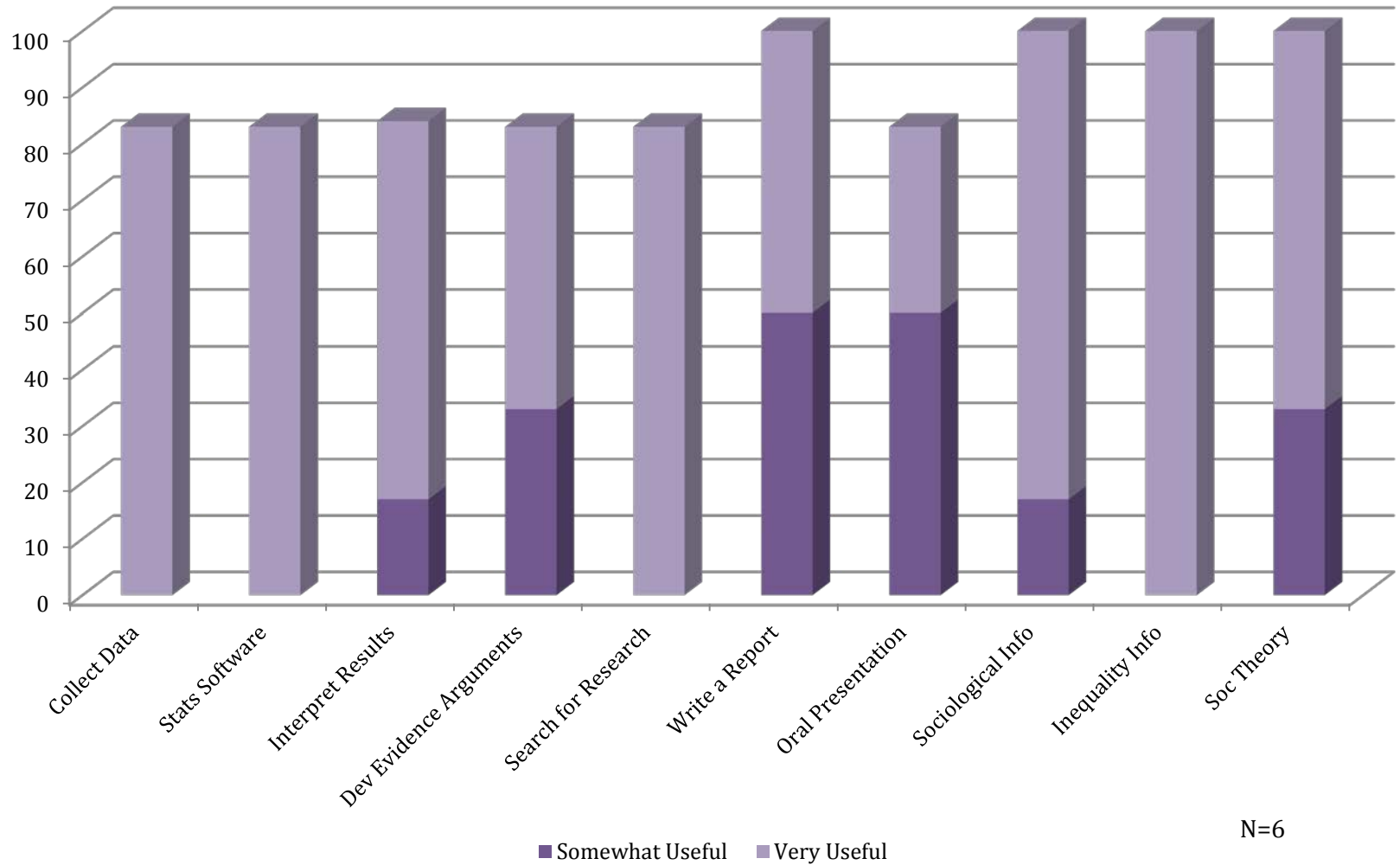
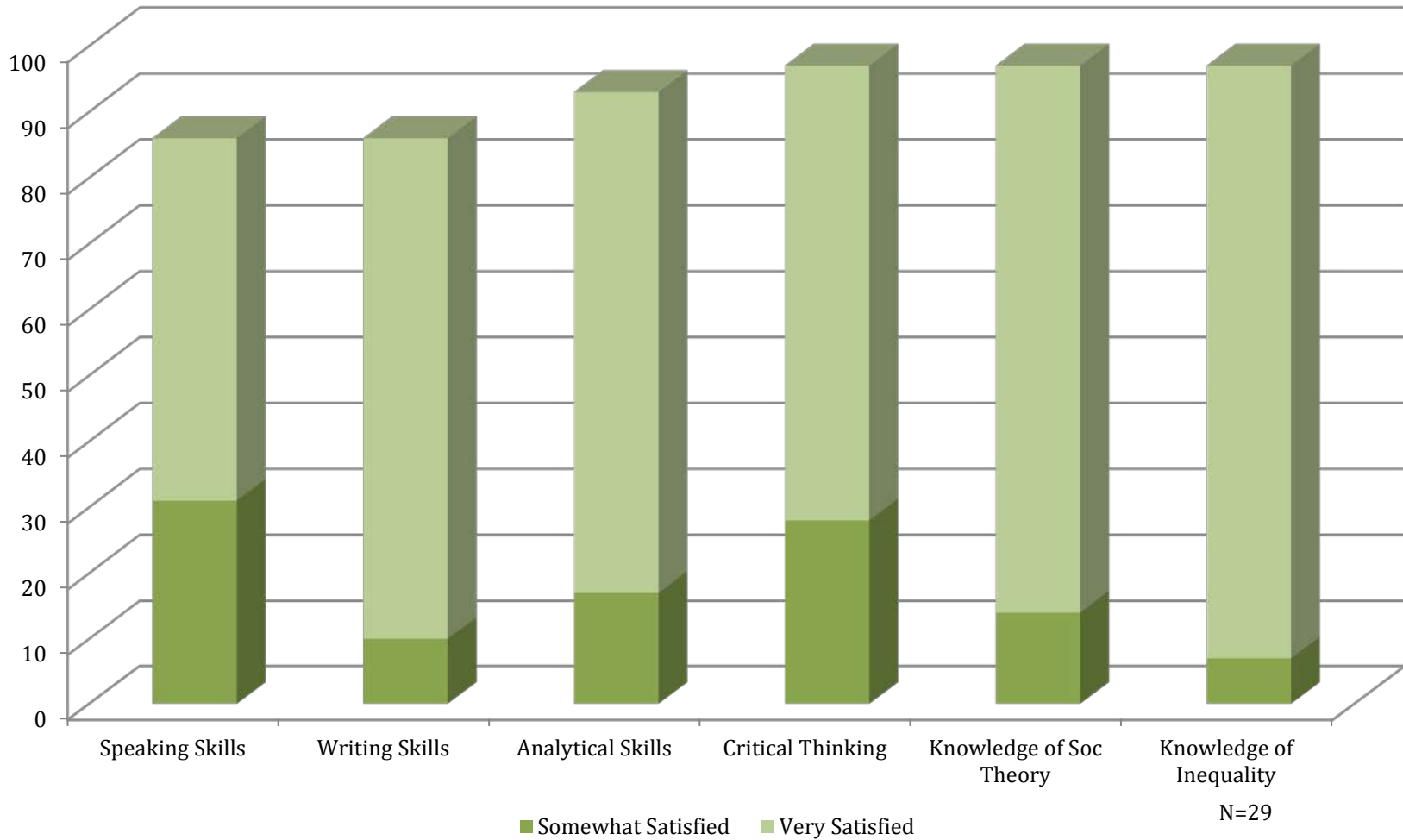


Figure 3. Satisfaction with Training Provided by UCM Sociology in...



Open-ended Question: “What aspects of your sociology education have been most useful to you in your work or further education?”

Research, stats and theories help everyday!

Understanding individuals. I work in personnel/hr and a lot of what I learned in school is useful knowledge for my position.

Understanding the social inequality among the students in a low income school.

Research skills, how to collect and interpret data; how to better interact with diverse populations

My undergraduate education in Sociology has laid the foundation for my graduate degree in Sociology. It has been useful in developing my scholarly interests and having a solid base of the sociological canon.

**Table 1. What Could Be Done to Improve the Sociology Program?
Alumni.**

Offer More Classes	32%
Provide Better Career Training	21
Provide More Internships	16

N = 19

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Sociology Program has been successful with PLO 5:

- The vast majority of our alumni are employed in careers related to sociology or graduate school.
- Over 70% of alumni agree that each of the individual sociological skills or pieces of knowledge provided by our program are useful in their work or graduate school.
- Most of the items are found useful by more than 80% of alums.

Room for Improvement

- Offer more classes
- Provide better career training
- Offer more research and internship opportunities.

Recommendations

- Work with the Sociology Club to offer more career-related workshops.
E.g., preparing to apply for graduate school workshop; careers in sociology workshop; a session with sociology alumni; etc.
- Hire a new faculty member to start Fall 2015
- Hire an additional lecturer



Thank you!