

## *Abstracts of SoTL\* Work on Sociology Students and their Learning*

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- **Dietz, Tracy. 2002. "Predictors of Success in Large Enrollment Introductory Courses: An Examination of the Impact of Learning Communities and Virtual Learning Resources on Student Success in an Introductory Level Sociology Course." *Teaching Sociology* 30:80-88.**

In this study, the researcher looks at the role of student learning communities and students' use of virtual or online aspects of the course in student success. Success was measured by total number of points scored in the course. The sample consisted of 227 students enrolled in a large section of Introduction to Sociology at a large public university. The students completed a questionnaire. **Results indicated that attendance, reading the assigned texts, and membership in a learning community were associated with earning more points in the class.** Self-reported time of studying was not related to total points earned.

- **Howard, Jay R. 2005. "An Examination of Student Learning in Introductory Sociology at a commuter Campus." *Teaching Sociology* 33:195-205.**

The researcher in this study gathered survey data in seven semesters of Introductory Sociology classes to look at predictors of success in the course. There were few significant gender differences, although female students spent significantly more hours studying for exams than did males. **Results showed that students who "attend class, work fewer hours for pay, read the assignments, and take the practice exams are more successful than those who do not" in terms of course grade (p. 202).** The researcher argues these variables are related to the important factor of student involvement in college.

- **McKinney, K. 2007. "The Student Voice: Sociology Majors Tell us About Learning Sociology." *Teaching Sociology* 35:112-124.**

In this article, the author reports on the common themes derived from three, small-scale qualitative studies that focus on how sociology majors believe they learn our discipline. These studies include a group interview, analysis of content in learning logs, and individual face-to-face interviews. **Based on the results of these studies, five types of connections appear critical to student learning in sociology: connections to others, among related ideas or skills, to student lives, across courses, and to the discipline. In addition, students were at different points on three overlapping pathways of learning: less-more successful in the major, use of surface-deep approaches, and novice-expert learners.** The author also offers implications and suggestions for teaching, sociology programs, and future research.

- **McKinney, K. 2008. "Correlates of Success in the Sociology Major." *International Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* 2 (1, January).  
[http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/ijstl/v2n1/articles/McKinney/Article\\_McKinney.pdf](http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/ijstl/v2n1/articles/McKinney/Article_McKinney.pdf)**

The focus in this exploratory study is on factors related to success in the sociology major. 114 graduating majors from a mid-sized, public university completed a self-administered questionnaire. **Students reported that talking with others about the material as well as using application, real world examples, and review strategies are critical to their learning. In multiple regression analyses, there is limited evidence for a positive relationship between several interpersonal academic/study behavior variables and success.** Multiple and ordinal regression analyses point to a negative relationship between age and success in the sociology major at this institution. Implications for teaching and learning in sociology and other disciplines are discussed.