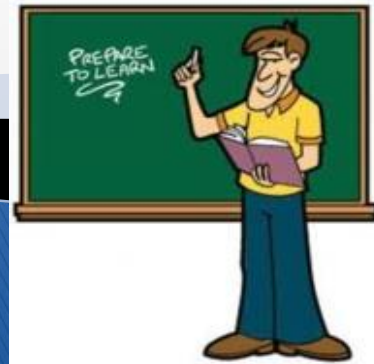


# Teaching and Assessment

*Multiple uses of class assignments*

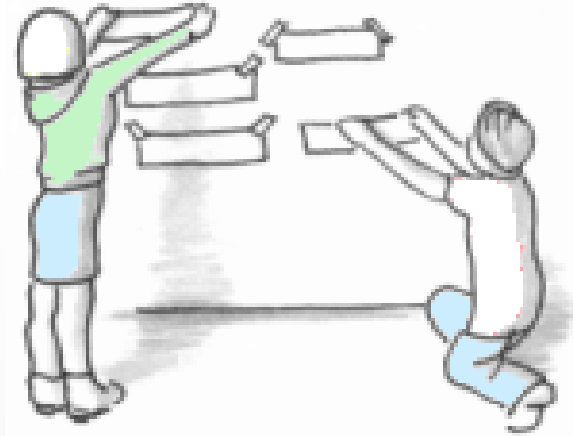


*Maureen Ellis-Davis, Bergen Community College*



# Operational definitions

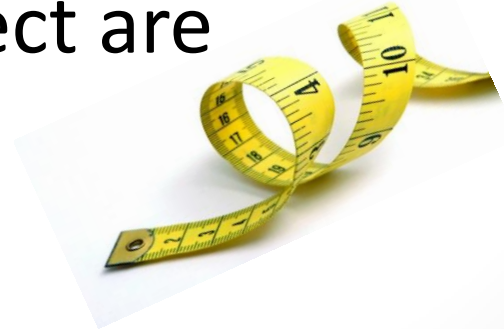
- ▶ Measurement
- ▶ Assessment
- ▶ Evaluation



- ▶ Three terms too often confused and too often used interchangeably.

# measurement

- ▶ Refers to the process by which attributes or dimensions of some physical object are determined.
- ▶ . . . generally uses some standard instrument to determine weight, height volume, speed, and so on.
- ▶ Attempts to quantify phenomena not readily observable empirically, such as IQ.



measurement generally means . . .

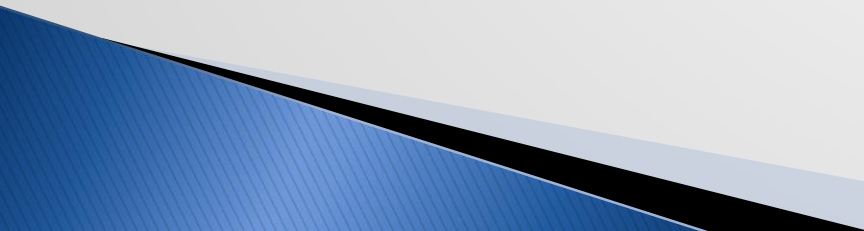
Information is obtained  
relative to some known  
objective or goal.



# assessment

In education, the term **assessment** refers to the wide variety of methods that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, and skill acquisition of students from preschool through college and adulthood.

# Teachers assess constantly!

- ▶ All tests are a form of assessment.
  - ▶ Not all assessments are tests.
  - ▶ We test at the end of a lesson or unit.
  - ▶ We assess progress at the end of a school year, often through testing.
- 



Tests can tell us something about what students “know” at a particular moment in time.

- ▶ How useful are they at helping us understand how long students will “know” what they learned with us?

# CULTURE

- ▶ SOC 101– one basic concept in one required unit in Introduction to Sociology.
- ▶ What is the best test format to assess culture?



# A favorite among students and faculty

- ▶ 1. All cultures possess
  - ▶ A) language
  - ▶ B) some form of family system
  - ▶ C) prohibitions against incest
  - ▶ D) all of the above
- ▶
- ▶ 2. The idea that you should not cheat during this exam is an example of a
  - ▶ A) norm
  - ▶ B) technology
  - ▶ C) social structure
  - ▶ D) material good
- ▶
- ▶ 3. A worker is frequently late, takes extended “coffee breaks,” and makes numerous mistakes while working on important tasks. As a result of poor performance, the worker is fired. This is an example of:
  - ▶ A) a sanction
  - ▶ B) a law
  - ▶ C) cultural diffusion
  - ▶ D) none of the above

# Short answers– memorization?

Give a sociological definition of each of the following five terms and/or concepts.  
(4 points each)

Cultural diffusion

cultural relativism

Norms

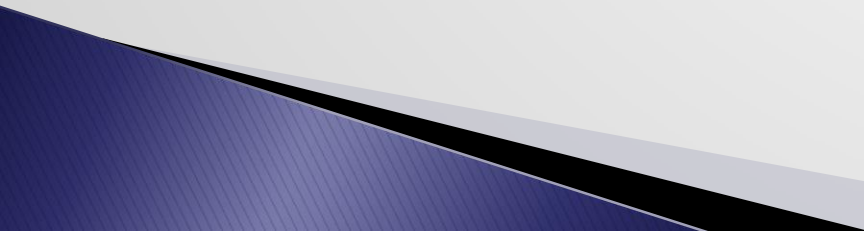
dominant ideology

culture

sanctions

# Essay . . .traditional format?

You are a high school principal. What norms would you want to govern your students' behavior? How might those norms differ from norms appropriate for college students?



How effective are these  
approaches?

Experiences?

# Explanations for differences?

Changing student bodies  
Changing technologies  
Changes in course contents

Problems in communication. . .



# When faculty say . . .

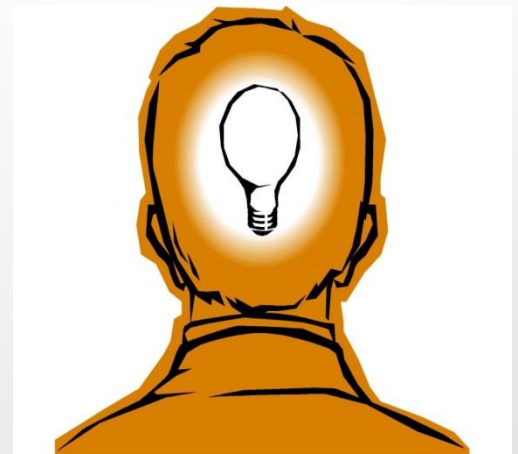
Consider the following situation . . .

After completing the assigned readings . . .

Write a short paper in which you discuss . . .

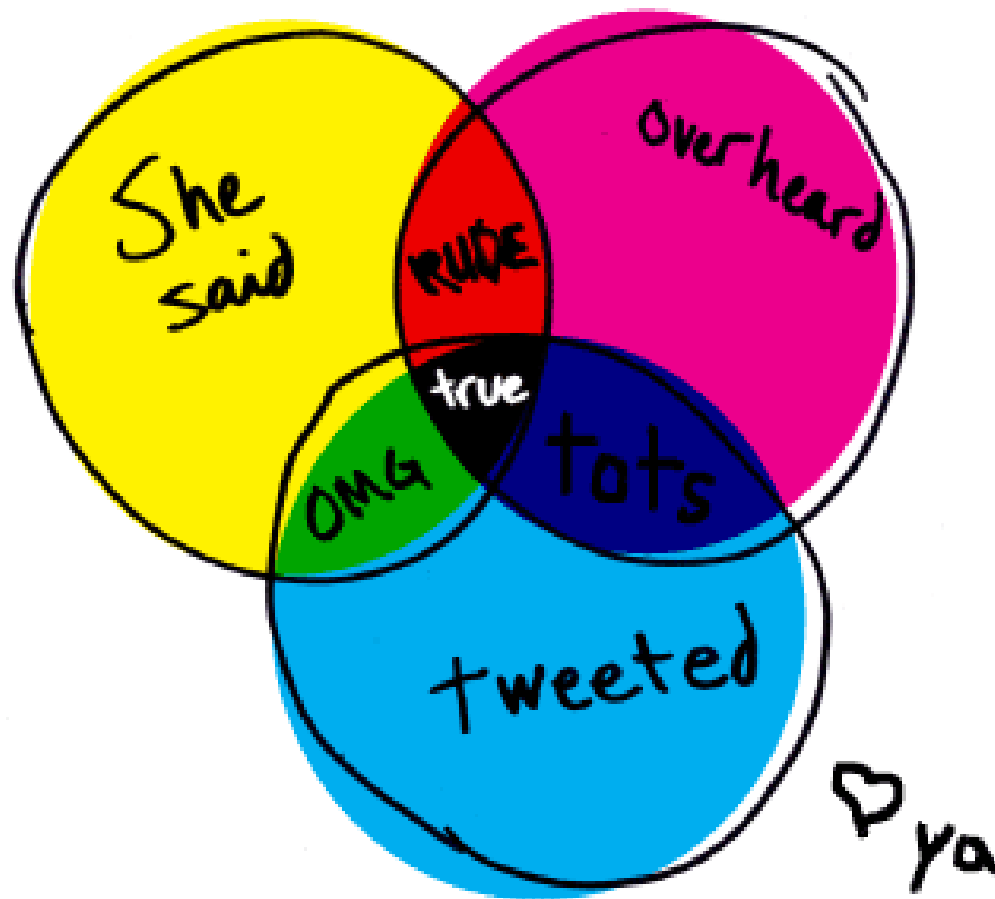
“. . . relationships between concept A and concept B”

# We want students to . . .

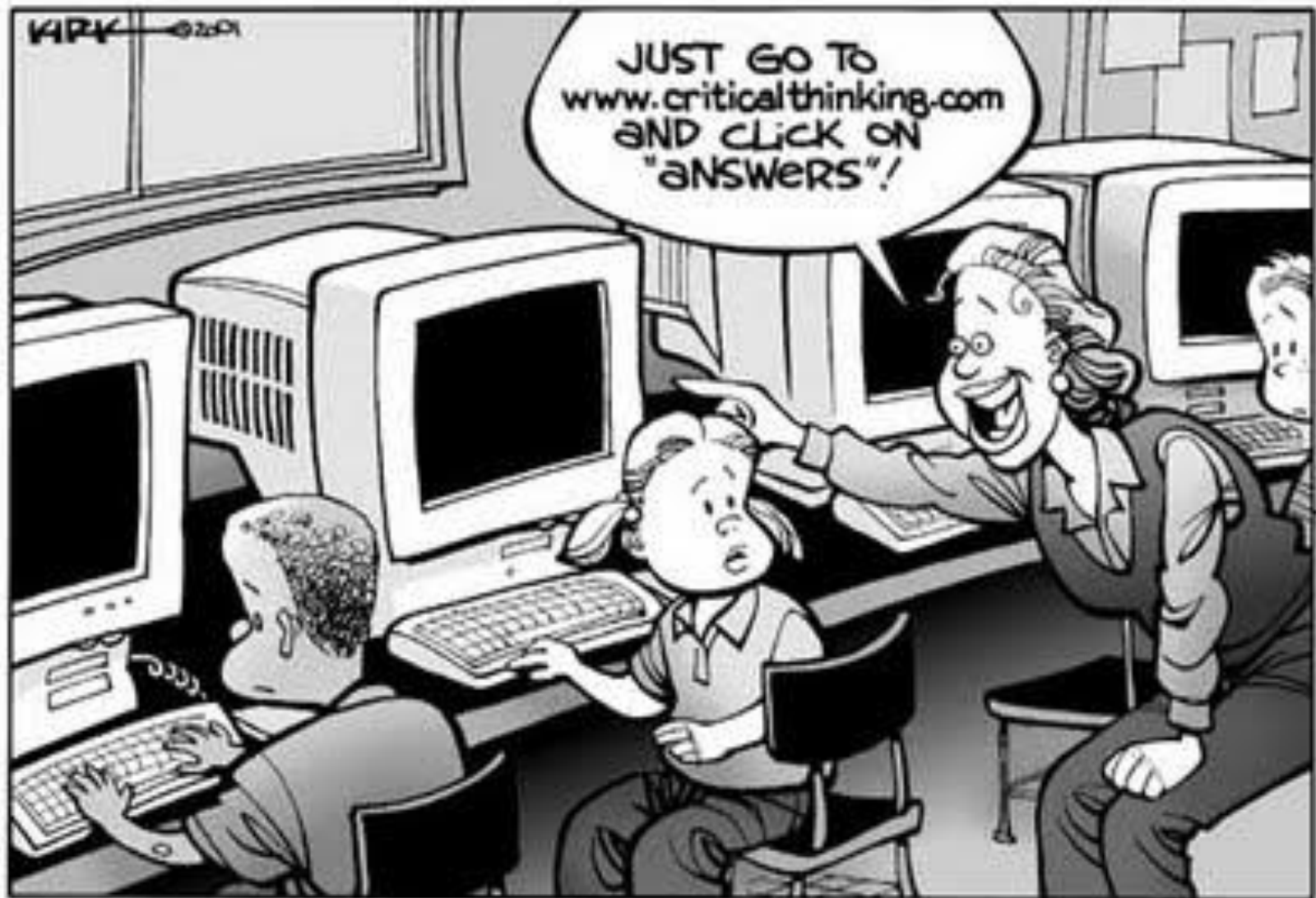




students hear . . .



Or . . .



Do our techniques still  
work?

# This is the new classroom!



# Sociology and critical thinking

Sociological imagination – one of the first concepts introduced in SOC 101 and reinforced throughout the semester.

It is often difficult for students to grasp as it is an abstraction . . . a mind-set or perspective.

# *sociological imagination*



- ▶ C. Wright Mills – an ability to see patterns that influence the individual as well as groups of individuals.
- ▶ Personal troubles versus public issues



- ▶ The task of sociology is to realize that individual circumstances are inextricably linked to the structure of society. (Mills, 1959)
- ▶ Sociology is thus . . .
  - A way of viewing the world around us.
  - It involves several related components
- ▶ Being able to do so is what Mills means by *sociological imagination*.

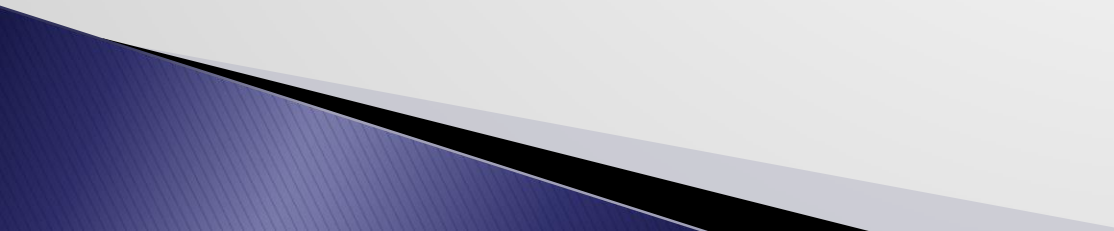


It is an ability to see societal patterns that influence individuals, families, groups, and organizations.

# Applications – society makes us do it!

Does where you live determine how you live?

In this assignment you will need to focus on technological innovations and how they generally shape the actions of people.



Identify two different technological innovations that you think are important to your life today.

How do each of the innovations shape the way you live your daily life?

Now consider how these two innovations may have shaped the daily lives of your grandparents when they were your age. How different or similar to your experiences were theirs?

How do you explain the similarities and differences?



# MOBILITY ACROSS GENERATIONS

## *Occupational Family Tree*

*--related concepts*

types of social mobility, structural mobility,  
cultural capital

culture, subcultures, social norms, values

family traditions



## **Task:** Social mobility in class based society:

(1) Use the grid provided to create a data base of three generations of your family, both paternal and maternal sides. Make your grids as complete as possible.

(2) Consider the social climates during which each generation spent their childhoods and early adulthood. Briefly describe some of the major sociocultural events, historical norms, beliefs, values, and so on, that might have shaped their social experiences

(3) In a brief essay, utilize your sociological imagination and discuss the extent to which one might argue that each generation can be understood to be a product of their own particular society.

# rationale

- ▶ Creating an “occupational family tree” help students map the way social change in the general society has impacted their own families. By reviewing the jobs/professions represented within their own multigenerational families, in light of the opportunity structure of the era (and country in which they were living) students to consider the extent to which social mobility is the sole consequence of individual efforts. Key concepts considered include: social mobility (and the various forms), structural mobility, matrix of domination.

# RACE AND ETHNICITY -- EXERCISE

***Look up the census statistics on the racial and ethnic composition of your community.***

What are the predominant racial and ethnic groups?

How many other groups are represented?

How many members of your community are immigrants, and where do they come from?

Do the results of your research surprise you?

What accounts for the pattern you discover?



# Society of People from Under Rocks

Believe it or not, a very small and peace loving society has been discovered: its name translates as *Living Under Rocks*. This society is a very proud one, with a very long history. The people pride themselves with full knowledge of their ancestry and tradition is extremely important. Much of the technology that we take for granted for them is novel and usually optional. But, they have some interesting plant life with an incredible application to waste disposal; the ultimate in recycling, these plants can make even old computers biodegradable. A number of American corporations would like to do business with companies in *Living Under Rocks* and the federal government thinks this would be a great thing, given our need to boost environmentally friendly businesses.

The people know very little about our U.S. society, just that it exists and is very big and busy. The leaders there are considering establishing a relationship with the U.S.; sharing is a fundamental part of the value system of people from *Living Under Rocks* and it is supported by their religion. Several of their citizens, including males and females of a variety of ages, have been selected to visit the U.S. for thirty days. During this time period they hope to learn about our society so that they can make recommendations to their leadership about establishing trade and possibly tourism agreements.

# Assignment:

***What would you tell the ambassadors from Living Under Rocks about life in the U.S. and the making of Americans?***

## Suggestions given:

Suburban shopping malls

television programs

American sports

Men's/women's magazines

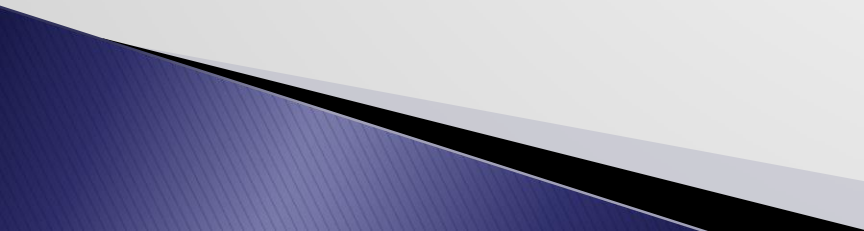
coffee cafes, sports bars & delis

music videos

# SOCIETY AS A CONCEPT

*The Chosen People* : Due to a freak set of circumstances, everyone outside of the classroom has suddenly perished. The only people left alive are the people now in the room. Fortunately there are no lasting effects of this freak occurrence and everything on the planet has been left undisturbed. There is no chance of the freak occurrence happening again. The class has been completely spared.

# Work in groups -- questions

- ▶ What do we do next?
  - ▶ What are our immediate goals?
  - ▶ What are our long-term goals?
  - ▶ How do we meet them?
- 

# The Chosen People -- continued

*After 10 – 15 minutes, the following is added:*

You must decide how to reconstruct society from the ground up.

Is there a particular order that the society must be reconstructed? Will you need a leader? Rules? Rules about what? What skills will be needed, promoted, developed and by whom? What norms, punishments, etc. do you envision? Will you create a “chosen people” mythology around why you survived and no one else did?