

Research as Employment Opportunity

There are many potential jobs out there for people with knowledge about how to conduct research. In fact, one of my very first jobs as a college graduate with a BA in sociology was at an **evaluation research** firm that hired me specifically because of the knowledge I'd gained in my college research methods class. While there, I worked as a data-collection coordinator, helping in the evaluation of local domestic violence shelters and transitional housing sites by administering satisfaction surveys to residents. I also helped collect data for a study on community member's thoughts and feelings about where they lived by conducting telephone interviews with a random sample of people who lived in the area. (This last project made me much more sensitive than I'd previously been to survey researchers who do cold-calling.) Without a background in research methods, I would not have been hired for this position.

Upon graduation from college, you, too, may enjoy the benefits of employment thanks to having learned social science research methods in college. Some current jobs of sociologists I know include jobs doing research in pharmaceutical companies to understand the social consequences of medications, conducting research for lobbying organizations, working in human resources, and so on. Other recent undergraduate sociology majors went on to conduct market research in the advertising industry, work for the United States Census and other federal government positions, and even help with the collection of data for large social science studies such as the **General Social Survey** (<http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/GSS+Website/About+GSS>). Understanding research methods is important in all these jobs and careers. In addition, in 2009 the *Wall Street Journal* reported findings from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics and Census Bureau showing that among 200 professions, sociologists have the eighth best job in the world (Needleman, 2009). Needleman, S. E. (2009, January 6). Doing the math to find the good jobs: Mathematicians land top spot in new ranking of best and worst occupations in the U.S. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123119236117055127.html> So now you should have more knowledge about what you might do with your sociology degree. Understanding social scientific research methods can lead to the prospect of a very satisfying career.