

Teaching/Learning Matters

ASA's Newsletter for the



Section On Teaching &
Learning In Sociology

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SECTION CHAIR'S CORNER

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Greetings, Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology! I look forward to serving as your Chair over the next year. Before I fill you in on my plans for the year, let me introduce you to a few other people.

Our Chair-Elect is Kathleen McKinney from Illinois State University. I have known Kathleen since she was editor of *Teaching Sociology* and I look forward to working with her more closely for the next couple of years. We also have three new Council members: John Glass (community college rep), Kerry Strand (4-year rep) and Diane Taub (university rep). My thanks go to outgoing Council members Wendy Ng, Lynn Ritchey and Steve Sweet for their service to the section. Thanks, too, to outgoing Past Chair, John Zipp. Susan Farrell, new Past Chair, has been a great help to me as well.

In the next year, I will be working with council and our committee chairs to conduct the business of the section. We have a new award that will be given for the first time in 2009: The Carla B. Howery Award for Teacher-Scholar Development. Carla is a great ambassador for the mission of our section. (She is also, hands down, the funniest person I know.) I am so pleased that we will be giving an award in her honor.

Council has approved four ad hoc committees to explore important issues over the next year. A committee on mentoring, chaired by Susan Belair, will be examining how the section might better serve its membership through mentoring programs. A committee on SOTL grants, chaired by Kerry Strand, will take up the question of whether the section ought to have a program to award money to support SOTL research. Alexis Bender (graduate student rep to Council) will head up a committee on graduate student

concerns to help us better meet the needs of our graduate student members. Andrea Miller is chair of a committee on contingent faculty concerns, which will focus specifically on the challenges this growing group of faculty face in the context of teaching and learning. Please contact me if you are interested in serving on one of these committees. Contact the committee chair to provide feedback on the topic their group is examining. Their email addresses appear at the end of this column.

By the time you read this column, the 2008 Presidential election may well be history. Whatever your political leanings, there's no doubt that this is a great time to be teaching sociology! My Feminist Theory class and I have been having some excellent discussions on the role of gender, race and class in Presidential politics. There are plenty of issues to examine as we help our students hone their sociological imaginations. I hope you are having similarly productive conversations in your own classes.

I wish you the best for the remainder of this academic year. If I can be of service with respect to any issues associated with the teaching and learning of sociology, please let me know.

I'll end this column with the same quotation from political scientist Cynthia Enloe that accompanies my email signature: "My greatest activism, truly, is in teaching. That's where I feel my most useful self." Wise words, for sure, particularly in the middle of a semester or quarter.

Be well.

Betsy Lucal, 2008-09 Chair

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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As always, I hope you find this newsletter both interesting and informative. I would especially like to thank everyone for submitting articles and really want to encourage all of you to please consider submitting for our Spring edition. We are seeking articles that are more "scholarly" in nature, however articles on teaching tips and thoughts are always welcome. We have added some photos from our meetings in Boston and I realized right away that I need a better camera next year. The newsletter is slowly adapting to a non print medium and thanks for your patience as we continue to add color and photos. The exciting news is that we can accommodate more articles and news. As some of you may know, I recently became the first Director of my institution's Center for Teaching and Learning. I basically have the opportunity to start this Center from "scratch" and have definitely been doing a lot of "scratching" lately. As I look back on my associations with this section and with the field of teaching and learning within Sociology, I am increasingly grateful for this section. The mentorship, guidance, and academic knowledge that I have gained over the years has helped me each and every day in the classroom as well as in my new position. I will continue to do my best to produce a high quality newsletter and would finally like to thank Linda Schock, my administrative assistant, for her assistance in developing this newsletter. The deadline for the Spring Newsletter is February 1, 2009. We welcome your submissions.

Kathy Rowell, 2008-09 Newsletter Editor



NOTES ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Guest Columnists:

Michael DeCesare, Merrimack College
Melinda Messineo, Ball State University
Stevie Young, Wichita State University

NOTE: The editor is currently seeking articles on the scholarship of teaching and learning for the upcoming year.

How the CLEP Introductory Sociology Exam Hurts: A Skeptical Response to Harrison and Singer

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I began reading Marissa Harrison and Marc Singer's article, "How the CLEP Introductory Sociology Exam Can Help Your Department" [*Teaching/Learning Matters*, Spring 2008], with quite a bit of interest. I finished reading it with much more dismay. From my perspective, using the CLEP exam is potentially much more *harmful* than helpful to sociology departments.

Harrison and Singer claim that the CLEP exam—which is a 100-item multiple-choice instrument—is a "practical and viable solution" in three situations: in a department that is having trouble meeting the demand for introductory sociology courses, in a department that is worried about perennial over-enrollments, and in order to "save your students and your department money and time" (pp. 2-3). Upon reading this, my first reaction was to disagree. None of the authors' three reasons, in my initial opinion, seemed to justify using the CLEP exam, since none of them had *anything* to do with pedagogical practices, course objectives, or student learning outcomes. The three seemed to have *everything* to do with bureaucratic efficiency, large-scale assessment, and budget constraints.

But, not wanting to render a verdict without sufficient evidence, I took a closer look at the CLEP exam in sociology after I finished reading Harrison and Singer's article. Here is some of what I found.

The College Board offers "study resources" to help students prepare for its various CLEP exams. The Board's tips regarding the sociology exam are telling: "To prepare for the Introductory Sociology exam, it is advisable to study one or more college textbooks, which can be found in most college bookstores. When selecting a textbook, check the table of contents against the 'Knowledge and Skills Required' for this test" (The College Board 2008a). If this does not constitute "teaching to the test"—or, more accurately, "self-teaching to the test"—then I do not know what does. The Board's advice to prospective test-takers is

clear: Browse an introductory sociology textbook, paying particular attention to the bold-faced words and italicized definitions, and then quickly sign up for the CLEP exam in order to maximize your chances of passing it.

Harrison and Singer, and the people at the Board who support the CLEP exams, seem unaware of the large body of research that documents the superficiality, lopsidedness, and general inadequacy of introductory sociology textbooks (e.g., Featherstone and Sorrell 2007; McGee 1985; Norris, Murphy-Erby, and Zajicek 2007; Perrucci 1985; Suarez and Balaji 2007). Encouraging students to study from textbooks in order to prepare for the CLEP exam is like pushing them to study from *CliffsNotes on Steppenwolf* in order to prepare for a test on the intricacies and nuances of Hermann Hesse's classic novel. Indeed, CliffsNotes markets its products as "The Fastest Way to Learn", and the Board's advice to students who are preparing for the CLEP exam in sociology is accurately summarized by the same slogan. But I would ask of both CliffsNotes and the College Board: the fastest way for students to learn *what?* To suggest to students that they rely solely upon introductory textbooks to teach themselves sociology—or, at least, enough sociology to pass the CLEP exam—is to do them a serious disservice.

So who, exactly, writes the CLEP exam in sociology? According to Harrison and Singer, the CLEP sociology exam questions are "developed by sociology faculty from around the United States who teach the [introductory] course" (p. 2). My check of the College Board's website, however, turned up a *three-person* 2007-08 Test Development Committee for the Introductory Sociology exam (The College Board 2008b). The Committee's three sociologists teach in New York, Texas, and Ohio. They are, I am sure, qualified as sociologists, but from my perspective, they cannot truthfully be referred to as a group of sociologists "from around the United States."

What is perhaps most curious about this entire topic is that the College Board rejected the ASA's proposal for an Advanced Placement course and exam four years ago (Howery 2004). Yet Harrison and Singer now ask us to take seriously a new initiative by the Board to certify students in sociology, *as long as the students can pass a multiple-choice exam that has been written by three sociologists.*

The authors proudly claim toward the end of their article that more than 2,900 U.S. colleges and universities "have established a CLEP policy" (p. 3). I wish to encourage—in fact, strongly encourage—all of us to do what we can to prevent that number from increasing.

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Re-Engaging "Texts" Helping Sociology Students Learn More Through Film and Readings

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As expert learners, we often forget that the skills we use daily when we interact with texts were developed over time. We lose sight of the challenges we faced as novice learners, and as a result we often find ourselves surprised by student responses or lack of skill. By breaking down specific behaviors, we can help students identify how their behavior differs from that of experts and give them concrete advice on how to change their approach. In order to sensitize your expert mind to the challenges faced by the novice learner, participate in these reflection activities.

Reflection 1

Think of one incident you experienced where you were surprised by the student's lack of expertise.

For example, in my Sociology of Media class I was initially surprised to see that my students did not take notes while reading. In fact, they did not write in their books at all. I was also surprised when I showed films in class and they would just sit there passively, as though they were consuming a film in a theatre. Upon reflection I realized that there was no reason for them to approach the Sociology of Media material any differently than they would materials for any other class. In fact, their sense of familiarity with the topic of media made them even less inclined to engage actively with the material. They felt they already had an expert understanding of the material and how best to engage with it. I decided that I needed to create a structure or scaffolding in which this course specific expert learning behavior could be developed. How does this example of my media class compare to your own experiences? What assumptions are you making about your students? What habits would you like to encourage in your students?

Reflection 2

Think of a task that you do well. Now write down how you go about doing that task. Provide explicit detail. Think about the tasks...again what assumptions are you making about the learner?

For the purposes of this illustration, let's start with a topic outside of sociology: making cookies. To do this reflection task I need to think about each and every step involved in this process. As an expert, I may not even realize that I am doing some of the steps because they come so naturally. For example, one of the first tasks when making cookies is to cream the eggs and sugar together. Let's stop right there. I have already demonstrated an assumption about my students' knowledge that may not be accurate. Do my students know what it means to "cream"? Have I lost them at the first step? How often do we make the same errors in our own classes. "Of course students know how to cream eggs with butter or write a literature review or take notes from a film." Or do they? Often faculty will comment that students *should* know how to do literature views or take notes, or any number of other tasks, and that may well be true. However, the reality is that if they do not have these skills, our being frustrated with their lack of mastery will not increase their chances of success.

The challenge for us as instructors is to identify for ourselves all of the complexities of the tasks we are asking our students to engage in and then articulate

this information to them so they can incorporate the expert strategies into their novice understanding of the task. For example, I came up with this partial list of tasks for how to watch a film in Sociology:

1. Sit where you can clearly see the screen and hear the audio.
2. Look at your syllabus to review the topic we are covering this week and next.
3. Look at your previous notes to see what questions we have been asking/discussing. Keep these in mind as you watch the video. (For example, you note that we are currently in the section of the course covering race. You see in your notes from the previous day's discussion that we have been talking about the way that black males are portrayed in the media and how it relates to their lived experiences. You see that today we are watching a film about the independent Black Film Movement. You know from the syllabus that we will eventually be talking about depictions of black athletes. Use this information to help you frame the notes you take from that day's video.)
4. Have paper and writing instrument ready.
5. Record the date of the screening, the title of the video, and the producer. If possible, note the company that distributed the film (PBS/Frontline, AEF, Media Education Foundation, etc.) How does this information relate to our discussion of political economy and hegemony?
6. Note the start time of the video. As you watch the film you may come across a segment that you would like to watch again or you would like to include in your homework, exam responses, or projects. When you identify a section, simply note the time. You can then subtract that time from the start time to determine how far you are in the film so when you go back it will be easier to find that clip.
7. Note how the video is set up. Does it offer an organizing question at the beginning? Does it use organizing headings? Section breaks? Does it explain a concept and then follow with an example? Use this information to help you

Is this strategy condescending?

The answer to this question depends on how you frame the exercise. Ask students to highlight the things they do not do when they are watching films and then encourage them to incorporate those behaviors into their own practice. Explain to them that these skills, habits, behaviors are necessary for

success. Ask students to do the exercise themselves for tasks at which they are experts. Learning is a behavior and a skill that can be developed. We can help articulate the steps necessary to perform a task at an expert level so students can develop better habits that increase learning.

Simulations Not Only Good for Students, But Excellent Learning for Teachers

By Stevie Young, Sociology graduate student at Wichita State University

While attending the ASA national convention this past summer, I was inspired by a workshop regarding simulations. I, a graduate student, had never heard of such a thing and was amazed and excited about the idea. When I got home the first order of business was to integrate simulations into the classes that I teach. Figuring out how to add simulations to the Introductory Sociology courses seemed easy enough, but I was anxious to see about using them in my other two classes: General Psychology and Student Connect (a community college freshman orientation class).

The first simulation I tried was an ice-breaker that I dubbed "the shapes game". This activity involved passing out colored shapes of paper to all students. They are then instructed to create groups of 5, without talking. They have to find a "quality" that all of their shapes share or an "idea" that binds them together. The idea is that the students will separate themselves into groups, just as people do in society. It is a wonderful illustration of stratification, prejudice, and alienation. However, what concepts does it help teach in a general psychology class?

I looked through the textbook for the course and found that many chapters were directed towards being able to identify psychological disorders. I then thought that I could describe the exercise as being an illustration of how certain attributes (symptoms) can lead a doctor to see a specific disorder. However, since there are always two groups with similar attributes, I can use the similarity as an illustration of how some disorders are similar and therefore share the same symptoms. I performed this simulation on the first day of class as an illustration of how difficult diagnosis can be. It allowed the students the opportunity to learn some basic concepts of psychology and gave an excuse to move around the classroom and meet other classmates.

In the freshman orientation class, the game was used as a way to illustrate group dynamics, the need for students to think outside of the box, and how prejudice exists in the world. These are all concepts that are important to a freshman in college, and they

are presented in an easy to understand and fun activity.

This activity was a success in all classes, and both the students and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The sociology class students divided themselves into groups, predominately based on physical characteristics. For example, the older students stuck together and the foreign students tended to stay close to one another. The groupings gave the impression that students already knew each other, even though I do not believe most of them had ever met. In the psychology class, the difference in learning outcomes or goals provided no difference in the way the students grouped themselves. There were still certain groups who stuck together and certain students who fit together, regardless of the typical groupings of shapes: these students invented properties that made them a group. There was no difference in the freshman orientation class; students exhibited the same grouping behaviors.

However, reflecting on the experience, I found that the simulation allowed me a unique view of society and social structures. By not participating in the grouping activity I was able to be an outsider looking in. I noticed things about the social structures that were created in ways that I do not think I have ever thought of before. I was able to see stratification within a group of 60 students and see the "jocks" gather together and stand on the opposite side of the room from the "international students"; I saw the shunning of some people as they attempted to join groups; I saw the loners of society. This was no longer an abstract concept within a book that I had read. It was there in front of my face, and I could watch the process. Not only did this provide a one-of-a-kind look at social structures, but it gave me the opportunity to share with students what I had seen through the simulation, during the debriefing session. This presents the interesting view that no matter what groups of people are asked to form a society and stratify, there are predictable outcomes. For me, as a graduate student who is relatively new to the scholarly field of sociology, there was no better illustration of society and the positions within it, or even the functions that each of these students served. These simulations not only allowed the students an active learning environment that was fun and entertaining, but it allowed me to observe "society" from an outside perspective, as if I were looking down onto the world and seeing the stratification that occurs. I learned more about society through these three activities than I could have read from a book, and I have a much higher respect for why the study of society is so important.

PEDAGOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PERSPECTIVE

NOTE: The editor is currently seeking articles of community college interest for future editions

REPORT ON PRE-CONFERENCE FOR NEW TEACHERS OF SOCIOLOGY

"Teachers Are Made, Not Born"

Kate Linnenberg, Beloit College

Once again the section sponsored a pre-conference for new teachers of sociology at the ASA Annual Meeting. This year in Boston our theme was "Teachers Are Made, Not Born." The day-long session was jam-packed both with ideas, advice, and insights into effective teaching and with people (we had 35 attendees and 25 presenters). The pre-conference was organized by Kate Linnenberg and Mary Nell Trautner. The day began with an opening keynote by Ed Kain. He gave a talk encouraging us all to think about the importance of our pedagogical footprints. Jeff Chin, Liz Grauerholz, and Kathleen McKinney, all current or past editors of *Teaching Sociology*, gave an insightful presentation on the role of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Concurrent roundtables presented by Denise Copelton and Marybeth Stalp, Idee Winfield, Kathy Rowell and Rebecca Plante, Bernice Pescosolido, and Roxanna Harlow and Kerry Strand focused on practical issues teaching and learning. They covered the topics of getting a job that values teaching, putting together a teaching portfolio, tips for dealing with heavy teaching loads, teaching at an institution where teaching isn't first priority, and life at a liberal arts college. The "hot topics" concurrent roundtables really buzzed with conversation. We offered tables on dealing with difficult students, classroom assessment, diversity in the classroom, classroom policies to communicate expectations and sociological ideas, and helping students make connections through civic engagement. These tables were ably led by Rebecca Bach and Julianne Weinzimmer, Greg Weiss, Rachael Neal, Jennifer Keyes and Gayle Sulik, and Elizabeth Borland and Heather Laube. We organized lunch groups based on teaching interests. People were able to discuss effective in-class exercises, accessible books for undergraduates, and ideas for assignments. After lunch and a repeat of the hot topics sessions, Betsy Lucal, Kathy Rowell, and Greg Weiss, all award-winning teachers, provided an honest discussion about the highs and lows of teaching. They reassured

everyone that having a bad day in the classroom doesn't mean that you're a bad teacher, and gave ideas on how to maximize the "good days." New professors Shannon Davis, Nancy Martin, and Nate Wright offered their insights into surviving the first year in the classroom and in the professoriate more generally. Caroline Hodges Persell's closing keynote focused on humor in the classroom, and left everyone laughing. It was a perfect ending to the programmatic portion of a busy day. SAGE/Pine Forge generously provided beverages and appetizers which gave presenters and attendees an additional opportunity to network and chat.

Nineteen of the attendees received SAGE & Pine Forge Press Teaching Innovations and Professional Development Awards to help them attend the pre-conference. SAGE/Pine Forge donates \$5,000 to this fund. Here is a list of the SAGE/Pine Forge authors who also generously support this program with a portion of book royalties:

Jeanne H. Ballantine and Keith A. Roberts, *Our Social World*

Anna Leon-Guerrer, *Social Problems: Community, Policy, and Social Action*

Kathleen McKinney and Barbara Heyl, *Sociology through Active Learning*

Jeanne H. Ballantine and Joan Z. Spade, *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education*

George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society*

Earl Babbie, *Adventures in Social Research*

Jodi O'Brien, *The Production of Reality*

Joan Spade and Kay Valentine, *Kaleidoscope*

William Roy, *Making Societies: The Historical Construction of the World We Live In*

Ken Allan, *The Social Lens: An Invitation to Social and Sociological Theory; Contemporary Social and Sociological Theory: Visualizing Social Worlds; Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World*

Thanks to my co-organizer, Mary Nell Trautner, all the fantastic presenters, and for all the interest of the attendees. The day was inspiring, in large part, because of everyone's enthusiasm for teaching. It was reaffirming to be surrounded by others who hold the value of teaching in such high esteem. One message that ran clearly throughout the overwhelmingly positive reviews of the pre-conference was that the attendees were happy to be welcomed into our section with such openness and support. Again, thanks to everyone who played a role in making this happen.



Comments from participants

The 2008 Pre-conference Workshop for New Teachers of Sociology held in Boston this year was a fantastic experience for me. I had just finished my first year as an assistant professor at a small, private, liberal arts university; the presentations and discussions by award-winning teachers were perfect for this stage of my career. I only wish I had attended a conference like this *before* starting my first year teaching!

The opening keynote by Edward L. Kain (Southwestern University) discussed our "pedagogical footprint" and fit the principles of the environmental movement (reduce, reuse, recycle) into a teaching framework. For me, the biggest impact of this discussion was the suggestion to really think about what I teach in my courses at various levels of the undergraduate curriculum and to develop systematic ways of

assessing and measuring the effectiveness of my teaching. As a first year teacher, I really did not have a good idea about the kinds of skills and expectations that are reasonable for first, second, third year sociology majors. After this session, I had notes and handouts to use as a guide to develop effective and appropriate courses.

Following the keynote speaker, a panel on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (Jeff Chin, Le Moyne College; Liz Grauerholz, University of Central Florida; Kathleen McKinney, Illinois State University) discussed a variety of topics including diversity in learning styles and settings, trends of published research on teaching, and research on the qualities of effective teachers. From this session, I realized that I think of myself as a good teacher, largely because I have anecdotal evidence from students who told me they think I'm a good teacher. As I thought about this during the presentation and afterwards, I was surprised – as a quantitative sociologist – that I would rely on such meager evidence. As a direct result of this presentation, in addition to subjective (how did you like it?) measures of a classroom exercise, I have incorporated objective testing items as part of the students' assessment of classroom activities.

I wish I could have attended all the roundtable presentations! One of the wonderful outcomes of attending this pre-conference workshop is the bound set of handouts from all the presenters. The roundtable discussions I attended were fantastic and gave me some practical tips on effective teaching and organization, but I can also benefit from the roundtable presentations I did not attend by reading over the handouts. Again, an incredibly valuable resource and well worth the price of admission!

Since I could only pick two roundtable topics, the first was directly applicable to my likelihood of getting tenure at a teaching university - "Putting together a teaching portfolio" (Idee Winfield, College of Charleston). The presenter offered several suggestions about how to define and organize a teaching portfolio. Again, the notes and handouts I have from this session – and all the sessions – are While I have not yet been able to develop my teaching portfolio, because I have access to the resources provided at the workshop, I feel confident that I can develop an adequate teaching portfolio for my tenure review packet. I am a big fan of service learning assignments, so for the second session, I attended a discussion of civic engagement and team consulting by Elizabeth Borland (College of NJ) and Heather Laube (University of Michigan, Flint). The presenters discussed specific types of projects. I am incorporating several of these projects – including a poverty diet – in my Class, Status, and Power class.

The afternoon panels continued the emphasis on practical tips for effective teaching. Greg Weiss (Roanoke College) discussed "Six deceptively simple recommendations for effective teaching." All six recommendations were outstanding and have helped me focus on why I teach and what I teach. But the one that made the biggest impression on me was "maintain your passion for teaching." As a first year teacher, I was already beginning to feel overwhelmed and worried about how I could manage to keep up that level of intensity. This last principle was a very effective transition to the next panel on "Surviving the first years in the classroom." Shannon Davis (George Mason University) and Nancy J. Martin (California State University, Long Beach) really reassured me that those overwhelming feelings I had most of my first year (and continue to feel in my second year) are normal and that there are practical steps I can take to reduce my anxiety – essentially: *keep it simple!*

The closing keynote by Caroline Hodges Persell (New York University) reminded me to keep my eye on the goal – student learning outcomes and to look for the most effective ways to realize that goal (including keeping my courses, topics, presentations, and exercises interesting).

Again, the practical focus of this workshop was outstanding and I came away from the day with tools to make me a more effective teacher.

~Danielle McCartney, Webster University,
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We at SAGE and its sociology imprint, Pine Forge Press, have been gratified by the reaction to our sponsoring the ASA Pre-conference, hosted by the Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology. As Executive Editor for SAGE and Pine Forge Press, I've received a number of emails from award recipients who were very grateful for our financial support and for the quality and content of the workshops. To a person, they've all reported that their teaching and their students will benefit from their attendance at the workshop this past August in Boston. We were honored to receive the beautiful glass plaque that thanked us for our efforts. I should add that many of our authors were not just impressed that we are supporting the workshops, but were embarrassed they hadn't provided some or more financial support of their own and pledged to do so in the future. We are excited to have been able to support 13 award recipients in 2007, the award's inaugural year, and another 19 winners in 2008. We are also pleased at the number of our authors and editors who are involved: in 2007, four Pine Forge authors contributed to this awards fund; in 2008, that number grew to 13, and we expect even more in 2009.

One 2008 award winner, Ana Villalobos, a Ph.D. candidate at University of California, Berkeley, wrote to say "THANK YOU SO MUCH for funding me to attend the pre-conference on teaching, which was the single BEST experience I've ever had regarding my sociology teaching."

We see this as a fitting opportunity to be an active participant in the discipline as well as a way to say thank you to the sociologists who adopt our textbooks and read, or publish in, our journals. While we are in the publishing business, we are also aware that SAGE and Pine Forge are part of the nation's higher education system. If we can help develop better classroom practices, your students will be better off for it, just as they will be with better textbooks and ancillary materials. The ASA Pre-conference on Preparing Future Faculty is a unique, worthwhile annual event that we value highly. We look forward to continuing to support the Pre-conference in new and better ways in the coming years.

~Jerry Westby, Jerry.Westby@sagepub.com

SECTION NEWS AND NOTES

Every Presentation is a Classroom: The 2009 Midwest Sociological Society Meetings

Please consider this your invitation to attend the MSS 2009 meetings in Des Moines April 2-5. You are always welcome within the region and as a member at large, but this year may hold particular interest for section members because of the theme: *Teaching Sociological Scholarship*. Some highlights of the meeting will be "Author Meets Teacher" sessions and plenary talks by Joel Best, University of Delaware and past-MSS President (keynote: "The Stupidity Epidemic") and Dan Chambliss of Hamilton College who will be sharing his research findings from the Mellon supported Project for the Assessment of Liberal Arts Education. In addition to hundreds of paper sessions across the discipline, we will have workshops on effective teaching, a regional spotlight on Iowa's recent floods and challenges, unique tours, and student poster sessions and a visual sociology competition for undergraduates. The Des Moines Marriott is great space near terrific restaurants. Please visit www.themss.org for details. Sessions are set but we are accepting abstracts until October 27th. In any event, we hope you'll attend!

Call For Papers

North Central Sociological Association 2009 Conference, April 16-18 at the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn, Michigan

***The Sociological Way of Looking at the World:
Research, Teaching, Application***

If you are interested in presenting at a session, please submit your abstract to the session organizer listed on this document:

<http://www.ncsanet.org/CALLPAP09.pdf>. Abstracts must be submitted no later than **October 31, 2008**.

CALLS FOR.....

Submissions Sought

Please submit suggestions for the spring newsletter to Kathy Rowell. Deadline for submissions is February 1, 2009. Suggestions for articles, regular features, news items to share with other members, and any other ideas are encouraged and welcome! Help me make this the best Section newsletter of the ASA.

Join the TEACHSOC Listserv

Established in 1995 by Jeff Chin and Kathleen McKinney, the Teaching Sociology E-mail List – teachsoc – provides a place to discuss and distribute news on teaching sociology. Teachsoc is open to all individuals interested in pedagogy, curriculum, and any other issues related to the teaching of sociology at any level. To join us, please send the command:

Subscribe teachsoc *Alfred Weber*

In the body of an email message addressed to – teachsoc@googlegroups.com substituting your name for Max's little brother, of course.

Renew Your Membership!

We encourage all section members to join us in recruiting new people to join the section. As Diane Pike is known for saying, EVERY sociologist who teaches should belong to the section. Help us in "spreading the word" about the section and its many benefits. We are the leaders in the scholarship of teaching and learning work as well as some of the most talented teachers. Additionally, the section newsletter provides compelling and interesting items to section members that you cannot get anywhere else. Finally, the journal of *Teaching Sociology* represents our interests through its editors (who have all been section members) as well as through its content.

Automatic Enrollment in Section E-Mail

When STLS section members pay their annual dues, including Section membership dues, their email address is automatically added to the email list. This list is used by Section officers to send messages to the entire membership. However, this is not a listserv and therefore membership is not able to send messages to other members. While Section officers value this opportunity to communicate more readily with our

membership, we recognize that some of you may prefer to be removed from the list.

To remove yourself from the STLS membership list for mailings, send a message to: infoservice@asanet.org with the following statement in the **body** of your message – ***"Please remove my name and email address from the Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology announcement list."*** Then add your name and email address to the message.

For the most up to date information about the Teaching and Learning Section in Sociology, please check the following websites:

American Sociological Association Meeting website:

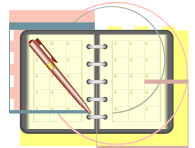
<http://www.asanet.org/cs/meetings/2009>

ASA Teaching and Learning in Sociology website:

<http://www2.asanet.org/sectionteach/>



***Mark your calendar...
Section on Teaching and
Learning at the ASA 2009
Annual Meetings in San
Francisco, August 8-11, 2009***



Section Day is August 9, 2009

