

Teaching/Learning Matters

ASA's Newsletter for the



**Section On Teaching &
Learning In Sociology**

**Volume 35, Number 3
Spring 2007**

SECTION CHAIR'S CORNER

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Warm breezes have finally arrived, as have worms, t-shirts, the other wonders of spring – not to mention the stacks of final papers and exams that are accruing on all of our desks. But if those piles look dauntingly large, perhaps it is worth taking a few minutes to divert your thoughts to summer and the ASA meeting in New York (August 11-14). Our section day is August 14th (saving the best for last, I suppose); as a result of that and our number of members, we have 5 sessions. Program chair (and section chair-elect) Susan Farrell and her program committee are in the process of putting together what I'm sure will be a great set of sessions. If this isn't enough reason to come to ASA, then surely two other events will do the trick. The first of these is the talk by Bernice Pescosolido, our 2006 Hans Mauksch Award winner. Everyone who knows Bernice and has been lucky enough to hear her lecture will agree that her presentation is not to be missed.

Second, the section is sponsoring a day-long pre-conference, "Teachers are Made, Not Born: A Workshop for New Sociology Instructors," to be held from 8:30am to 5:30pm on Friday, August 10th. The pre-conference will combine presentations, panels and roundtable discussions on teaching and learning issues, all led by experts in the field. This is an excellent opportunity for graduate students and beginning faculty to learn from some of the best. Betsy Lucal has taken the lead, along with Kerry Strand and Kate Linnenberg, in developing and organizing this workshop. By the time this newsletter arrives, complete information on the pre-conference should be available on our website.

Spread the word, but since space is limited, please register early. And for those who may be short on funds, consider applying for a Teaching Innovations and Professional Development Award to attend this pre-conference (see Funding section in this newsletter for additional information). Many thanks to Jeanne Ballantine, Keith Roberts, and Sage Press for supporting and initiating these grants.

Speaking of new instructors, a recent meeting with one of the grad students here at Akron was one more piece of evidence on how important is the work of our section. I'm the faculty sponsor for a project that three of our grad students are doing that focuses on the role of the international teaching assistant. Without going into all the details, the three of them – two international students (one whose native language is English, the other whose is not) and one U.S. student – are studying the

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perceptions, experiences, and teaching strategies faced by all three types of graduate student teachers. Although they are still collecting data, they've already uncovered some interesting findings. One theme that seems to be emerging is the ironically "private" perception of teaching by many "future faculty" they interviewed.

These students (none in sociology!) report not talking about their teaching with anyone else, including their advisors (who are thought to "too busy" with their research to even entertain a question about teaching).

The notion of teaching being private is, of course, laughable, as it is by definition a public act. Yet, far too many of our colleagues treat it as private – not visiting other classrooms or having others visit theirs; not reading and discussing the vast literature on scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching; not joining our section (approximately 90% of ASA members are in higher education, yet only 5% are in our section) or attending workshops or meetings on teaching; and in general, adopting an approach that implicitly holds that if you can earn a Ph.D., you pretty much can be a good teacher simply by knowing your subject matter well. (Of course, the latter is necessary, but clearly not sufficient.)

I realize that this is preaching to the choir, but I'm hoping that this spurs a few of us to expand the flock, so to speak. If the graduate students we've interviewed are typical, too many academics are not engaged in a public discourse on teaching. Share this newsletter with a colleague or a student, invite them to attend our meetings or others focused on teaching, and remind everyone that "good teachers are made, not born."

Finally, on behalf of all of our section members, I wish to offer a few words of appreciation to Anne Eisenberg, editor of *Teaching/Learning Matters*. Early in her editorship, Anne set a personal goal to make this the best section newsletter in the ASA. As Anne steps down as editor, she can be proud of her efforts, as we are of her.

John Zipp – Section Chair 06-07

2006-2007 OFFICERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR THE SECTION ON TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SOCIOLOGY

The purpose of the Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology shall be to facilitate within the discipline of sociology a culture and a method that pursues, values, and rewards excellence in teaching and which promotes student learning and the scholarship of teaching at the undergraduate, graduate, and secondary levels.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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One of the goals of *Teaching/Learning Matters* is to provide a meaningful benefit to section members in several ways. First, and foremost, is to present interesting substantive articles to stimulate discussions within the section and the discipline. To that end, in this issue you will find Carol Jenkins' final SoTL column examining the role of assessment in SoTL research as well as two articles concerning teaching sociology in high school – Hayley Lotspeich writes about her own experiences in helping to create CAST (Chicago Area Sociology Teachers) and Michael DeCesare writes about studying high school sociology. Michael Klausner's article encourages us to actively encourage student potential and Susan St. John-Jarvis provides additional insight to issues faced by community college faculty. The second goal of the newsletter is to keep members informed about section activities as well as section news, as found in John Zipp's chair's comments and information about the ASA pre-conference workshop for new teachers. The final goal of the newsletter is to provide information about opportunities for section members through calls for submissions and funding notices.

This is my final note to you as editor of *Teaching/Learning Matters*, as Katherine Rowell has

full responsibility for the newsletter starting with the next issue. I want to thank all of you – to the Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology Council for selecting me as editor, to Stephen Sweet who has been a patient (which may have been difficult at times!) in working with me to ensure that our newsletter is one of the best newsletters of all the sections, and to all the members of the section for your support over these past three years. The newsletter is empty without your input, submissions, and notices. I STRONGLY encourage each of you to submit an article, to keep us informed, and to continue to make this newsletter and this section the most welcoming and supportive! Take care – be well – and continue to be the wonderful teachers our students deserve!



SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Earning Respect and Reward for SoTL Research

I have just finished reviewing proposals for a highly competitive SoTL Fellowship program. Many of the proposals have great potential for making a difference in student learning in various disciplines. As colleagues were describing the development of exciting pedagogical skills and innovative instructional strategies it was apparent that in the minds of the applicants their chosen activities would definitely increase student learning.

However, proposal after proposal was instructor-centered or pedagogically-focused, rather than learner centered. Assessment components were especially weak - few proposals emphasized the systematic measurement of student learning. As envisioned, many of the proposed assessment strategies for measuring student mastery would not

yield meaningful information. And, most projects were not breaking new ground.

Measuring and documenting the extent of student learning which includes a reflective component is at the heart of SoTL. Limiting one's research to documenting scholarly teaching or a potential "best practice" is not. Before asking "whose proposals", I am unconvinced that the quality of proposals I read differ significantly from those proposed, funded and implemented elsewhere.

A long-standing emphasis in the SoTL literature and practice is to distinguish between "good teaching," "scholarly teaching" and the "scholarship of teaching and learning" (McKinney 2004, Shulman 2004, Bass 1999). It is imperative to adjust the intellectual and practice paradigm from developing and documenting scholarly teaching and effective pedagogical techniques to systematic reflection on teaching and student learning, especially assessing the extent to which student learning actually occurs (Jenkins 2006).

If we are to have our "scholarship" on teaching and learning gain administrative respect and response in the reward structure, "scholarship" by definition necessitates the same rigor as any other research endeavor. For now, our work needs to be beyond excellent to be taken seriously. I may no longer work in a research-oriented setting but I do continue to be an external reviewer for many programs and competitions. There is some incredible and true SoTL work being accomplished and shared publicly by our colleagues. Our journal, *Teaching Sociology*, is intentionally attempting to move us into the SoTL arena. However, I am becoming hard pressed to recommend and/or support a "P & T reward" or "fellowship" opportunity for much of the current teaching and learning "research." It is unrealistic to request institutional rewards for documenting pedagogical efficacy when the focus should be on demonstrating the extent of student learning. The weak link seems to be the assessment component.

Criticism aside, let's think positively. A crucial component of SoTL research is assessment. Documenting the extent of student learning requires on-going assessment, especially at the course level. Lee Shulman (2007) argues that *the great promise of assessment is its deployment in the service of instruction, its capacity to inform the judgment of faculty and students regarding how they can best*

advance the quality of learning. Internal uses of assessment for instruction, external uses of assessment for accountability and transparency. Assessment needs to be intentional, efficient, reliable and valid. Data collection must be ongoing, transparent and publicly shared (ASA Task Force on General Education and Sociology 2007). Doing so should yield both quantitative and qualitative information about the extent of student learning (internal) as well as document instructor accountability (external).

Each semester our College requires professors to assess a learning competency of choice for each course taught. To ease the stress I developed a schema (Jenkins 2005) to help conceptualize the task. First it was important to identify contextual linkages between District initiatives, the College mission, General Education learning goals, Department emphases, ASA liberal learning expectations and agreed upon course learning competencies and outcomes. The assessment strategy came into focus and was manageable. The task could be viewed as onerous or extremely challenging and rewarding. For me, the assessment process became a positive experience. In many cases the data generated and reflective student responses provided a basis for strengthening my scholarly teaching and continuing SoTL research and exploration. With each semester ritual, the Institution wins, I win, and most importantly, the students win.

Attached to the end of this newsletter is a schema for your consideration. It's really easy. Just follow the college mission (applicable institutional goal statement) – intended course goal – intended course competency – learning outcome and assessment strategy of choice across the columns. Then envision it for your setting.

Most of us abhor external requirements and constraints that seem to affect our ability to do our jobs well. We want to set the agenda for our professional growth and the enhancement of meaningful learning experiences for our students. When honestly reflecting on the frequently mandated institutional expectations, especially assessment, how pleased we should be to remember that all these "new" expectations are little more than formalizing what most have been doing all along in the pursuit of excellence. If we proceed with integrity and scientific rigor, in time, we will earn the respect and appropriate rewards we seek

for our SoTL research.

Well, this is the third and final formal conversation with you about SoTL. The experience has been wonderful, but also disappointing in that these articles did not actively stimulate responses and discussion. I thank Nancy Greenwood for pre-submission readings and helpful insight, and to a local colleague Hannes Kvaran for the graphics. Have a wonderful semester and finish well.

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PEGAGOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PERSPECTIVE

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Academic Dishonesty Challenges at Community Colleges

Conversations on plagiarism often revolve around Internet resources and Web-based Distance Learning, but academic dishonesty is not simply due to a "cut and paste" generation (Foster and Read 2006). In addition, much of the research on academic dishonesty centers around a "culture of cheating" at 4-colleges and universities. Since many community college students that do not live on campus and commute, there may be an assumption that these students escape cheating norms. However, research on cheating at the community colleges is virtually absent from the literature for the past four years. Academic dishonesty research at the university level appeared in 20 items since 2003, according to a quick search of the SocIndex database (Library Online, Corning Community College).

Yet, in my experience at the community college level, academic dishonesty thrives. In part, this may be due to a unique combination of factors involving locality, networking, and competing values. Community colleges mainly draw student populations from local high schools. Not only do students bring with them past norms which may tolerate (or even glorify) cheating, but they also bring intact networks to facilitate academic dishonesty: friends, family members, and former students who are neighbors, co-workers, or even employers. If a high school student travels away to a residential college, these existing networks are disrupted and the student often lacks reinforcement for previously established norms. Certainly, residential community colleges, 4-year colleges and universities have another set of issues associated with paper and test "banks" available in dorms, fraternities and sororities.

Professors have long encountered "romantic couples" who over-collaborate or do actual work for one another. However, as a community college professor, I have found in addition to romantically involved students, it is common to have siblings,

cousins, and parent-child pairings in class. Family members usually have a very strong sense of loyalty and they may even strive to preserve a family standing of high academic achievement. Conversely, students may try to overly help another family member who is less prepared for the rigors of college. Surprisingly, a first generation college student may be helping a parent who never before attended college! Family members also share computers. Assignments are sometimes available to family members who are or have been students in the same classes. If a "theft" is discovered, even an unwitting partner may defend the offender since ongoing close relationships are involved.

Compounding the problem for sociology faculty is that students in most programs are required to take Introduction to Sociology. This means we are more likely to encounter such issues. Finally, community college students usually have work and family obligations to balance as they commute to classes. Rather than simply youthful indiscretions, shortcuts, such as purchasing papers online, are used by mature students perceived as unlikely cheaters, such as mid-life reentry students in good standing. Increasingly, students see the degree as the goal not the skills, knowledge and education they will need to succeed. This becomes de facto justification that dismisses any potential harmful effects. Yet, plagiarism is harmful. It distorts the playing field by raising performance expectations among students and for faculty. Unchecked plagiarism and other cheating also impacts student attitudes and motivation, demeaning the educational process.

Students must be educated about what constitutes plagiarism and why it needs to be curtailed. In a climate of cooperative learning and group work, students often perceive the discussion and sharing of homework as expected and positive. Anecdotally they claim that faculty even encourage and support this. Therefore, it is imperative that faculty tell students that *all authors* need to be named on assignments. Faculty must explicitly identify assignments that are an individual responsibility. Furthermore, faculty need to remind students that assignments involve a process one must follow and work through to become educated, not just a series of hoops on the way to a certificate or degree. Without going through the hard work to get there, students will not achieve the levels of education and skills that are possible for themselves. In addition, faculty should fully explain what constitutes

plagiarism. I routinely refer students to Earl Babbie's site on plagiarism and even take students on a virtual tour (<http://www1.chapman.edu/~Babbie/plag00.html>). Admittedly, plagiarism is a messy problem. Some faculty acknowledge that plagiarism occurs but feel it is too difficult and time-consuming to prove. However, community college faculty are uniquely positioned to uncover academic dishonesty. Classes are generally small and they often have known the students. While they can substantiate suspicions by gathering evidence using a Google search or resources such as Turnitin, this does not identify the types of cheating scenarios discussed here. We can learn from online faculty, who claim to notice when the "voice" of a student posting does not match previous interaction through e-mail, online asynchronous discussion and chat. They point out that knowing the student is the best weapon against cheating (Baron and Cooks 2006). For the college administration, dismissing students from a course due to academic dishonesty presents a host of problems, including worry of lawsuits, loss of reputation, and loss of revenue. Yet, within my own institution I have found the administration very supportive of instructor decisions, even giving a failing course grade. The instructor's policy must be clearly stated upfront in the syllabus. My syllabus includes a strong statement about academic honesty and penalties for violations. I always state that students may receive an "F" in the course for plagiarism. This is not too strong of a message for students.

According to an article that appeared last summer in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, graduate student Tom Matrk found approved theses with identical pages (up to 50 pages, and in some cases containing identical typos). Advanced degrees had been awarded by the same engineering department at a Midwest university before the plagiarism was discovered. Then, graduates actually were rewarded by being allowed to resubmit their theses (Wasley 2006). This was extremely disappointing. With all this in mind, should community college faculty take a strong stand against academic dishonesty lest students continue up the academic ladder without serious repercussions? Absolutely! Plagiarism has become a routinized practice that permeates every level of higher education, often with minimal penalty. Research is needed to determine the extent and nature of cheating for sociology students at community colleges. What measures will significantly improve academic

honesty, and ultimately scholarship and learning? The Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology is the right venue to explore plagiarism at the community college level and move this issue beyond discussion, particular classrooms or faculty experience (see also: McKinney 2004).

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- McKinney, Kathleen. 2004. "Using SOTL in Sociology: Evidence from Two Volumes of *TS*." *Teaching/Learning Matters* 33(2): 3-4.
- Wasley, Paula. 2006. "The Plagiarism Hunter." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 53(11): A8-A11.

Web Resources

- Earl Babbie's Homepage/Plagiarism (2005)
<http://www1.chapman.edu/~Babbie/plag00.html>
- Center for Academic Integrity
www.academicintegrity.org

Editor's Note: The following two papers concern our often invisible and unrecognized colleagues who teach sociology in high school. There is an ASA task force examining establishing standards for an AP test in sociology which will directly impact the teachers in the field. I hope that they encourage you to engage in dialogue with the high school teachers in your area as a way of recognizing their work as well as to enhance the way that sociology is taught at the secondary level.

IMPROVING HIGH SCHOOL SOCIOLOGY: A GRASS-ROOTS APPROACH

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Much has been written about the state of high school sociology teaching. Regardless of whether one believes that the instruction is outstanding or leaves room for significant improvement, it is likely

that the "most effective way to enhance the quality of high school sociology is to improve the training of those who teach it." (DeCesare 2002, 306) It has been my experience that DeCesare (2002, 310) is correct that "most teachers are interested in ways to improve their teaching and their courses, regardless of the rewards." For the last five years, sociology teachers in the Chicago area have come together to make this happen. These teachers have created opportunities to develop stronger curricular materials and improve their overall instruction in their sociology courses.

CAST (Chicago Area Sociology Teachers) developed organically. Its origins began when a few sociology teachers, searching for meaningful professional development, met at a session of an ASA conference at DePaul University in Chicago. Upon further discussion the teachers discovered a common challenge: each was the single sociology teacher in his or her respective buildings. There were no colleagues within their school with whom they could co-plan, share and cultivate curriculum. All were in need of professional collegial relationships to accomplish such a goal.

From there, the teachers decided to meet one time each semester to share lessons, activities, and assessments. The meetings would be held after school at a central location. One teacher took the lead, gathered email addresses, and offered her school as the meeting place. In addition, all department chairs in the nearest two counties were contacted and asked to forward the information to their sociology teachers who had not attended the conference. A major obstacle for the group was selecting a time after school that everyone was available. Many teachers coach, sponsor activities in the building, participate in building committees, and have day care issues. While the attendance of 15 teachers for the first meeting was encouraging, it was clear that there were more teachers who wished to participate. To include everyone, the group would need to meet during the school day and for a very low or free cost.

The group found a way to do just that. The local branch of Mid America Bank maintains a "Community Room" and allowed the group to use their facility – a very comfortable one at that – for free. The cost of speakers was eliminated. Instead, the day was divided into four sessions based on units all teachers taught. Each teacher signed up for one of the four sessions and

presented on that topic, bringing copies of any necessary handouts. The only cost was for an optional working lunch and for individual buildings to provide a substitute. Two teacher leaders in this group were given an opportunity to present one session at the Dupage Valley Social Studies Conference, a meeting during a county in-service day, where most teachers in nearby counties attend. The session was well attended and it was there that additional names and contact information were collected.

The first formal CAST meeting was a tremendous success. More than twenty-five teachers shared more than fifty lessons, assessments, and activities. Teachers from a number of backgrounds from a variety of years of experience, to different school demographics, to diverse course offerings in terms of level and length of the course were represented in the group. A discussion of the AP Sociology draft occurred as well as innovative use of textbooks, simulations, and role plays to apply concepts.

More importantly, teachers developed professional relationships. One teacher created an email group that is lively as teachers now communicate electronically to share successes, VCR alerts, and current articles that apply to the curriculum. CAST, also, now meets twice a year – in the fall to work on curriculum mapping and goal setting and in the spring for the traditional sharing of lessons.

The dedication of high school teachers to improving the instruction of high school sociology is wholehearted. Without direct leadership from state and national high school sociology organizations, an alternative was developed. This group of committed teachers has made for superior teaching in Sociology, with the betterment of instruction across the Chicago area. As the group moves forward, they continue to seek out ways to increase their expertise. These high school teachers are wholeheartedly dedicated to improving high school instruction, and they have moved forward without the direction of any formal sociology organization. As they continue to investigate new methods, share ideas, and set new goals, they can be assured that students are benefiting from their professional commitment.

DeCesare, Michael. 2002. "The Lessons to Be Learned: The Past Troubles and Future Promise of Teaching High School Sociology." *Teaching Sociology* 30: 302-316

STUDYING HIGH SCHOOL SOCIOLOGY: RECENT, CURRENT, AND FUTURE APPROACHES

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High school sociology courses turned 95 years old this fall. Regrettably, there seems to be little cause for celebration for the courses have been just as neglected in their old age as they were during their earlier years. Consider the following:

- Since 1986, high school sociology has been studied in only four states (cf., Riennerth et al. 1998; Dennick-Brecht 2000; Lashbrook 2001; DeCesare 2004b).
- Over the course of 34 volumes, *Teaching Sociology* has published just six articles about sociology in high school (cf., DeCesare 2005a, 2005b, 2002; Lashbrook 2001; Matlock and Short 1983; Short and Matlock 1982).
- Taken as a whole, other sociological journals have an even worse track record than *TS*: five articles in the last 20 years (cf., DeCesare in press, 2006, 2004a; Riennerth et al. 1998; Ryan 1997).

Sociologists' consistent and collective neglect of high school sociology—especially compared to the recent efforts of psychologists, statisticians, and geographers to improve their high school courses—is a deeply troubling aspect of the discipline.

The optimist in me, though, believes the tide might be turning. After all, four empirical projects have been carried out in the past several years (cf., Riennerth et al. 1998; Dennick-Brecht 2000; Lashbrook 2001; DeCesare 2004b). Most of this research shares important results. The first and most glaring is that high school teachers have had little exposure to and experience with academic sociology. They are extremely unlikely to have majored or minored in the discipline as undergraduates, and even less likely to have earned a graduate degree in it. The typical teacher has not taken many undergraduate or graduate courses in sociology. In addition, the vast majority of teachers have never attended a sociological conference or held membership in a sociological organization. Not surprisingly, very few teachers who offer a sociology course consider themselves sociologists. The

overwhelming majority think of themselves more generally instead: as high school teachers.

The most recent research also shows that sociology is typically a half-year, elective course that enrolls between 25 and 30 students. It is usually a course in current events or social problems rather than in sociology *per se*. Still, the vast majority of teachers rely on an introductory textbook as their primary teaching tool. But they use it "as a reference more than a bible," as a teacher in Connecticut once told me. In other words, texts are used to teach students terminology and definitions. Most of the substance of the course comes from outside readings, especially newspaper and magazine articles. The only significant difference among the recent studies is the percentage of high schools in each of the states in which sociology was currently being taught. A sociology course was offered in half (52%) of Pennsylvania's high schools in 1998-99 (Dennick-Brecht 2000), in only one-quarter (24%) of high schools in New York during 1996-97 (Lashbrook 2001), and in two-thirds (68%) of Connecticut's high schools in 2000-01 (DeCesare 2004b).

As optimistic as I am, I must admit to having a pessimistic side too. And the pessimist in me realizes that current studies of high school sociology are few and far between. Caroline Persell and her colleagues are working on a study of what prominent sociologists think students should understand after taking a high school sociology course. And with the help of a 2005-06 Teaching Enhancement Fund grant from the ASA, I just finished collecting data from the first national survey of high school sociology teachers in 25 years (cf., Short and Matlock 1982). These are the only current empirical projects that I know of.

Optimists and pessimists can agree on at least one thing about high school sociology: there is an enormous amount of empirical work to be done. A good place to begin is with longitudinal research. Every empirical study that's ever been conducted, dating all the way to 1926 (cf., Bain 1926), has collected data at only one point in time. As a result, we can't explain changes: changes in course content and objectives, in teacher and student characteristics, and in the use of particular teaching techniques. In fact, we don't even know *whether* significant changes have taken place since the first courses were offered during the 1911-12 school year.

In addition, few sociologists have interviewed teachers or collected their course materials (cf., DeCesare 2004b; Dorn 1986). Future researchers should do both. They should also observe high school sociology classes. Surveying teachers, and listening to their descriptions of classroom activities and teaching techniques, will take us only so far. It seems that there's no better way to find out what teachers actually do in their classrooms on a daily basis than to watch them do it. But only Dean Dorn (1986) has done so in recent memory—and he observed just six teachers' classes 20 years ago.

Finally, talking to students who take sociology in high school seems potentially fruitful. According to the 1998 High School Transcript Study, 334,441 students—or 11.7 percent of all 1998 high school graduates—took a sociology course at some point in high school (U.S. Department of Education 2001). We need to examine exactly what these students are getting out of their sociology courses, especially in light of repeated results that indicate they aren't learning what sociologists think they should be (e.g., Langam et al. 1975; Matlock and Short 1983; Szafran 1986). We also need to inquire into students' reasons for taking sociology, their perceptions of the discipline, and whether they were left with a favorable impression of it. Yet another project might examine how, if at all, taking a sociology course in high school affects students' choice of a college major. Studies in the latter two areas could help direct future efforts to increase the number of incoming sociology majors, which has been a perennial concern of the ASA for at least 20 years (cf., Hillsman 2003; Howery 1985; Roberts and Piker-King 1995).

My hope is that by the time high school sociology courses reach the age of 100, we will have more reason to celebrate.

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TEACHING AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' POTENTIAL

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Traditional notions of teaching view it primarily as the communication of information to students. Many students as well as some teachers see teaching as preparation for a job or career. In this paper I contend that another way to view teaching is as the development of students' potential (DSP). The dictionary defines potential as, "ability or capacity available for use or development; capable of coming into being or being developed or used." The crucial importance of the development of human beings' potential was a key element of Aristotle's philosophy and was made visible and popular by psychologist Maslow's theory of human motivation (Aristotle, 1987; Maslow, 1968). Maslow postulated a "hierarchy of needs" which served to motivate human beings. The "lowest" or most basic ones being the need for food, shelter and safety; the "highest" one being the need for "self-actualization." He argued that people would not be motivated to fulfill the highest need until the lower ones were satisfied. By self-actualization, he essentially meant the development of a person's potential. In this paper I discuss the practical implications associated with different conceptions of teaching and suggest

what types of teaching activities can facilitate the DSP.

Practical Implications Associated With Different Conceptions of Teaching

All teachers have explicit or implicit conceptions of teaching which, consciously or subconsciously, affect their teaching style, classroom activities and methods of assessment. For example, the "banking" or "sponge" notion of teaching assumes that students' minds are "empty banks" or "dry sponges" that need to be filled with "money" or "water" (course content). The purpose of the teacher is to "deposit" as much information into students' minds as possible. Those holding this model of teaching are most likely to use the lecture as the main teaching method.

Basic to viewing teaching as the DSP is the assumption that students have the capacity to learn and do well in their courses. It sees students as "works in progress" and views teaching as a means to facilitate their "progress." The DSP model of teaching implies *growth*. While the focus is on *students' growth*, the teacher whose activities flow from the DSP model of teaching *also* experiences growth. Waugh (1974:128) observes that "the student, teacher and subject each react with one another and, if the reaction is successful, each of the three relationships acquires the capacity for independent growth."

A useful "fiction" that I use is to imagine that my students are great sociologists in their past incarnations and that my task is to "remind" them of their previously acquired knowledge. I actually tell them this on the first day of classes. This logically leads to a discussion of my philosophy of teaching and the format of the class. I tell them not to think of me as the proverbial "sage on stage" but rather as a "guide on the side." This view of my role is more apt to foster the development of students' potential than the view that regards teachers as "sages" on stage. This notion of teaching reflects the true meaning of the word "education" which comes from the Latin "educere" meaning to "lead out."

Growth of students' intellectual, cognitive and communication skills is the major goal of those who perceive teaching as the DSP. Ken Bain puts it well when discussing "...a model of education in which learners do more than accumulate information, they

undergo deep-seated changes, transformations that affect both the habits of heart and the mind and the capacity for continued growth." (2004: 84). He contends that "true learning" involves both personal and intellectual change and that "...neither the ability to think nor the qualities of being a mature human being are immutable. People can change and those changes---not just the accumulation of information---represent true learning." (ibid). Viewing teaching as the DSP compels teachers to create classroom activities and assessment methods which will serve to significantly enlarge the boundaries of students' capacities.

Teaching Techniques to Foster the Development of Students' Potential

Sharpening Students Saws. Different conceptions of teaching imply and lead to different ways of creating courses, evaluation tools and conducting classes. What methods and approaches are most apt to facilitate the development of students' potential? First and foremost, as Covey has said, teaching requires sharpening students' "saws". (1989) This means helping students develop and improve their study skills. I have found that most students are sorely lacking in this area. Thus I sprinkle class discussions with "study tips" dealing with such areas as: text reading, note taking, exam preparation, retention of material, and time management. In addition to discussing them, I give handouts on these topics and conduct workshops on them. Students who have not done well on an exam usually do much better after *applying* some of the material. Indeed, when I see an improvement on the second exam, I ask them what they did "differently" compared to their preparation for the first one. Invariably, their application of specific study methods (such as paraphrasing segments of material in their notebook) is what accounted for the improvement. Enabling students to learn how to learn is crucial if they are to develop their potential to the fullest.

Using a Variety of Teaching Methods. Viewing teaching as the DSP leads the teacher to use a diverse set of *active* teaching methods rather than passive ones such as a straight lecture. Methods that function to tap into a variety of students' abilities and talents are most appropriate. Examples of these would be: discussion, debates, role-playing, collaborative learning (teamwork), and the use of "hints" or cues to draw out correct responses to questions, audio-visual material exemplifying

sociological concepts and theories. (Klausner, 1998) Leamnon notes that "The best teachers were not merely performing, they were getting students to perform." (1968, 18).

Using a Variety of Evaluation Instruments.

The desirability of using a variety of teaching methods also applies to evaluation instruments. They should not be limited to the traditional "objective" exam and essay type questions, although it's fine to use them when they are used in *conjunction* with other assessment approaches. I like to give students a broad array of options for projects and encourage them to be as "creative" as they like. Examples would be: initiation or replication of empirical studies using diverse research methods, analysis/ commentary of movies showing how segments of them relate to course material, reports about community service activities and how they pertain to some course topics. Allowing students to *choose* from a variety of assessment options enables them to "*buy into*" the project and make it their own. This often results in higher quality outcomes than if they were *assigned* a specific project.

My colleague, Professor Helene Lawson, founded the Penn-York Undergraduate Research Association in 1999. It provided a venue for undergraduate students to present their research and papers they had written at a regional conference. Students majoring in all disciplines participate. At first many students were hesitant to present their work at a "conference" where professors and students from other universities would have the opportunity to hear, question and critique their work. However, without exception, after attending and presenting their work, our students said that they valued the experience. It served to develop aspects of themselves that would have not been tapped otherwise. Indeed, many expressed "surprise" that they were able to present their work in such a "formal" arena and nicely field the questions asked by both their peers from other colleges and professors. Professor Lawson, noted that initially the students were "afraid" but after working with them and rehearsing they gain enough confidence to attend and do a fine job. Afterwards, she indicated, the students "feel very good about themselves." (Lawson, 2006).

Community Service. Encouraging or even requiring students to engage in some form of community service will certainly foster the

development of their potential. Community service activities will also enable them to apply and understand many sociological concepts and perspectives as no book or lecture can. They can also serve as a type of "anticipatory socialization" for a future career. Some of the community service can be done via an "internship" where the student will work at a particular site under the supervision of someone associated with the organization. My experience and that of my colleagues with students who did internships at such sites as: prisons, YWCA's Victim Resource Center, schools, radio stations, and a variety of local businesses have been uniformly positive. At times the internships led to permanent, full time positions for students when they graduated. An added benefit is that the relationship between the town and the university (town and gown) is enhanced.

Advising. Many students, perhaps most, aren't sure what career they would like to pursue. Indeed, many are undecided about a major as well. If they have decided maybe it was based upon what their parents or some relatives wanted. Those choices may be those associated with a particular social class. Thus students may not have thought "out of the box" when considering potential career choices. The advisory process provides a unique opportunity for teachers to suggest possible careers to students that they may never have even have thought of or realize exist! Advising can match students' interests and talents with professions that require them. Above all else, the college years should be a time of *self-discovery* for students which involve students discovering interests and talents they may not have known they have.

Sociology's Unique Contribution In Fostering the Development of Students' Potential

While most suggestions for DSP made so far can be implemented regardless of the teacher's disciplinary affiliation, there are some *unique* contributions that sociologists can make to foster the DSP. As students learn to view social phenomena through a sociological "lens" and develop and apply their sociological imagination, they may be inspired to create positive social change. This can be done via a variety of ways community service, internships, supporting candidates of their choice or becoming actively involved in some "cause." In addition, since the sociological imagination applies to both macro, mid range and micro level phenomena showing how they relate to one another, students can use that

perspective to better understand their interpersonal relationships and the "issues" they face.

Barr and Tagg contrast the "learning paradigm" with the "instructional paradigm." (1995, p.23). They state that the learning paradigm sees student as "human beings who are born geniuses designed for success."

(ibid). When they don't realize their success potential it is because "their design function is being thwarted." Their "design function" becomes thwarted when they are not exposed to experiences and people who can facilitate the development of their potential to the fullest. He states that when the "learning paradigm" is the guiding light for educators," faculty find ways to develop every students' vast talents and clear the way for every student's success." (ibid)

Lean contends that, "Education, to be effective, requires that some *change* takes place in the educand; she/he must be different in some way as a result of the learning process. (1968) What better and more significant "changes" could occur in students than for them to have discovered and *actualized* some of their potential as a result of their educational experiences?

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SECTION NEWS AND NOTES

Renew Your Membership!

We encourage all section members to join us in recruiting new people to join the section. As former Chairperson 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.

2007 ASA PRE-CONFERENCE FOR BEGINNING INSTRUCTORS ON TEACHING

Beginning instructors and graduate teaching assistants are encouraged to apply for the ASA Pre-conference, "Teachers are Made, Not Born: A Workshop for New Sociology Instructors," to be held from 8:30am to 5:30pm on Friday, August 10. The pre-conference, sponsored by the ASA Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology, will combine presentations, panels and roundtable discussions on teaching and learning issues, all led by experts in the field. For information on specific sessions, see the [program schedule](#). Participants will be admitted on a rolling basis with consideration as applications are received. Applications are available [here](#) or from Betsy Lucal (blucal@iusb.edu; 574.520.4899). A \$50 registration fee covers conference materials, snacks and Section membership. WE ENCOURAGE INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS TO APPLY SOON.

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.

CALLS FOR.....

Submissions

The American Sociological Association's Teaching Resources Center invites submissions for the first edition of a collection of syllabi, instructional resources, and other relevant materials for *Teaching High School Sociology: A Resource Guide*. Submissions may include, but are not limited to: syllabi, course outlines, handouts, exercises, assignments, exams and other evaluation instruments, video and film recommendations, book and film reviews, websites, essays and articles on teaching high school sociology, and any other work relevant to teaching sociology in high schools. Submissions are especially welcome from high school sociology teachers. The deadline for submissions is May 1, 2007. Please send inquiries and materials (as single-spaced MS Word documents) to Michael DeCesare at mdecesare@csun.edu

Submissions

Film and History, an interdisciplinary journal of film and television studies with an international audience, seeks original manuscripts for **two special issues related to schools and teaching**. The first explores images of teachers, students, and schools in film and television. The second is a compilation of case studies that explore how we teach about historical film and how we teach history with film. Editors are seeking manuscripts

addressing the following topics for the 2009 issues of *Film and History*. Analysis of films, empirical work, and book/film reviews are all welcome as well as topics not listed below:

- analyses of teachers and/or students portrayed in film
- urban and/or suburban school portrayals
- schools, teachers, and students at elementary schools, secondary schools, and colleges
- intersection of race, class, and/or gender in school films
- images of student learning in film
- pedagogy of teachers portrayed in film
- school principals and other administrators
- depictions of student social groups in film
- representation of content areas in school
- other depictions of schools or school-related activities

All submissions should be submitted electronically in MS Word. MLA style is preferred but the editors will accept manuscripts in Chicago style if this format is used in your scholarly discipline. Send manuscripts to, and contact for additional information from, Alan Marcus – alan.marcus@uconn.edu

Funding Available

Sage/PineForge Press and the authors of *Our Social World* (Ballantine/Roberts) are sponsoring the SAGE and Pine Forge Teaching Innovations & Professional Development Awards to prepare a new generation of scholars and leaders in the Teaching Movement in Sociology. They will provide supplemental funds to support participation in the Section on Teaching and Learning's 2007 pre-conference teaching workshop entitled "Teachers are Made, Not Born: A Workshop for New Sociology Instructors." Recipients will be asked to join (if they have not done so already) the Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology. An estimated 10-15 awards will be conferred, most in the range of \$500-\$700. Applications are especially encouraged from those in their early career stages (graduate students, assistant professors, newer Ph.D.'s). Awardees will be required to submit a short paper (500-800 words) after the meetings describing specific benefits of their participation in the program.

Review of applications will begin on May 1, 2007. Applicants should provide the following information no later than:

- contact information including institutional affiliation
- academic rank and year Ph.D. was granted or is anticipated
- 500 word essay indicating how participation at the Annual Meetings will contribute to your teaching
- no more than 200 words explaining why this award is needed to support your travel
- amount of support available from other sources
- itemized budget of anticipated expenses
- vita

All information should be sent to Lynn Ritchey
(ritchelh@ucrwcw.rwc.uc.edu)

Joining 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.

Joining the Community College Listserv

Join the ASA Community College listserv – it is open to all who are interested in sociology in the freshman and sophomore levels, transfer issues, general community college issues and teaching tips.

To subscribe, send a message with SUBSCRIBE in the subject line (no information in the textbox and delete any signature block) to:
communitycollege@listserv.asanet.org

If you have any questions regarding the listserv, contact Susan St. John Jarvis at stjohn@corning-cc.edu

Note: the stated course goals, competencies and learning outcomes are consistent with the (1) American Sociological Association’s “*Guidelines for Liberal Learning*” expectations; (2) Rural Sociological Society’s “*Curriculum Transformation for Integrated Learning*” expectations; and (3) MCCD’s “*Diversity Infusion*” and “*Internationalizing*” expectations.

Applicable Institution Goal Statements	Intended Course Goals Syllabi Description	Intended Course Competencies: Transfer-GE-Personal Interest	Learning Outcomes:	Assessment Strategies
- (TR) Transfer - (GE) Gen'l Education - (GA) Global Awareness - (MC) Multicultural/Diversity Understanding - (TI) Technology Infusion	<p>“Intro to Sociology systematically examines social behavior and human groups, particularly the influence of culture, socialization, social structure, stratification, social institutions differentiated by race, ethnicity, gender, age, class, region, and socio-cultural change upon people’s attitudes and behaviors.”</p> <p>To prepare for a major/minor in Sociology at a 4-year institution</p> <p>1. ... to present thoughts clearly and correctly in written and oral expression</p> <p>2. ... to be able to read, understand, analyze the general sociological research literature</p> <p>3. ... to understand and apply the sociological imagination</p> <p>4. ... special skills needed: college level reading, writing, quantitative reasoning, computer competency and statistics.</p>	<p>1.. to understand the discipline of Sociology and its role in understanding social reality</p> <p>2.. to develop basic analytical and critical thinking skills by using the insights of Sociology and its various perspectives</p> <p>3.. to understand the role of theory in Sociology</p> <p>4.. to understand the role of evidence in quantitative and qualitative methodologies in Sociology</p> <p>5. to understand the basic concepts and processes in Sociology</p>	<p>1. apply the Sociological Imagination and basic sociological concepts to one’s life (TR/GE/GA/MC/TI)</p> <p>2. understand how societal/structural factors influence individual behavior; how social interaction and the development of the “self” influence society and social structures (TR/GE/GA/MC/TI)</p> <p>3. compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations and their role in the development of sociological thought; apply a range of theoretical explanations to at least one area of social reality (TR/GE/GA/MC/TI)</p> <p>4. describe the role of sociological methodologies in building sociological knowledge; identify and compare methodological approaches; demonstrate quantitative reasoning and problem solving skills (TR/GE/GA/MC/TI)</p> <p>5. define, give examples, describe, analyze the inter-relatedness of basic sociological concepts: (TR/GE/GA/MC/TI)</p>	<p>1. case study analysis collaborative analysis exam questions</p> <p>2. internet exercises film review analysis exam questions collaborative exercises case study analysis</p> <p>3. theoretical paper internet exercises film review analysis exam questions</p> <p>4. internet exercise hypothesis testing case studies exam questions</p> <p>5. internet exercises in-class inventories photographic essays collaborative exercises exam questions</p>
	<p>To meet general studies requirements in Social/ Behavioral Sciences; background other careers</p> <p>1. ... to serve students in the first two years of instruction leading to the Bachelor’s degree</p> <p>2. ... coursework will be readily accepted at all public universities in Arizona</p> <p>3. ... Introduction to Sociology provides a pre-requisite for courses at Arizona colleges and will be fully accepted for that purpose</p>		<p>- culture -differentiation by - socialization - race/ethnicity - stratification - sex/gender - social structure - social class - institutions - age - social change - region (rural/urban) - globalization</p>	
	<p>For Personal Interest</p> <p>1. ... to introduce basic soc concepts/processes</p> <p>2. ... to understand a range of explanations for societal phenomena in everyday life</p>	<p>6... to understand the internal diversities of American society (rural-urban) and its place in international context</p>	<p>6. describe the domestic and global significance of variations by culture, race/ethnicity, sex/gender, age, region (rural-urban); the effects of socio-cultural change on individuals and social structures; strategies for functioning in a pluralistic society and diverse world cultures (TR/GE/GA/MC/TI)</p>	<p>6. internet exercises film review analysis hypothesis testing exam questions case studie photographic essays</p>