

Using Writing Assignment Designs to Mitigate Plagiarism

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Growth in large courses, particularly in public higher education institutions, poses a number of critical challenges within the context of dramatic increases in Internet use in the larger society. Now students find it easy to copy others' work without citation, extension, or application of critical thinking skills. If not appropriately addressed, such plagiarism threatens the very authenticity of the educational experience, with such concerns as quality and effectiveness of instruction seeming almost irrelevant. This research focuses on the design of writing assignments to detect and prevent plagiarism. Three types of writing assignments were examined using the "Turnitin" detection system to gauge potential plagiarism. The conclusion is that faculty can design assignments to mitigate plagiarism.

How Sociological Leaders Rank Learning Goals for Introductory Sociology

Author: Persell, Caroline Hodges

Publication info: Teaching Sociology 38. 4 (October 2010): 330-339.

DOI: 10.1177/0092055X10378822

Abstract: In 2001, the American Sociological Association launched a task force to articulate learning goals for an introduction to sociology course and design an advanced high school sociology curriculum that could also be a model for introductory sociology courses in colleges and universities. This research note describes one of several efforts to validate the learning goals developed by that ASA task force, by asking a sample of peer-designated sociological leaders to complete an electronic survey ranking the importance of the 30 learning goals identified. The top 5 goals were to show the reality of structural factors in social life, place an issue in a larger context, identify and offer explanations for social inequality, recognize the difference between empirical and normative statements, and compare and contrast one's own context with those of people in other parts of the United States and the world. (Contains 2 tables and 4 notes.)

Dumbing down or Beefing up the Curriculum? Integrating an "Academic Skills Framework" into a First Year Sociology Programme

Author: Keating, Mike; O'Siochru, Cathal; Watt, Sal

Publication info: Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences 2. 2 (2009): 66-95.

Resource Sharing

Abstract: This article describes a C-SAP-funded project evaluating the introduction of a new tutorial programme for first year Sociology students, which sought to integrate a "skills framework" to enable students to develop a range of academic skills alongside their study of the subject. The pedagogical and institutional background to the decision to adopt this "integrated" approach is summarised and the staff and student experiences are then evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Primarily concerned with evaluating staff and student responses to the new programme, this paper also raises some issues with regard to the methodologies of evaluation. (Contains 4 tables and 1 note.)

How Sociological Leaders Teach: Some Key Principles

Author: Persell, Caroline Hodges; Pfeiffer, Kathryn M.; Syed, Ali

Publication info: Teaching Sociology 36. 2 (2008): 108-124.

DOI: 10.1177/0092055X0803600202

Abstract: This paper arose from a larger study designed to explore what leaders in the field of sociology think are the most important goals and principles for students to understand after taking a college-level introductory course and how they teach those principles. A population of scholarly leaders in sociology was defined by various forms of peer recognition and included elected presidents of national and regional professional associations, recipients of national awards, and recipients of competitive research funding. In 2005 and 2006 we interviewed a sample of 44 leaders to gain an understanding of key principles and how they are taught. We report their teaching strategies and compare their strategies to those of other teachers and the recommendations in McKinney et al. (2004). Although similar in many respects, leaders are considerably more likely than other sociologists to engage students in research and somewhat more likely to use simulations or games. (Contains 3 tables and 4 footnotes.)

Cultivating a Sociological Perspective Using Nontraditional Texts

Author: Castellano, Ursula; DeAngelis, Joseph; Clark-Ibanez, Marisol

Publication info: Teaching Sociology 36. 3 (July 2008): 240-253.

DOI: 10.1177/0092055X0803600304

Abstract: In this paper, we argue that novels, mysteries and nonfiction books can provide undergraduate students with an accessible and exciting place to explore sociological concepts. Using storytelling as a pedagogical tool, we teach students key theoretical ideas by analyzing the books in their specific sociocultural contexts. First, we put forward three different strategies for using nontraditional readings in the classroom. We then present standardized assessment data to measure how well these strategies helped to meet our student learning goals: increasing engagement, enhancing conceptual understanding and improving analytic ability. We also discuss what we consider to be the pedagogical costs and benefits of using these approaches in the classroom. (Contains 4 tables.)

A Framework for Transition: Supporting 'Learning to Learn' in Higher Education

Author: Wingate, Ursula11King's College London

Publication info: Higher Education Quarterly 61. 3 (2007): 391-405.

DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2007.00361.x

Abstract: In this paper, a framework for developing first-year students' learning is proposed. Its aim is to increase university managers' and teachers' awareness of two issues: (1) that the currently predominant 'skills' approaches to the enhancement of student learning are based on a deficiency model and achieve little more than remedying the overt problems of individual students and (2) that a holistic, subject-specific approach is needed to support all students in the complex process of learning to learn in higher education. The framework aims at facilitating transition to university by helping students to understand what is expected from them at university, by addressing their conceptions of learning and knowledge and by gradually developing their competence as independent learners as well as their competence in constructing knowledge in their discipline. Different contexts are used to apply complementary methods for the development of learning. As the framework relies on the engagement of academic teachers, it is critical that university managers and policy makers give appropriate recognition to effective teaching. This involves instigating changes in conceptions of teaching, providing opportunities for educational development and setting incentives for teachers' commitment to student learning. Adapted from the source document.

What Should Students Understand after Taking Introduction to Sociology?

Author: Persell, Caroline Hodges; Pfeiffer, Kathryn M.; Syed, Ali

Publication info: Teaching Sociology 35. 4 (2007): 300-314.

DOI: 10.1177/0092055X0703500401

Abstract: Sociologists have long reflected on what should be taught in sociology. In recent years, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) has produced several important publications on key principles and learning goals for the introductory course. However, little current work has systematically examined what peer-recognized leaders in the field deem important for introductory sociology. This paper is an effort to fill this research gap. Our research questions include: What do leaders think students should understand after an introduction to sociology course? Do the goals of Teaching Award winners differ from those of other leaders? How do the leaders' goals compare with those expressed in leading SoTL publications? To address these questions, we interviewed a sample of 44 leaders in 2005-2006. Using qualitative content analysis, we systematically coded, analyzed, and compared their goals. (Contains 2 tables and 5 footnotes.)

Using a Research Article to Foster Moral Reflection and Global Awareness in Teaching about Religion and Politics, Theory Testing, and Democracy in the Muslim World

Author: Davis, Nancy J.; Robinson, Robert V.

Publication info: Teaching Sociology 34. 3 (July 2006): 296-312.

DOI: 10.1177/0092055X0603400308

Abstract: Encouraging students to reflect on their ethical principles and to develop a global outlook have been identified as key pedagogical goals in recent national reports on higher education. This article shows how instructors can use a current article from the "American Sociological Review (ASR)" to facilitate moral reflection and global awareness. The "ASR" article, with its focus on the political implications of moral cosmologies of Muslims, its cross-national methodology, and its non-western geographical focus, is well suited to these pedagogical goals. We offer active learning exercises designed to promote ethical examination and global understandings in an introductory sociology course, a theory course, and an upper-level course on political sociology, sociology of religion, or globalization. (Contains 1 table, 4 figures and 1 footnote.)

Making First-Year Tutorials Count: Operationalizing the Assessment-Learning Connection

Author: MacMillan, John¹; McLean, Monica J¹Politics&History Section, Business School, Brunel U, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UK john.macmillan@brunel.ac.uk

Publication info: Active Learning in Higher Education 6. 2 (Jul 2005): 94-105.

DOI: 10.1177/1469787405054235

Abstract: This article reports the design & effects of a practical, pedagogic experiment motivated by the wish to encourage greater 'active learning' in first-year tutorials along with a range of other learning skills, in particular the practice of 'good' argumentation. The project has its roots in a formal accredited programme in teaching & learning that provided frameworks for thinking about how to change the assessment regime & in a measure of dissatisfaction with the existing, 'conventional' organization of the tutorial as a site of learning. The aim was to create an environment in which the students prepared thoroughly for each tutorial, engaged in challenging discussion, & reflected on what & how they were learning. The method employed was to centre the assessment regime on the tutorial itself in conjunction with frequent & rapid feedback on student work.

Teaching Sociological Theory through Active Learning: The Irrigation Exercise

Author: Holtzman, Mellisa

Publication info: Teaching Sociology 33. 2 (April 2005): 206-212.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4127525>

Abstract: For students, theory is often one of the most daunting aspects of sociology--it seems abstract, removed from the concrete events of their everyday lives, and therefore intimidating. In an attempt to break down student resistance to theory, instructors are increasingly turning to active learning approaches. Active learning exercises, then, appear to be an effective mechanism for overcoming the fear and resistance students often exhibit with respect to theory. In this paper, the author describes one exercise that she has successfully used in an introductory, first-year sociology class. The activity, which she calls "The Irrigation Exercise," is designed to reinforce, in a concrete way, the tenets of functional and conflict theory, which have been previously introduced in class lectures and readings. The author's goal in this exercise is to help students see functionalism and conflict theory as more than scholarly abstractions.

The Research Article as an Instrument of Active Learning for Teaching about Violence, Sexual Abuse, and Union Formation among Low-Income Families

Author: Purvin, Diane M.; Kain, Edward L.

Publication info: Teaching Sociology 33. 3 (July 2005): 323-335.

DOI: 10.1177/0092055X0503300313

Abstract: As noted by Goldsmid and Wilson a quarter of a century ago, a "curious gulf" exists between teaching and research in sociology. This article addresses this problem by suggesting ways in which a current research article from the American Sociological Review can be used in courses at three different levels of the undergraduate curriculum. The active learning exercises are linked to explicit student learning outcomes that build upon recommendations from Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major Updated: Meeting the Challenge of Teaching Sociology in the Twenty-First Century. (Contains 1 table.)

Syllabus under Construction: Involving Students in the Creation of Class Assignments.

Author: Hudd, Suzanne S.

Publication info: Teaching Sociology 31. 2 (2003): 195-202.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3211308>

Abstract: Presents an exercise in which students are required to develop assessment criteria for an introductory sociology class. Notes that students respond positively to being included in the class syllabus design. Describes some logistical concerns and pedagogical constraints of the exercise implementation. (Author/KDR)

Teaching Communication Skills in the Context of Introductory Sociology

Author: Hinrichs, Donald W11Gettysburg Coll, PA 17325

Publication info: Teaching Sociology 18. 1 (Jan 1990): 32-38.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1318228>

Abstract: A unique pedagogy is described that was designed to: (1) improve first-year sociology students' communication skills; (2) develop their ability to think critically; & (3) instill basic sociological concepts, theories, & perspectives. Comparison of an experimental group of 16 students with a control group of 16 history students not exposed to the pedagogy was undertaken using a student essay, communication skills inventory, & videotaped discussion. Results support the superiority of the experimental pedagogy over traditional ones; faculty members using it were also favorably impressed. 2 Appendixes, 47 References. K. Hyatt

Strategies for Enhancing Learning in the "Blow-Off" Course.

Author: Stoecker, Randy

Publication info: Innovative Higher Education 14. 2 (1990): 141-153

Paste the article title in Google Scholar

Abstract: This paper contrasts active and passive learning environments, and describes efforts to create an active, critical learning environment in both "Introduction to Sociology" and "The Family System" typical lower division courses in sociology. There is a review of grade distributions, quantitative course evaluations, qualitative course evaluations, and a student survey.