

Implementing a Teacher Development Pilot Program for MA Students*



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Abstract

We implemented and tested the effectiveness of a small pilot program that prepares MA students to teach core sociology courses at community colleges in Iowa. We present the three components of the pilot program, revised based on our evaluation of students' work and experiences over the past year. **Part A** is a teaching development course. **Part B** is a concurrent teaching mentorship with a University of Northern Iowa (UNI) sociology faculty member, and **Part C** is a guided teaching internship at Hawkeye Community College. We also present the proposed curricula for a non-thesis teaching track in our MA program in **Part D**. Finally, we present the portions of student assessment instruments that may be used to assess a teaching track within an MA program.

Background

In Iowa, the number of students enrolled in community colleges increased nearly tenfold between 1965 and 2008 (Iowa Dept of Education 2008). Currently, over 88,000 students are enrolled in Iowa community colleges. Among the 1,052 transfer students at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) in 2008, 72 percent transferred from Iowa community colleges.

Community colleges also play an important role in sociology (Kain et al. 2007; Kerr 1991). An ASA task force reported that half of all sociology credits are taken at community colleges (Zingraff 2002). At UNI, 48.5 percent of our majors have transferred from community colleges.

Arts and science community college instructors in Iowa must have a master's degree, along with 12 hours graduate instruction in their field. The 2006-2011 Strategic Plan for the State's Community Colleges includes initiatives to expand partnerships between community colleges and other educational institutions, and to provide comprehensive development for faculty (Iowa Dept of Education 2006). Yet, four-year institutions routinely devalue community college instructors and ignore them in curriculum decisions (Zingraff 2002). As the historic teachers' college, UNI plays a critical role in training and partnering with community college teachers. This project is the first step in addressing the need for partnership between two- and four-year institutions, and training community college instructors.

References
 Iowa Department of Education. 2006. *Shaping the Future: Five-Year Plan for the Community Colleges of Iowa, 2006-2011*. Des Moines, IA.
 -----, 2008. *Fall Enrollment Report*. Des Moines, IA.
 Kain, Edward L. et al. 2007. "Sociology in Two-Year Institutions." *Teaching Sociology* 35 (October): 350-359.
 Kerr, Clark. 1991. *The Great Transformation in Higher Education 1960-1980*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
 Zingraff, Rhonda. 2002. *Final Report of the Task Force on the Articulation of Sociology in Two-Year and Four-Year Sociology Programs*. Washington, D.C.: American Sociological Association.

Part A: Teaching Development Course

Spring, year 1. 1-2 credit hours.

Course objectives:

- 1) prepare you to teach introductory level sociology at a community college
- 2) train you to reflect upon and address "positionality" and inequality in the classroom
- 3) engage you in the scholarship of teaching and learning

Readings:

- McKeachie, Wilbert. 2005. *McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers*. 12th edition. Cengage Learning.
- Bain, Ken. *What the Best College Teachers Do*. 2004. Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Various articles from *Teaching Sociology*

Course Structure

WEEKS	TOPICS	SAMPLE READINGS	SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS
2-5	Course Preparation • What to cover in Intro • Creating goals & obj. • First day exercises	McKeachie ch. 1-3 Bain ch. 2-4 Persell et al: "What Students Should Understand after Taking Intro."	1. Create first day exercise 2. Create goals and objects
6-12	Classroom Strategies • Critical thinking • Active learning • Lecturing • Assignments • Evaluating students	Bain ch. 4 Jennings, Patricia K. et al. 2006. "Assessing Student Learning."	1. Abstract 2 active learning exercises from <i>Teaching Sociology</i> 2. Create a course assignment 3. Create 15 MC questions, 1 essay
13-15	Issues in Teaching • Ethics & boundaries • Cheating, problems, students with issues • Teaching controversies	McKeachie ch. 12-14 Gerschick's "Should & Can a White, Hetero, Middle-Class Man Teach Students about Social Inequality and Oppression"?	1. Abstract 2 inequality articles from <i>Teach Soc</i>
16-17	Demonstrating What You Know • Assessment • Teaching Portfolios	Example teaching portfolios	Course Assignment: Teaching Portfolio

Assignments

Assignments throughout Course:

- 2 teaching observations of faculty; critically assess teaching strategies
- Tape record self teaching 3 times across semester; critically assess teaching strategies & development

Term Assignment: Teaching Portfolio

- philosophy of teaching and learning
- syllabus
- course assignment
- teaching exercises
- sample exam
- grading rubrics
- assessment materials

Part B: Teaching Mentorship

Spring, year 1. Completed concurrently with Teaching Development course. 1 credit hour.

Students serve as teaching mentees for a section of Introduction to Sociology.

Tasks to observe and learn:

- track attendance
- hold office hours
- select and reserve media
- develop class assignment
- construct test questions
- prepare lecture notes
- videotape 3 teaching sessions across semester
- lead class discussion
- work with students one-on-one
- address student issues

Part C: Guided Teaching Internship

Construct and teach an Introduction to Sociology course as a paid intern at Hawkeye Community College.

- Paired with Hawkeye Community College mentors
- Evaluated by UNI faculty

Part D: MA Non-Thesis Teaching Track

Proposed Requirements

Courses

Contemporary Sociological Theories
 Advanced Research Methodology
 Quantitative Analysis
 Qualitative Analysis
 Sociology Seminar
 Proseminar: Professional Development
 Electives in Sociology (3 courses)
 Teaching electives outside of Sociology (1-2)
 Proseminar: Teaching Development
 Teaching Mentorship

Internship

2 semesters teaching internship

Non-Thesis Project

Teaching Portfolio
 Development and extensive evaluation of Class Exercise
 (ready-for-publication format)

Student Assessment

UNI sociology faculty assess the graduate program every other year. We developed several instruments to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching track of the MA program, including direct and in-direct measures. Below are portions of two assessment instruments.

Example Student Self-Assessment Questions

How confident are you that you can	Very	Somewhat	A little	Not at all
Course Design				
Create a syllabus	a	b	c	d
Choose readings/text for a course	a	b	c	d
Teaching Strategies				
Do a "breaking the ice" exercise for the first day of class	a	b	c	d
Integrate student questions into class	a	b	c	d
Incorporate teaching strategies based on research	a	b	c	d
Relating to Students				
Provide students with appropriate referrals to address their issues	a	b	c	d
Manage student behavior in the classroom	a	b	c	d
Materials				
Evaluate your teaching skills	a	b	c	d
Prepare a teaching portfolio	a	b	c	d

Example Material Evaluation Instruments

Content	Exceptional: 4	Good: 3	Adequate: 2	Inadequate: 1
Course Obj.	thoroughly covered, clear, concise, needs no revision or editing	fully covered, clear, needs minor clarification, revision or editing	topic covered but needs moderate clarification, revision or editing	topic not covered or needs major/complete revision
Multi-Choice Qs	nearly all questions are: clear & concise, require critical thinking; covers wide breadth of material; requires little or no revision	most questions are: clear & concise, require critical thinking; covers fairly wide breadth of material; requires minor revision	some questions are: clear & concise, require critical thinking; covers some breadth of material; requires moderate revision	few if any questions are: clear & concise, require critical thinking; covers limited breadth of material; requires major revision

Contact information

For more information, syllabus, or complete assessment instruments, please contact:

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