In recent years, there has been a burgeoning interest in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) (see Hutchings, Babb, and Bjork 2002 for an annotated bibliography). Whether the research focuses on student or faculty attitudes, assessment procedures, institutional impediments, or teaching strategies and techniques that can be implemented in the classroom, the goal is always to enhance teaching and learning. Since Baker (1985) noted the link between sociology and teaching, our discipline has begun to develop a sociology-specific SoTL with a growing body of literature (Albers 2003; Chin 2002; Hanson 2005a; Lucal et al. 2003) and an ASA-sponsored SoTL conference in 2000. In addition to the SoTL literature, there is a wealth of materials on strategies for effective college teaching and learning. Most of this work stems from such disciplines as education, English, and psychology. Sociology is notably underrepresented in this literature, despite the attention to teaching and learning among sociologists. We find this omission puzzling given that the foundation of sociology is the examination of social life and education is part of the social world. By viewing the classroom as a social space, our discipline can explore a range of sociological themes such as interactional dynamics, identity formation, institutional effects, structural inequalities, and knowledge production, among others. If sociologists already study these levels of social analysis, why not capitalize on this for the betterment of teaching and learning?

In this article, we make a case for sociology as pedagogy by exploring the implications of various social theories for the process of teaching and learning. Sociology as pedagogy is a model that encourages us to use our sociological knowledge to reflect on and address the social dynamics of educa-
tion. With such sociological insight we are better equipped to develop effective strategies that answer the challenges and tap into the potentialities of educational processes. Analyzing teaching and learning sociologically should be as fruitful as any other sociological analysis. By examining the classroom from a sociological perspective, we could understand interactions, institutional context and dynamics, structure, identity, and culture as they emerge in the classroom—and ideally we could use such insights to improve the teaching and learning experience of our students and ourselves.

By discussing how major works of sociological theory can inform teaching and learning, we attempt to bridge what Hanson (2005b) describes as the intellectual gap between what we do in the classroom and what we do as scholars. Whereas Hanson calls for a more theoretically grounded SoTL that incorporates the sociological imagination, we take the integration of the disciplinary perspective and studies of educational processes a step farther. We do not intend to position sociology as pedagogy as a partisan interjection into the debate that ensued from Hanson’s article (Hanson 2005b; Kain 2005; McKinney 2005); rather we envision sociology as pedagogy as a broader approach to pedagogy that links the insights of SoTL, the sociology of education, and the discipline as a whole. Our work builds on Pescosolido and Aminzade’s (1999) effort to collect examples of the integration of teaching and research in the social sciences and analyze the social aspects of college. We take their project a step further by demonstrating that the sociological outlook not only helps us analyze and understand higher education, but it can also be put into practice in the classroom. In effect, sociology as pedagogy brings the connection between the scholarship of teaching and learning, the sociology of education, and sociology as a discipline full circle—from the classroom to the larger social realm back to the classroom.

Much attention has been given to how sociologists teach theory. Over the years, instructors have suggested innovative, creative, and engaging ways to convey both classical and contemporary social theory to students. Some of these teaching strategies have used active learning (Holtzman 2005), actual conversations with theorists (Sturgis 1983), television programs (Donaghy 2000), participant observation (Silver and Perez 1998), literature (Gotsch-Thomson 1990), video (Fails 1988), music (Ahlkvist 2001), and even puzzles (Lowney 1998). Although these strategies have informed how we teach social theory, we still know very little about how social theory may inform our teaching.

In the following, we focus on five well established sociological theories and demonstrate how these ideas can guide us in our pedagogy. The five theories are: rationalization and McDonaldization (Weber and Ritzer), solidarity and anomie (Durkheim and Merton), symbolic interaction (Blumer and Goffman), feminist standpoint theory (Smith), and cultural capital and symbolic violence (Bourdieu). We selected these theories for two main reasons. First, they represent a broad range of sociological perspectives. In addition to including classical and contemporary as well as micro and macro theories, our selections reflect an array of political and epistemological orientations. Second, most sociologists are familiar with these theories since they are commonly found in the curriculum. These theories demonstrate the suitability of sociological ideas for enhancing pedagogical processes; however, as we will discuss later, we believe that most, if not all, sociological theories can help us become better teachers and learners.¹

We recognize that there are diverse ways

¹In selecting theories for this paper, we were primarily concerned with demonstrating how one could locate pedagogical insights in social theories. To that end, we chose wide-ranging, yet familiar theorists instead of the most recent theorists. Nevertheless, we reiterate our conviction that the model of sociology as pedagogy can be applied to the most current social theories and we encourage our readers to do so.
in which sociologists approach teaching. Some lecture, some discuss; some sociologists draw on feminist and/or postmodern epistemologies and pedagogies, while others subscribe to a positivist paradigm. We do not presume to know the full range of pedagogies practiced; however, many sociologists share the goals of encouraging critical thinking, sociological awareness, and social justice (Grauerholz and Gibson 2006; McKinney et al. 2004). It is from this perspective that we will discuss how drawing on sociological insights may promote a more reflexive pedagogy that makes evident the implicit interrelationship between sociological practice and teaching.

**RATIONALIZATION AND MCDONALDIZATION**

In one of the central texts of classical sociological theory, Weber (1930) identified rationalization as a key characteristic of modern life. Rationalization remains such a commanding force that it is not difficult to recognize its impact on teaching and learning. While the modern condition is such that we cannot naively hope to create a classroom free of rationalism, nor do we necessarily want to, developing a critical awareness of its impact will likely make us better sociologists and teachers. Today, the paradigmatic example of rationalization is Ritzer’s concept of McDonaldization. As Ritzer (2004) explains, “Weber described how the modern Western world managed to become increasingly rational—that is, dominated by efficiency, predictability, calculability, and nonhuman technologies that control people. … McDonaldization is an amplification and extension of Weber’s theory of rationalization” (p. 25). By examining the McDonaldization of education, we can discern the pedagogical implications of sociological ideas like rationalization.

For all that may be gained in a McDonaldized institution, there are some fundamental elements of experience—elements quite important to teaching, learning, critical thinking, and social consciousness—that are lost. McDonaldized education is, like other McDonaldized experiences, dehumanized and deindividuated. In a McDonaldized world, students cannot ask to be graded based on unique circumstances, faculty cannot use nonstandard forms of evaluation, just as you cannot ask that your burger be cooked medium-rare. Looking at teaching and learning sociology through the lens of McDonaldization underscores the rationalization, standardization, and commodification of higher education.

The impact of McDonaldization on higher education is undeniable. Ritzer (2004) offers several examples: computer-graded testing, the use of textbooks and publisher’s lecture notes, the quantification of the evaluation of students (e.g., GPA) and faculty (e.g., ranking of publications, number of publications, weight of tenure dossier, number of citations), and technology mediated and delivered instruction (e.g., distance learning, computer-based training). The extent of rationalization is so great that some have described contemporary institutions of higher education as knowledge factories (Aronowitz 2000) and McUniversities (Hayes and Wynyard 2002). While colleges and universities may be aptly described as such, faculty also participate directly in the rationalization of higher education. Increasing pressures to rationalize teaching and learning often constrain the choices faculty make, despite the sanctity of academic freedom and autonomy. At the institutional level, the movement towards greater accountability and assessment compels faculty and students to rationalize teaching and learning. Similarly, the multitude of demands postsecondary institutions place on faculty results in an academic time bind that pushes faculty to adopt efficient, and often standardized, pedagogical strategies (Wright et al. 2004).

Though in some ways rationalization can be viewed as beneficial to the educational process (for example it may be useful in negotiating the time bind and increasing productivity), social theory and research have long pointed to the direct correlation...
between rationalization and alienation (Alexander 1987; Weber 1930). Typically, alienation limits students’ motivation, which in turn stifles engagement with course materials and curtails the development of their sociological imaginations. If teaching practices contribute to alienation among students (and faculty), then the students may become disengaged, making teaching more a chore than a calling (c.f., Davis 1993, chapter 23). Under such circumstances faculty are prone to compartmentalize research and teaching, resulting in the estrangement of our professional lives and the rationalization of our pedagogies. By contributing to alienation, McDonaldized teaching methods promote the further rationalization of our academic practices. In effect, a vicious cycle of rationalized higher education ensues.

The rationalization of teaching and learning also tends to produce uniformity rather than independent, critical thinking. So often we complain about students producing “cookie-cutter” responses to essay questions. This complaint can be heard throughout academia, from community colleges to doctoral programs (Bean 2001). But before we place the blame solely on students, we should ask what role rationalized, “cookie-cutter” pedagogical strategies play in this phenomenon. In what ways do we (unintentionally) limit the development of critical thinking? Being aware of the McDonaldization of education may illuminate the irrationality of rationalization as well as the rationality of seemingly irrational pedagogical strategies. In one of our courses, for example, following a conventional compare and contrast assignment that produced lackluster, “cookie-cutter” papers, students were given a less standardized and less predictable assignment. Students were asked to select a current event, piece of literature, film, or television episode and analyze it according to a contemporary social theory of their choice. Students wrote about a wide range of topics including the Black Panthers, the Tamagachi popular culture fad, female suicide bombers, and the increasing emphasis on standardized testing in elementary school. This assignment mirrored the process of sociological analysis we as researchers use, and it gave students a way to develop insight into a subject that interests them. Furthermore, it gave them an opportunity to exercise their sociological imaginations, resulting in papers that were far more spirited and enjoyable for both the reader and writers. Unlike homogeneous, predictable papers that merely regurgitate course material, these papers required thinking “outside the box” in terms of how to evaluate them. While the extra effort needed for evaluation may seem irrational given the time constraints faculty face, grading these papers turned out to be far less onerous than the seemingly rational compare and contrast assignment.

Hudd (2003) presents another example of the rationality of a seemingly irrational pedagogical technique. She asks her students to collaborate with her on constructing the syllabus and designing the assignments for their course. In the process, students take greater ownership of the course and assignments. Here, relinquishing control over the course turns out to be a rational and effective pedagogical strategy to foster student engagement. In addition to the applications described above, Bean’s (2001) Engaging Ideas offers a wide range of creative assignments and activities designed to foster critical thinking and student engagement. Research indicates that non-McDonaldized pedagogy, including active, collaborative, and service learning techniques, enhances student engagement and learning (Umbach and Wawrzynski 2005). Moreover, recognizing the manifestations of rationalization and McDonaldization in the classroom and experimenting with ways to counter them helps us maintain what Freire (1998) describes as epistemological curiosity, a trait critical to scholarly and pedagogical effectiveness.

SOLIDARITY AND ANOMIE

Of all the sociologists we explore in this
paper, Durkheim is one of the few who has actually addressed pedagogy. In *Education and Sociology* (1956) and *Moral Education* (1961), Durkheim presents his ideas about the role of education in maintaining stability, discipline, and a harmonious social order. Much like the argument we put forth in this paper, Durkheim believed sociology informed the pedagogical process more than any other discipline. Although Durkheim’s thoughts about education are still invoked today (c.f., Walford and Pickering 1998) and his ideas about moral education have been foundational for many theorists working in this area (Piaget 1999; Power, Higgin, and Kohlberg 1989), most sociological discussions of Durkheim concentrate on his views on societal integration. We focus on some of Durkheim’s most well known concepts, specifically solidarity and anomie, in order to demonstrate how we may locate pedagogical value in the sociological canon.

In one of his most famous passages, Durkheim (1984) makes a distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity to capture the essence of the changing nature of society. For Durkheim, mechanical societies are characterized by small, relatively homogeneous social units bound by tradition, whereas organic societies are more individualistic. In the face of modernization and the move toward organic societies, Durkheim’s great concern was how social cohesion would be maintained. Although Durkheim developed this dichotomy to support his vision of history, the distinction may be relevant to pedagogy. If we view the classroom as a type of society, we may say that as the semester begins our classes reflect quasi-mechanical solidarity. In our experience, students appear to enter the classroom with weak social bonds—both among themselves and with the teacher. The glue that holds the class together is the strong collective consciousness of educational customs; through years of socialization, students and professors know their roles and act them out dutifully. In the early stages of this mechanical classroom, originality, creativity, and change may not be strongly encouraged because rules, procedures, and policies are being established. Although this type of mechanical learning environment has its benefits, we believe that a classroom reflecting Durkheim’s ideal typical organic solidarity offers distinct advantages. Here, interdependence would be strong, cooperation would be expected, and positive individualism in the form of inventiveness, innovation, and imagination would be welcome. A classroom modeled after Durkheim’s organic solidarity would demonstrate cohesiveness, reciprocity, and respect among teachers and learners.

When individuals in an organic society do not feel wholly integrated the threat of anomie is always present. Anomie encompasses social disintegration ranging from complete chaos to the breakdown of norms such that individuals no longer share the same goals and/or the same means to achieve goals. Although higher education does not often suffer from the stark breakdown of societal norms, anomie could still manifest in subtle ways. For instance, listening to many of our colleagues we notice there is a growing sense of feeling bogged down, overworked, and progressively more powerless due to the corporatization and commercialization of the university (Aronowitz 2000; Bok 2004). Universities are getting more “greedy,” expecting faculty to demonstrate enthusiastic citizenship by serving on central committees, attending campus-wide meetings, and participating in fund-raising activities, among other things (Wright et al. 2004). Being aware of these organizational strains helps us address such anomic tendencies. For example, building what Baker (1999) calls a “learning community” may remedy feeling overextended, robotic, or dispirited. By focusing on communication, mutuality, and mindful engagement, learning communities go a long way in promoting connectedness, cultivating integration, and stemming the tide of anomie.

Students too may feel a greater sense of disconnectedness from the educational process. With a rise in adjunct instructors and online classes, and with an increase in class
sizes, it is increasingly unlikely that strong collective ties with other students and faculty will be formed. By studying Durkheim’s ideas and contemplating how his theoretical framework informs the pedagogical process, we will be in a better position to adopt teaching strategies that may counter these macro-structural forces. For example, in our experience learning all of our students’ names and working to ensure that the students know each other’s names help foster a more organic classroom characterized by cohesion, reciprocity, and respect. One exercise we use at the beginning of the semester is to place students into groups of two with the task of identifying eight things they have in common. After the groups introduce each other to the class and report on their commonalities they then join together into groups of four with the same task. The groups of four introduce each other, identify their commonalities, and then join together into groups of eight. This snowballing exercise (see another variation in Brookfield and Preskill 1999) continues until the class is back together as a whole. Although such an exercise may take up a whole class period, it goes a long way in establishing a more cohesive and interconnected community of learners.

Building on Durkheim’s notion of anomie, Merton’s “Social Structure and Anomie” has long been an integral part of the sociological canon. In this classic article Merton develops strain theory to explain how individuals adapt to various social conditions. By focusing on the acceptance of cultural goals and the institutionalized means to achieve such goals, Merton devised a typology of five modes of individual adaptation: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. Merton (1968) explains that the social structure “produces a strain toward anomie and deviant behavior” because “[t]he pressure of such a social order is upon outdoing one’s competitors” (p. 211). Merton’s strain theory has been used and modified by countless researchers to explain a wide range of behaviors and social processes. Yet, with the exception of Rafalovich’s (2006) breaching experiments and the application of strain theory to studies of academic misconduct (Brezina 2000; Vowell and Chen 2004), the pedagogical insights of Merton’s idea have been largely ignored. We believe that strain theory can be used to better comprehend some key processes of teaching and learning. Higher education is a goal-driven endeavor. Instructors are aspiring toward tenure, promotion, publication, and merit pay raises. Students are driven by GPAs, degrees, graduate school admissions, and career credentials. With all of this goal-oriented behavior “a strain toward anomie and deviant behavior” is likely, especially if “the social structure rigorously restricts or completely closes access to approved modes of reaching these goals” (Merton 1968:200). This last point is an important component of Merton’s analysis and it may help us better comprehend and address the various modes of adaptation among teachers and learners.

Paulsen and Feldman (1995) point out that “to understand how the teaching of individual faculty members can be improved, a good place to start is an examination of organizational forces within the university” (p. 121). For example, when competency in the classroom is an institutional goal and we are provided with the means to achieve this goal, the classroom has the potential to be a dynamic site of learning. When teaching is deemed secondary and the institutional means necessary to be an effective teacher are limited, some sort of innovation (or retreatism) on the part of the instructor will be necessary. Merton reminds us of the need to be cognizant of how teaching is impacted by the stated goals of the academic institution and the extent to which the school grants access to the legitimate means to achieve these goals. A critical insight we can gain from strain theory then is an understanding of the way in which institutional conditions shape pedagogical adaptations.

Using Merton’s framework may offer even more pedagogical value by examining...
how students' behaviors are affected by the cultural goals and the institutional means. Because college serves as a building block for students' future orientations, the typical goal is to graduate with a strong academic record. However, the students' goal may be different from the goal of their professors, who may be aiming to instill an appreciation and comprehension of the subject matter. The students' goal may also be different than the stated goals of the college administrators, who may be more interested in retention rates and years students take to complete their degrees. Even if there is some consensus on the stated goals, the students may not have the means to achieve such goals. The need to undertake paid work because of cuts to financial aid, the desire to build one's resume through extracurricular activities and volunteer service positions, and the emphasis on social life are all factors that may inhibit students' ability to embrace the institutional means to their desired ends.

When professors contemplate students' conduct in the classroom, for example, why some seek shortcuts whereas others are highly motivated or why some may doze off whereas others are attentive and focused, it may be useful to return to Merton's typology of individual adaptation to comprehend these different behaviors. The insights we gain from strain theory can help us recognize the influence of institutional constraints on our pedagogical choices and the corresponding adaptations among our students. For example, a straightforward strategy we utilize to understand student behavior is to go right to the source. If we want to know why students conform, innovate, ritualize, retreat, or rebel, we simply ask them. Once we have this information we can provide students with legitimate means to accomplish their goals without compromising the goals of the faculty or institution. Teaching students about what constitutes plagiarism, showing them how to skim for content and comprehension, incorporating a variety of assignments designed to tap into students' different strengths, offering credit for resume-enhancing internships and fieldwork, and educating them about the importance of doing quality undergraduate work given the increasing competitiveness of graduate school admissions may all help students better adapt to the rigors of college life without as much strain or anomie.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTION

As the theoretical perspective that considers how society is produced and reproduced through social interaction, symbolic interaction has much to offer us pedagogically. By positing the classroom as a site of social interaction, we can critically analyze the processes of teaching and learning from a micro-sociological orientation. From this perspective, the foundation of the educational process can be accurately characterized as the exchange of “significant gestures” (Mead 1934). Much like all social encounters, teaching and learning are communicative practices. Because the literature of symbolic interaction is replete with observations about how individuals traverse this interactive landscape, it is particularly well suited to developing our awareness of the classroom environment.

A logical starting point for revealing some of the pedagogical insights of symbolic interaction is with Blumer’s classic statement. Blumer outlined three premises of symbolic interaction each of which provides a glimpse into some of the practices of teaching and learning. First, Blumer (1969) suggests that “human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that things have for them” (p. 2). Blumer’s initial premise is especially salient when instructors and/or learners attempt to understand, much less change, the dynamics of the classroom. By recognizing that we all approach the classroom based on our preconceived notions and identities, we are better situated to engage in mutually supportive social interactions. If we accept Blumer’s suggestion that “the meanings that things have for human beings are central in their own right” (p. 3), then we are more
likely to validate the behaviors and experiences of others instead of disrespect and neglect them. This is a crucial point for a successful educational experience because good teaching and learning is unlikely to occur if students and/or teachers feel discounted or ignored (Hirschy and Wilson 2002; Karp and Yoels 1976; Major and Palmer 2002). It is difficult to give voice to the experiences of individuals if we resist understanding from where such individuals are coming. This point is particularly relevant when it comes to students’ learning styles. As Powers (1999) suggests, if we fail to comprehend how students learn (i.e., how they act toward learning), then we are unlikely to employ pedagogical strategies that maximize learning. Incorporating assignments and activities that are geared towards a wide range of learning styles, such as group work, individual writing assignments, peer teaching, and experiential learning, enables us to reach more students than teaching in only one or two modalities (Hirschy and Wilson 2002).

Blumer’s second premise builds on the first one, stating that the meaning of things is drawn from our social interactions. This point underscores the idea that meaning is a social product. The meaning of things—including the classroom, the role of teacher or student, the course material—are not intrinsic or inherent; rather, we learn through our social interactions what these things are and how we are expected to respond to them. Blumer’s second premise reminds us there is nothing innate about how we respond as teachers or learners, much less how the classroom is constructed. Blumer argues that our behavior in social settings is built on a process of interaction. As individuals we have the potential to change what it means to be students and teachers just as we can change the meaning of teaching and learning.

The potential to transform the educational process through our social interactions is the key pedagogical benefit from Blumer’s paradigm, and it brings us to his third point: that meanings are used and changed through an interpretive process. This final premise is the defining characteristic of symbolic interaction and it has great resonance for the classroom. Beyond the many innovative teaching techniques that reflect this interpretive construction of reality (Obach 1999; Roberts 2001; Rodgers 2003), Blumer’s theory reminds us that teachers and learners enter the educational setting with a set of preconceived connotations of the situation, but these meanings are not rigid. Through the interactions that transpire in the classroom our understanding of education can and does change. We can challenge students to entertain alternative meanings of learning just as we can challenge ourselves to consider alternative meanings of being a teacher. For example, in smaller classes we can rearrange the seating, have students lead discussion, and invite students to develop assignments. In larger classes, we can invite students to generate critical questions about the course material, a select few of which may be used to begin (or end) each class. Some instructors even transform the normative meanings of teacher and student by having students construct the syllabus, select the course content, and rewrite the grading system (Bickel 2006; Eby 2001; Hudd 2003). All of these examples are attempts at de-centering the authority of the teacher by altering the roles and statuses that students and teachers conventionally occupy. As Blumer suggests, this renegotiated environment can only arise from the reinterpretations of classroom interactions.

Blumer’s framework is one of many ideas from symbolic interaction that may be useful pedagogically. As another example we can examine some of Goffman’s insights. Goffman may not have considered himself a symbolic interactionist but his dramaturgical analysis is often discussed within this framework. Goffman’s (1959) discussion of how people engage in impression management and face-saving techniques is well known by most sociologists and is often taught in introductory sociology classes. As teachers, it is helpful to consider how self presentations play out in the classroom.

As Blumer suggests, this renegotiated environment can only arise from the reinterpretations of classroom interactions.
Being aware of how we manage our impressions to students as well as how they manage their impressions to us and to each other may allow us to better appreciate the differences we experience. For example, discussion-oriented classes often have a dynamic whereby some students are loquacious whereas others are quiet and reserved. Some might explain this behavior by relying on psychological explanations of innate personality traits such as extroversion and introversion. Research confirms the feedback we hear from students: their reticence emanates in part from a fear of appearing stupid, while talkativeness stems from a desire to sound knowledgeable (Auster and MacRone 1994). In other words, students are engaging in impression management. Along with other sociologists, we have used this feedback to develop strategies to counter these impression-management tendencies, such as engaging the class in a silent discussion (Kaufman 2008) or online discussion (Wolfe 2000), assigning discussion roles to students (e.g., summarizer, questioner, facilitator, exemplifier, time keeper), and setting classroom rules of engagement such as having everyone speak at least once before anyone speaks twice (for more strategies see Brookfield and Preskill [1999], pp. 171-93). By recognizing these underlying dramaturgical processes, we are better equipped to help one group find their voice while helping another group temper theirs.

The ideas of self presentation are also valuable for our own understanding of how we navigate the social landscape of academia. Students are by no means the only ones who engage in impression management. Teachers also utilize interactive strategies to get students to react to them in a particular way. As such, it might be useful for us consider how we are presenting ourselves and what impressions we are giving off to students. At times we may feel frustrated that what we are trying to achieve is not being accomplished. In Goffman’s (1959) terms we are not controlling the impressions of our students nor are we achieving the “reciprocal influence of individuals upon another’s action” (p. 15). To address this situation it may be helpful for us to consider many of the aspects that Goffman identified in his theory of self presentations: our initial projections; our practices, both defensive and protective; our overall performance; and even our appearance and manner. Fobes’s (2006) account of physical and emotional risk-taking in front of her students offers one example of how the learning environment can benefit if we are more mindful of our self presentations. By not managing her impressions to the extent that we typically try to do in the classroom, Fobes demonstrated her vulnerability which allowed her students to trust her and see her as a full human being, not just as a teacher. Reflecting on our own impression management strategies may shed light on the ways in which we encourage or obstruct social interactions with students, and by extension, how our self presentation may affect the learning process.

FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY

Feminism has made notably strong and explicit connections between theory and pedagogy (Macdonald and Sanchez-Casal 2002; Maher and Tetreault 1994; Mayberry and Rose 1999). Unfortunately, for many sociologists these potential insights remain underutilized. In light of the richness of feminist pedagogy and the constraints of space, we limit our discussion to standpoint theory as articulated by Dorothy Smith. For Smith, the distinct experiences women have and the roles they play shape the perspectives with which they approach a situation. She argues that the male-centered sociological world has failed to fully incorporate women’s lives, experiences, and perspectives. To remedy this, she calls for an acknowledgement of the distinct experiences that shape women’s lives and perspectives as compared to men’s. For Smith (1974), “an alternative sociology must preserve in it the presence, concerns, and experience of the sociologist as knower and discoverer” (p.
This results in the need to make “our direct embodied experience of the everyday world the primary ground of our knowledge” (Smith 1974:389). In other words, experience as prior knowledge becomes the foundation for learning.

Smith’s approach keys teachers into gender dynamics in the classroom, such as the silencing of women. Despite the number of studies that address this issue, it remains a problem in many classes (e.g., Hall and Sandler 1982; Jones and Dindia 2004; Sadker and Sadker 1994). To the extent that Smith’s characterization of sociology as male-centric is accurate, the silencing of women in the classroom may be explained in part by the disconnection between their experiences and the perspective implicit in the course materials. When students are presented with material that fails to resonate with their lives, it is difficult for them to develop as both knower and discoverer. Furthermore, without a curriculum that relates to their lived experiences, students may lack the confidence or desire to enter the dialogue. Thomas and Kukulan (2004) argue that the dearth of women in the sociological cannon, especially in social theory, reflects the limited attention graduate programs pay to women theorists, since our doctoral training often shapes who and what we teach. Thus, breaking the cycle of exclusion often requires a conscious effort to diversify the curriculum.

Bringing in readings by women is perhaps the most obvious strategy to address this issue. Beyond this, instructors can take other measures such as drawing on research and examples that specifically address women’s experiences and remaining cognizant and equitable in how one responds to and encourages student involvement. A specific example we use involves a critical adaptation and analysis of the classic “Twenty Statements Test” developed by the Iowa School of Social Psychology (Kuhn and McPartland 1954; Wellman 1971). This exercise, similar to Brookfield and Preskill’s standpoint statements (1999), highlights the insights of standpoint theory and can be easily employed in both small and large classes. Students are asked to answer the question “Who am I?” with 20 single-word responses. By contemplating this question, students have an opportunity to identify what attributes are salient to their own standpoints. More importantly, it illuminates the invisibility of privilege that dominant groups often take for granted. The point in these suggestions is to demonstrate to students that knowledge does not emanate from a single perspective or common set of experiences. Standpoint pedagogy fosters the idea that all students have the capacity to contribute based on the distinct experiences they bring to the classroom.

While Smith concentrated on women and gender, we can extend her approach to encompass the myriad standpoints we develop through embodied experience. Social theorists writing before and after Smith have elucidated standpoint theories addressing various dimensions of diversity, such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, religion, class, and ability (e.g., Appiah 1993; Davis 1981; DuBois 1903; Fanon 1967; Hill Collins 1990; hooks 1981). Encouraging students and faculty to recognize their multiple positionalities pulls us away from the traditional monofocal perspective (white, male, heterosexual, etc.) and better reflects the diversity of contemporary society. Like feminist standpoint theory, this heterogeneous perspective has important implications for the classroom. Just as women may feel silenced in a male-centered curriculum, diverse students may be alienated and frustrated by the disconnect they feel from their educational experience (Hirschy and Wilson 2002; McCarthy and Crichlow 1993; Weis and Fine 1993). Instructors wanting to address privilege and inequality in the classroom have countless strategies from which to choose. For example, Schuster and Van Dyne (1999) outline six stages of curriculum development to transform courses characterized by exclusion and invisibility of certain groups into courses that reflect balance and inclusion of all groups. Similarly, Chesler, Lewis, and...
Crowfoot (2005) offer a comprehensive template to move one’s course from monoculturalism to multiculturalism. By focusing their recommendations on the interaction among subject matter, instructors, students, classroom techniques, and larger institutional contexts, these authors offer decidedly sociology as pedagogy applications of standpoint theory.

**CULTURAL CAPITAL AND SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE**

We end our discussion by considering the sociology of Bourdieu who, through his concepts of habitus, cultural capital, and symbolic violence, offers instructors analytical tools to help further cultivate a reflexive approach to the classroom. In keeping with the French sociological tradition, Bourdieu (1989) bases his theory on the premise that individual behavior and perception are constrained and guided by the hierarchical world of structures we inhabit, “structures independent of the consciousness and will of agents” (p. 14). Social structure takes shape in fields, or competitive marketplaces where we accumulate and marshal economic, social, symbolic and cultural capital to gain relatively favorable positions. Of particular importance in education is cultural capital, the legitimate and legitimated knowledge that shores up or increases one’s position in a field. Cultural capital may be objectified (in material goods), institutionalized (e.g., diplomas), or embodied (in language, habits, and taste).

Bourdieu argues that economic and cultural capital are powerful “principles of differentiation” in that these forms of capital direct us into the objective social position which conditions our disposition, the “generative, unifying principle of conduct and opinions” he calls habitus (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970:161; see also Bourdieu 1987); in turn, habitus reinforces position.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) describe the seemingly consensual assertion, legitimation, and naturalization of the hegemonic culture carried out by powerful institutions, such as the educational system, as symbolic violence. Schools tend to value the dominant class culture resulting in the legitimation and perpetuation of stratification. Those students socialized with the habitus, cultural capital and practices of the dominant class are more likely to succeed in the educational field than those who find the cultural codes foreign and more difficult to acquire (Carson 1993; Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell 1999). According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1970), testing is the archetypical manifestation of cultural capital in schools and thereby serves as the main mechanism of symbolic violence: “In imposing as worthy of university sanction a social definition of knowledge and the way to show it, it provides one of the most efficacious tools for the enterprise of inculcating the dominant culture and the value of that culture” (p. 142). Not only do exams disguise the relationship between the school and the larger social structure, but more generally all forms of assessment are inherently biased. For example, essays tend to favor eloquent writers regardless of their comprehension of substantive material. Similarly, students skilled in memorizing material generally have an advantage in short-answer questions. Charismatic, confident students may present themselves exceptionally well in public speaking assignments. We believe that these attributes largely derive from one’s habitus and cultural capital.

Teachers and students may be unaware of how cultural capital favors those who possess it and disadvantages those who do not. Given that educational credentials are largely based on test performance and are presumed to reflect individual achievement, it is important to recognize the extent to which cultural capital is mistaken for merit.

Undoubtedly, some will disagree with the foregoing analysis and reject the argument that their exams are biased and unfair—
much less that they contribute to the reproduction of social inequality. But Bourdieu’s sociology encourages us to suspend such impulsive reactions and instead implores us to be reflexive about our social practices. By understanding the propensity of schooling to be a site of symbolic violence, and by acknowledging our potential role in this process, we will be better positioned to construct an educational environment that is welcoming and receptive to all students. To this end, we may challenge ourselves with the following pedagogical questions: How are our classroom strategies and assessment techniques shaped by our habitus or the level or types of cultural capital we possess? Are some students inadvertently excluded or disqualified because they do not share the institutionalized signals that we rely on to transmit information and knowledge? Can we use alternative measures of evaluation including participation, oral presentations, peer evaluations, group work, field research, self reflections, and of course written work such as papers, journals, and reactions instead of relying solely on the traditional methods of exams and quizzes? Would these alternative measures help us accommodate a wider range of learning styles and mitigate the differences in cultural capital accumulation? In short, Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology reminds us to think about the ways in which we may be unwitting accomplices to symbolic violence.

In educational institutions, language emerges as a key component in reproducing the social hierarchy (Carson 1993). Schools enforce institutionally and often state-sanctioned forms of language and systems of meaning while de-legitimizing popular and subcultural vernaculars. In this way, the legitimation of class-encoded linguistic capital constitutes another example of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1999 [1991]). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) note that “[e]very linguistic exchange contains the potentiality of an act of power, and all the more so when it involves agents who occupy asymmetric positions in the distribution of the relevant capital” (p. 145). Written and oral exchanges between students and professors exemplify such asymmetry. By being mindful of how classroom interactions may reflect such imbalances, we can deconstruct and de-center this locus of power. For example, a professor we spoke with at a diverse, urban community college with a high proportion of first-generation college enrollees discusses the issue of linguistic capital with her students each semester. She explains to students that standard written English is the language of the academy and in large part the workplace; thus language is not simply a matter of pride, style, or even value, but also a matter of successfully operating in powerful gate-keeping institutions. Moreover, language signals status, which is equally important for students and faculty to be aware of. She is careful not to demean forms of expression less valued in academia and discusses code-switching to navigate between the fields in which students are positioned. Her point is not to advocate the continuing legitimation of standard written English at the cost of other forms of expression, but rather to provide students with the knowledge necessary to understand the consequences of their choices, specifically in terms of how they use language. Engaging in dialogues about the role of linguistic and cultural capital in academic and professional success is one strategy to make the subtle mechanisms of inequality more transparent to students (for other exercises that help students understand the role of cultural capital in social life and their education in particular, see Dundes and Spence [2007], Isserles and Dalmage [2000], or Wright and Ransom [2005]).

Bourdieu’s framework reminds us that language, especially as it plays out in the classroom, is a complex matter. Linguistic capital that is valued in one field may not be recognized in another (Bourdieu 1984). This insight becomes particularly salient as students navigate between their peers and their teachers. Though a command of slang may gain students respect within youth subcultures, it becomes a liability when students cannot master the dominant language
of academia. College students must learn how to “talk smart” if they hope to succeed in the dominant culture (Kaufman 2003). As instructors we can play a crucial role in either assisting or obstructing students from acquiring linguistic competency and, subsequently, gaining important cultural capital. For example, by purposefully using academic jargon and obfuscating language, we reify dominant cultural codes and extend our institutional power over students. In doing so we may make our students feel inferior or disinclined to participate in class (Karp and Yoels 1976). Our point here is not to promote a “dumbing down” of the academy; rather, we hope to encourage intellectual interactions between students and professors that will enable students to gain legitimate cultural capital. Through attentive pedagogical means such as defining terms contextually, inviting students to ask questions, creating a list of key words, and promoting epistemological inquiries, we can help students penetrate the dominant linguistic codes. In short, by recognizing the potential for symbolic violence as well as the advantages of accumulating legitimated linguistic and cultural capital, we can help students negotiate the educational field more effectively and enhance our own ability to interpret classroom dynamics.

SOCIOLOGY AS PEDAGOGY:
A NEW PARADIGM OF TEACHING AND LEARNING?

In this paper, we employ a framework of sociology as pedagogy to highlight the ways in which sociology can enhance and inform teaching and learning. The theories we discussed exemplify the insights we can gain from using what we teach to learn how to teach more effectively. By examining the pedagogical implications of these social theories, we draw out the connection between the theoretical insights and practices of teaching and learning, and between our work as scholars and our work as educators. Our analysis is based on the premise that the discipline of sociology has gained prominence by studying institutional structures and explicating the processes of individuals navigating the social landscape. What goes on in the educational arena—at both the institutional and the individual level—reflects the underlying analytical orientation of sociological inquiry. As such, we believe that because of our disciplinary expertise, sociologists are uniquely positioned to understand didactic processes and formulate ways to improve them.

Although we focus on select theories, we argue that all sociological knowledge has potential pedagogical applications. To fully appreciate our argument, one should look beyond the specific theories and theorists we discuss. For example, although we did not discuss Marx, in part because his ideas are foundational to many of the theories we analyzed, we believe there is as much pedagogical value to be gained from his ideas as there is from others we did not examine such as Anthony Giddens, Michel Foucault, or Arlie Russell Hochschild. Furthermore, pedagogical value is not limited to paradigmatic theories and findings. Indeed, we encourage our colleagues to explore the ways in which the full range of sociological theory—and even research—may be mined for pedagogical insights. As Durkheim argued, if sociology studies social life and the school is a microcosm of society, then there is much to discover about teaching and learning from our disciplinary knowledge.

By drawing on the literature of sociology as pedagogy, we can further integrate pedagogy and scholarship. When people want to connect their teaching and research, they usually incorporate their scholarship into the curriculum. Certainly, this helps students gain an appreciation of the methods and findings of the professional sociologist. But what we are advocating here is something quite different. We suggest that using sociological ideas to inform our pedagogy is an effective and underutilized way to expand the modes of integrating teaching and research. Not only does sociology as pedagogy offer potential benefits for faculty but it also enhances the learning experience of
students. Ultimately, we hope that by recognizing sociology as pedagogy instructors will feel compelled to be more reflexive about their teaching practices and positionality.

Reflexivity involves a continual process of simultaneously looking inward and outward. We should reflect upon our actions, the reactions we elicit, and the interactions constituted by this negotiation between ourselves as actors, as processors, and others. Comprehending how our own experiences and positionality shape the way in which we interact with the social world begins to capitalize on the benefits of reflexivity. Along these lines, sociology as pedagogy suggests that we need to be cognizant of how what we study informs how we teach as well as the forms of learning we facilitate. As teachers and learners, we should strive to become aware of the manifestations of racial, ethnic, gender, class, and other structural dynamics in classroom interactions. Sociology informs us of these structural dynamics and the classroom is by no means immune to them. In our quest to become better teachers and learners, much can be gained from using sociology as pedagogy.

REFERENCES


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