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Jay R. Howard
Butler University, jrhoward@butler.edu

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North Central Sociological Association 2014 Teaching Address: The John F. Schnabel Lecture—Sociology's Special Pedagogical Challenge

Jay R. Howard

Abstract:

Instructors and students must overcome a course's special pedagogical challenge in order for meaningful and important learning to occur. While some suggest that the special pedagogical problem varies by course, I contend that the special pedagogical problem is likely to be shared across a discipline's curriculum, rather than being unique to each course. After reviewing a three-part typology of learning outcomes for sociology, I argue that the development of students' sociological imaginations is sociology's special pedagogical challenge; I then offer some general guidelines for teaching strategies to enhance the students' success in developing a sociological imagination.

In something of a brief aside in his book, *Creating Significant Learning Experiences* (2003), L. Dee Fink suggests that every course presents a special pedagogical challenge. According to Fink (2003:72), the special pedagogical challenge is a particular problem that tests the ability of both instructor and students to ensure that “meaningful and important” learning occurs. Fink offers several illustrations of special pedagogical challenges. In statistics courses, the significant pedagogical which must be overcome is fear of statistics. Students often enter a statistics course with the view that math is something they are “just not good at.” Therefore, students either fail to put forth the effort necessary to learn statistics because they believe it is hopeless or they become so anxious about their perceived lack of ability that the anxiety undermines their learning in what amounts to a self-fulfilling prophecy. In teaching German, Fink suggests the special pedagogical challenge may be Hitler. Students come to German class interested in only the Holocaust, Hitler, and the Nazis. Anything else covered in the course is perceived as a distraction from what students find most interesting. In psychology the special pedagogical challenge may be students’ perception that it’s all “common sense.” If psychology is merely common sense, then students need not study or work hard because they already “know” the material. Each of these special pedagogical challenges amounts to a significant problem which must be overcome in order for learning to occur most effectively in a course.

So what’s a professor to do about the special pedagogical problem in his/her course? Fink (2003) points out that one constructive response is to consider the alignment of goals, strategies, and assessments in our courses and curricula in the context of the specific pedagogical challenge. How can we design our courses to overcome the special pedagogical challenge to ensure that meaningful and important learning is occurring? Fink concludes that if an instructor can overcome the significant pedagogical challenge in a course, then the probability of student success is vastly improved.

While Fink’s (2003) description of the specific pedagogical challenge focuses on specific courses, it is worth asking, do *disciplines* have special pedagogical challenges? I believe they do, and, in fact, it may be more beneficial to think of the special pedagogical challenge as commonly shared within a discipline rather than as something unique to each course. In most disciplines the subject matter is similar enough that the special pedagogical challenges are likely to be shared across most courses within a discipline. For example, in sociology, would the special pedagogical challenge in gender be vastly different than in teaching race and ethnicity? Would the special pedagogical challenge in teaching stratification be significantly different than in teaching social theory? Of course, there are exceptions. The specific pedagogical challenge in a sociological statistics course is likely the “fear of math” problem. And it may well be the case that in well-designed curricula where the learning objectives in 300- and 400-level courses build upon learning in 200-level courses which, in turn, are built upon learning outcomes in introductory or gateway courses, the specific pedagogical challenges may differ somewhat by course level—though it is certainly not a given that the curricula in most sociology programs are so carefully structured. But I contend that in the majority of a discipline’s curriculum, the special pedagogical challenge is likely to be the same, or, at least, very similar. So if we accept the contention that disciplines have specific pedagogical challenges common to most of the curriculum, it leads to the question, what *is* sociology’s special pedagogical challenge? What is the learning “hurdle” which sociology faculty

and students (both majors and non-majors) must overcome in order for significant learning to occur?

WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY'S SPECIAL PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGE?

If we take a few moments to consider the possibilities based on classroom experience, there are any number of contenders for the title “sociology’s special pedagogical challenge.” We can go back to Fink’s (2003:72) point that students often perceive psychology to be merely “common sense.” Certainly, multiple introductory sociology textbooks and readers assume that this is the case, as evidenced by the fact that the book often begins by challenging the notion that sociology is merely common sense (see, for example, Ballantine and Roberts 2012) or conventional wisdom (see, for example, Ruane and Cerulo 2015). Other common challenges are the associations and assumptions that students make in confusing sociology with social work and socialism. Students may come into our classes fearful of being exposed to an “anti-American” ideology or assuming that the primary goal of the discipline is to prepare them for careers in human services assisting the disadvantaged. Yet another possibility is the difficulty in getting students to trust scientific investigation and research as being a more reliable indicator of social reality than individual experience or memorable anecdotes. If students are convinced that their personal experience has led to knowledge of what is “true,” they are often unwilling to consider any other viewpoint that may contradict what personal experience has taught them. Students may also perceive sociology to simply be another ideological viewpoint or opinion available in a marketplace of opinion where they, as consumers, are free to choose whichever opinion they prefer. Each of these is a pedagogical challenge frequently encountered in our sociology classrooms. However, a better way to identify sociology’s special pedagogical challenge is to consider what are the goals of sociological instruction and the sociology curriculum and what challenges interfere with achievement of those goals in particular?

LEARNING SOCIOLOGY TO WHAT END? THE OUTCOMES OF A SOCIOLOGY CURRICULUM

Conceptually, one can think of learning outcomes in sociology on three levels. Once we have identified these learning outcomes, we can then consider what specific pedagogical challenge makes achieving these outcomes particularly difficult. In terms of learning outcomes in sociology, as in most disciplines, there is the matter of content. What are the concepts, ideas, and basic insights of sociology which we want students to learn and retain long after they finish the course? The potential list of key concepts is endless. Sadly for sociology, there is little evidence of agreement on key concepts either at the founding of our discipline (see Howard 2010) or more recently (D’Antonio 1983; Keith and Ender 2004; Wagenaar 2004). Given this lack of agreement on particular subject matter content central to sociology, it seems that the teaching of any particular subject matter is not likely to be the special pedagogical challenge widely shared within the discipline.

A second category of learning outcomes in sociology is the discipline’s contribution to what might be called core curriculum or general education’s goals. These are academic and intellectual skills which multiple disciplines, including sociology, seek to develop in students. These include the

development of critical thinking skills—the recognition that almost any topic can be viewed from multiple perspectives, each of which provides differing insights and implications along with a recognition that each perspective has greater or lesser evidence to support it relative to other perspectives. However, is there any academic discipline today which does not claim to teach critical thinking skills? Given that teaching critical thinking is claimed nearly universally as an academic goal, it is difficult to conceive of critical thinking as the special pedagogical challenge unique to sociology. Other general education outcomes, the achievement of which are facilitated by sociology as well as other disciplines, include quantitative literacy—an ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate statistical or mathematical evidence, and qualitative literacy—an ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate qualitative forms of evidence (including the recognition that qualitative evidence is distinct from anecdotal evidence). While sociology contributes to both quantitative and qualitative literacy, it is again difficult to make a convincing claim that teaching these skills presents a special pedagogical challenge for sociology that is not shared in other disciplines such as mathematics (quantitative literacy) or literature (qualitative literacy).

The third category in this typology of learning outcomes is skills unique, or nearly unique, to sociology, which we hope students will develop through the sociology curriculum. For example, one of these skills is role-taking—the ability to see society through the perspective of another who may be quite different from oneself. However, one could argue that role-taking is a skill that is developed in a relatively small number of other disciplines (for example, anthropology) as well. Therefore, role-taking is not a good candidate for sociology's special pedagogical challenge.

I believe that the skill developed in the sociology curriculum that is unique and distinguishes sociology's contribution to liberal learning from all other disciplines is the development of a sociological imagination—the ability to see and understand one's experiences in society (biography) as influenced by social structure (Mills 1959). While at times sociologists have not done a good job of delineating the difference between higher-order thinking more generally and the sociological imagination (Massengill 2011), I contend that the use of the sociological imagination is a particular type of higher order (or critical) thinking unique to sociology. In my view, what Grauerholz and Bouma-Holtrop (2003) characterize as “critical sociological thinking,” which they define as the “ability to logically and reasonably evaluate an argument or problem while maintaining an awareness of and sensitivity to social forces and contexts” (485), is, in essence, the development of a sociological imagination.

Of course, the lines between these three types of learning outcomes (subject matter/content, general education skills, and uniquely sociological skills) are permeable, as one can use sociological content to develop the sociological imagination and one can use the sociological imagination to better develop critical thinking skills and so forth. In addition, other disciplines, and sociologists teaching in other fields, have also recently begun to utilize sociological imagination in their own teaching. These include management (Duarte 2008; McCoy 2012), education (Hynes, Baloché, and Berger 2010), feminism (Grimes 2012), medicine (Kitto 2004), family therapy (Milardo 2009), physical education (Plymire 2014), law (Romero 2005), interprofessional care (Reeves 2011), and communication/journalism (Rockler 2006; Schudson 2008). Nonetheless I contend the development of students' sociological imagination is the learning

outcome that distinguishes sociology from all other disciplines. Fujieda (2009) claims it is the sociological imagination that distinguishes our discipline from others, particularly other social sciences. Therefore, whatever problem or problems undermine students' development of their sociological imagination is the significant pedagogical challenge in sociology.

WHY IS TEACHING THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION CENTRAL TO SOCIOLOGY?

Widely seen by sociologists as “a universal statement of the distinctiveness of sociology” (Brewer 2004:319), Mills’ *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) is analogous to Durkheim’s *Suicide* ([1897] 1951), because, like Durkheim, Mills is arguing that sociology makes a contribution to knowledge that is distinct from all other disciplines. Kraetzer (1991) called *The Sociological Imagination*, “the statement of metasociology of a sociologist par excellence” (289). Tilman (1989) concluded “sociology has not been the same since its publication” (287). However, now more than 55 years later, many fail to realize that *The Sociological Imagination* was largely dismissed by critics upon its publication (see Brewer 2004) and continues to be dismissed by some critics (see, for example, Denzin 1990). Nonetheless, *The Sociological Imagination*, both as a book and as a skill to be developed in students, has come to be defined as central to the discipline of sociology.

Hazzard (1991), following lead of Berger (1963) and Macionis (1990), argues the essential task of sociology is “to make society visible” so that we can comprehend how individuals think, feel, and act within context of social forces. One can make the argument this is the sociological imagination and that the central task of sociology as an academic discipline is to develop students’ sociological imagination. I suspect that there are few who would argue against the importance of the development of this skill—even if they would not necessarily declare the development of a sociological imagination to be the single most important outcome of sociological learning, they would probably rank it among the top priorities. In fact, many faculty members begin their introductory sociology course by having students read the first chapter (or excerpts) of *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) titled, “The Promise.”

The editors (Scanlan and Grauerholz 2009:2) of a special volume of *Teaching Sociology*, which sought to assess the impact of *The Sociological Imagination* 50 years after its publication, concluded that the sociological imagination “provides a foundation for independent, lifelong learning and analysis”. Even those who criticize the way sociology has developed as a field point back to the sociological imagination as providing a basis for addressing its shortcomings. For example, Phillips, Kincaid, and Scheff (2002) critique sociology for having failed to achieve cumulative development and, instead, breaking down into endless specialties. Yet the title of their book, *Toward a Sociological Imagination: Bridging Specialized Fields*, implies that the sociological imagination may be the thread that can weave our patchwork discipline together.

WHY IS SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION DIFFICULT FOR INSTRUCTORS TO CONVEY?

If the sociological imagination is widely accepted as central to sociology as a discipline, what makes it so difficult to teach? Why should we consider the challenge of developing a sociological imagination to be sociology's special pedagogical challenge?

One difficulty is that sociologists do not have a clear consensus on just what is meant by developing a sociological imagination. Eckstein, Delaney, and Schoenike (1995:353) concluded that while sociologists "toss [it] around like quarters in a casino", there is actually little agreement on the term's meaning. Dandaneau (2009) argues that while the sociological imagination is often cited, it is rarely understood. Dandaneau, who authored a supplementary text (2001) with the expressed goal of developing the sociological imagination in undergraduates, concludes teaching the sociological imagination is "so utterly challenging, so nearly impossible" (2009:9). Hironimus-Wendt and Wallace (2009), for example, have a different emphasis in their understanding of the sociological imagination when they argue that teaching "social responsibility" is central to sociological imagination. They stress the importance of opportunities to apply and practice social responsibility in order to develop a sociological imagination. In doing so, students are provided with a meaningful purpose for developing their sociological imaginations. Eckstein et al. (1995) account for students' difficulties in developing a sociological imagination by ascribing much of the blame on sociologists' lack of consensus on what it means to have developed one.

Dandaneau (2009:15), who argues that the sociological imagination is "the name Mills gave to enlightened self-consciousness of humanity's self-formative potential", is difficult to develop, given the social structure of modern higher education. The modern classroom, set within the context of the commercialized and bureaucratized higher education, is too often filled with under-prepared and poorly motivated undergraduate students who define themselves as consumers of a "lifeless educational product" (9). He concludes that the typical college or university classroom is not a setting that facilitates transforming everyday consciousness into sociological self-consciousness.

A third reason developing students' sociological imaginations is particularly difficult is that it is a "quality of mind" (as Mills describes it) or a "form of consciousness" (as Dandaneau describes it) rather than merely terminology or content. The sociological imagination is not simply a term whose definition can be memorized and thereby achieved. It is a skill that must be developed over time through repeated opportunities to practice it. Creating appropriate assignments that will facilitate the development of a sociological imagination is not an easy task (Bidwell 1995). Instructors must create assignments which encourage students to question what seems obvious to them, or, as Berger (1963) put it, to recognize "things are not what they seem." Traditional lectures and term-papers are not effective strategies for the development of this skill (Dandaneau 2009).

A fourth challenge in the development of students' sociological imagination is motivation. Instructors must find ways to convince students of both its importance and practical value (Dowell 2006). As noted above, Scanlan and Grauerholz (2009:2) argue that the sociological imagination "provides a foundation for independent, lifelong learning and critical analysis". While faculty can easily see the benefits of such a critical viewpoint and understand its utility, students often do not. Faculty must find ways of convincing students that the hard work and practice required to develop this quality of mind is worth the effort.

WHY IS SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION DIFFICULT FOR STUDENTS TO GRASP?

In a longitudinal study of sociology majors conducted at a large, Midwestern university, McKinney and Naseri (2011) found only minimal growth in students' understanding of and ability to use the sociological imagination across their academic careers. Calhoun (2003) concludes that most students never get there. Our efforts to assist them in making the adjustment to thinking like a sociologist fall short of their intended goal (Calhoun 2003).

Eckstein et al. (1995), in a study conducted at a private Catholic university, found that non-Catholics were more likely than Catholics to develop their sociological imagination. Similarly students who had attended a Catholic high school were less likely to develop their sociological imagination. Students who came from less privileged backgrounds were more likely to be successful. Eckstein et al. hypothesized that perhaps students who are "outsiders" in a social context may more effectively develop a sociological imagination due to their greater willingness to take a critical view of the status quo.

However, attempts to encourage the adoption of such a critical viewpoint may not be welcomed by students who may find the experience quite uncomfortable. By encouraging students to utilize a critical stance toward the status quo (which facilitates the development of a sociological imagination), we are undermining both students' sense of self and their understanding of how the world works. As Gallmeier (2005:83) has pointed out: "the majority of our students are told in their homes, in their classrooms, on television, on the Internet, and in their churches, mosques, and synagogues that we are who are, we do what we do, we become what we become, simply because we chose it".

Typically our students, like most Americans, prefer to define themselves as rugged individualists rather than as members of a culture who are influenced by the social structures which envelop them. Americans resist the notion that our behaviors, attitudes, and decisions are greatly influenced by the groups to which we belong and the interaction that takes place in those groups (Robertson 1989:2). We have been taught that "life is fair"—you (more or less) get what you deserve in life. We want to believe that if we work hard enough, we will succeed in life. To suggest that "life is not fair," that some people are born on "third base" while others are born with two strikes against them, strikes at the heart of our culture's ideology about the fairness of "the game of life."

When we teach the sociological imagination and encourage its development, we must recognize that the sociological imagination is different from, and often counter to, other ways of thinking (Eckstein et al. 1995). Sociology instructors must acknowledge that the sociological imagination competes with other perspectives in the community and the larger culture which students have likely adopted and may hold dear. To teach the sociological imagination is to undermine the typical American students' understanding of the world. That is an inherently uncomfortable and disturbing process. It is little wonder that students will sometimes be tempted to dismiss a sociological understanding of the world as merely someone's opinion.

Fujieda (2009) argues that students commonly hold three misconceptions about sociology which undermine the development of a sociological imagination. We, as faculty, inadvertently contribute to these misconceptions and the lack of a development of a sociological imagination through the

ways we teach and structure our curricula. According to Fujieda, students often conceive of sociology as an ideological opinion. Because it is an opinion, students are free to choose to reject a sociological view and adopt a different opinion. Because in their secondary education and, frequently, in their post-secondary education students are called upon to share their opinion, they fail to develop an understanding of critical thinking and sociological critical thinking (Grauerholz and Bouma-Holtrop 2003). If students are left with the view that any opinion carries equal weight with all other opinions, they are failing to develop higher order thinking skills and failing to develop a sociological imagination. Secondly, Fujieda argues that because we teach research methods in a course that is separated from the rest of the curriculum and rarely in a manner that links research methodologies to the sociological imagination, students conclude that research methods are techniques used to show the intellectual capacity of the researcher, not “a collective process of discovery” (Fujieda 2009:189). Research methods may be seen as ways of manipulating the evidence to affirm the researcher’s biases. Finally, sociologists’ approach to teaching theory also discourages the development of higher order thinking and the sociological imagination. Because theory is also commonly taught as a course separate from the rest of the curriculum and other courses rarely discuss the relevance of theory for the subject matter, students easily conclude that theory is simply another opinion. In sum, the way sociologists typically organize the curriculum, divorcing theory and methods from substantive content courses, undermines the opportunity for students to develop higher order thinking skills and the sociological imagination, in particular.

While, as noted above, Wagenaar (2004) along with Keith and Ender (2004) found little consensus regarding core content in sociology, Persell (2010) and Persell, Pfeiffer, and Syed (2007) in their study of sociological leaders’ views of what are the most important learning goals in sociology ranked “show the relevance and reality of structural factors in social life” (Persell 2010:334) as the most important goal. In addition, these sociological leaders ranked “understand the intersection of biography and history” (Persell 2010:334) as the thirteenth most important of the 30 goals. Both of these goals are central to the development of students’ sociological imaginations. If the key and most distinctive outcome of the sociology curriculum is development of a sociological imagination, how can instructors best facilitate achievement of this goal?

HOW THEN SHOULD WE TEACH?

It is much easier to say what doesn’t work in developing a sociological imagination than identifying what does work. In contrast to developing skills such as the sociological imagination, Fink (2003) argues that most college teachers’ learning goals run along the lines of students’ need to understand and remember (at least until the exam) whatever I say during class. Professors tend to focus primarily on “covering content” which typically means introducing students to as much of the disciplinary jargon as possible in what Fink refers to as an information dump. The “information dump” approach of telling students lots of content leads to an overreliance on lecture because lecture is an efficient means of “telling” content. However, saying something in class does not mean that anyone is learning anything, nor does it automatically lead to higher order thinking skills such as the sociological imagination.

Weimer (2013) suggests that our obsessive focus on “covering content” is actually a barrier to student learning. We turn to lecture as our primarily pedagogical strategy because it allows us to cover content efficiently, despite its limitations in facilitating learning or skill development. Even when they are attentive and motivated, students tend to adopt a superficial approach to learning—temporarily memorizing content with little understanding of it—in response to a faculty members’ focus on covering content through extensive reliance on lecture.

So what pedagogical strategies are helpful when it comes to facilitating the development of a sociological imagination? Dandaneau suggests that while reading the average textbook or journal article is unlikely to be helpful, forms of Eastern meditation might work (2009:12). In the pages of the American Sociological Association journal, *Teaching Sociology*, an abundance of specific pedagogical techniques for teaching the sociological imagination is recommended. These include having students write book reviews (Cadwallader and Scarboro 1982), lifestories (Stoddart 1991), sociological autobiographies (Kebede 2009), or journals (Keller 1982; Wagenaar 1984); analyze their own garbage (Dowell 2006); and the use of role-playing games (Simpson and Elias 2011). Gallmeier (2005) describes three strategies for developing the sociological imagination: storytelling—which allows students to see the relevance of a sociological imagination for understanding their life experiences; use of a “sociological magic wand”—asking students to take roles with others different from themselves; and “shock-and-awe,”—sharing particularly riveting accounts of the sociological research which are startling, surprising, or counter-intuitive. Hoop (2009) also stressed the use of students’ “lived experience” through “ill-defined” problems as a pedagogical strategy. Likewise Fujieda (2009) advocates for challenging students to analyze, interpret, and present their own understandings and experiences from a sociological perspective. Hironimus-Wendt and Wallace (2009) and Huisman (2010) stress the importance of opportunities to apply and practice the sociological imagination through social responsibility related activities such as service learning. On the surface, these seem to be a hodge-podge of suggested strategies. What ties them together and makes them effective?

The first thing to recognize in developing pedagogical strategies is that engaged students learn more than unengaged students. In their reviews of 30 years of research on learning in higher education, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, 2005) conclude that both students’ gains in factual knowledge (the “content”) and in development of intellectual and cognitive skills (such as the sociological imagination) “is determined by the extent of the students’ interaction with faculty members and student peers in and out of the classroom” (Pascarella and Terenzini 1991:620). When faculty members focus on helping students develop an understanding of the material and are committed to assisting students in mastering material at a deeper level, students begin to engage in their learning in deeper ways that lead to their autonomy and independence as learners (Weimer 2013).

Given that the sociological imagination is a type of critical thinking skill, we need to consider what does the scholarship of teaching and learning say about how to most effectively develop such skills in undergraduates? The answer is that students are more likely to develop cognitive skills like the sociological imagination when they are working collaboratively. In his research on the development of critical thinking skills among college students, Brookfield (2012: 56) found that

approximately 80 percent of participants cited that the most helpful moments in developing critical thinking skills occurred in the context of small group activities. Similarly, in his review of the evidence in support of active learning strategies, Michael (2006: 160–165) concludes that individuals learn more when they learn with others than when they learn alone. Michael (2006) also argues that meaningful learning is facilitated by articulating explanations, whether to one's self, peers, or teachers. Constructing these explanations also gives students practice in using the language of the disciplines. Too strong a focus on “covering content” therefore easily leads to pedagogical choices that undermine the development of the sociological imagination in students.

Thirdly, many of these strategies are intentional attempts to demonstrate the relevance of a sociological imagination for helping students to understand their own experience in society. Often liberal arts disciplines are dismissed as teaching that lacks “real world” relevance for students. Yet, students find sociology to have practical application to their lives and experiences. Giving students opportunity to develop a sociological imagination by applying this skill to their understanding of their own experiences can lead to greater student motivation and engagement in the sociology classroom.

To summarize, this abundance of specific pedagogical techniques for facilitating the sociological imagination has three things in common. First, they focus on engaging students through active learning strategies rather than being instructor-centric strategies which lead to passivity in students. Second, they are strategies that provide students with the opportunity to learn collectively, from each other as well as from the professor. Third, they provide opportunities for students to practice and develop their sociological imaginations by applying it to their own experiences—as Mills would say, understanding how biography is influenced by history and social structure.

CONCLUSION

In 2005 Lee Shulman, then president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, proposed that in multiple professions there existed what he called “signature pedagogies.” Signature pedagogies, per Shulman, are “types of teaching that organize fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions” (52). Through these signature pedagogies, future members are taught the norms of the profession. For example, medical schools utilize bedside teaching as a signature pedagogy. Law schools use a quasi-Socratic method for preparing future lawyers. Shulman (2005) contended that the professions were more likely to develop signature pedagogies than other academic disciplines because professional education is geared toward preparation for professional practice in service to others.

Picking up on the idea of signature pedagogies, Gurung, Chick, and Haynie (2009) attempted to identify signature pedagogies or “approaches to teaching disciplinary habits of mind” in a range of disciplines beyond the traditional professions. The notion that particular disciplines seek to teach particular “habits of mind” is a helpful idea. Not surprisingly, Fujieda (2009), the sociologist who contributed to the Gurung et al. (2009) volume, argued that the sociological imagination is the particular sociological habit of mind our discipline seeks to teach. In sociology, there is not a single signature pedagogy which facilitates the development of this “habit of mind”—the sociological imagination. However, there are many pedagogical strategies available to us who are

focused on engaging students, helping students learn collectively, and provide opportunity to practice the application of a sociological imagination to their own experiences. The effectiveness of these approaches is well documented by 30 years of research in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Therefore, as we design our courses and our curricula, we should begin with the end in mind—the development of students’ sociological imaginations.

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