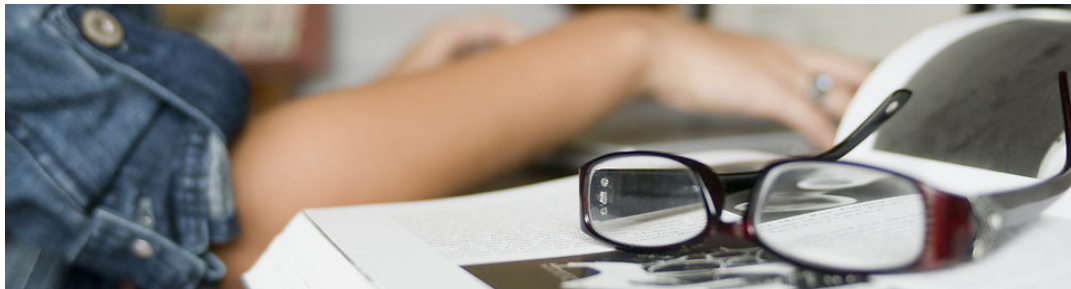


The Publicizer

*Newsletter of the ASA Section on
Sociological Practice and Public Sociology*

Involving Undergraduates in Research

By: Audrey Devine-Eller
Grinnell College/College of St. Scholastica



Getting undergraduates involved in research that matters is both a leap of faith and the right thing to do. For students, working with their professors on real projects – not just pedagogical exercises – is one of the true benefits of teacher-scholar education. Students' growth as researchers and sociologists can be dramatic, and students can contribute in substantial ways to faculty research projects. First, I'll describe a four-year-long project I conducted assessing a local high school's postsecondary planning, and then I'll offer 10 takeaway tips.

The project began as I developed a new Sociology of Education course at Grinnell College. Serendipitously, I heard through the grapevine that the local high school principal was interested in assessing the post-secondary planning pathways of his students. This being precisely my area of expertise, I knew we had a match.

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Editor: Dennis P. Watson, PhD
Layout: Lisa Robison, MPH

Involving Undergraduates in Research *continued from cover*

In that first course, my students and I collaboratively designed a multi-year project. If post-secondary outcomes were of interest, we knew we needed to collect some baseline with the current 11th graders, the Class of 2014, and then follow them through graduation. Students in that course helped me think through the structure of the project as a whole, assess what kinds of baseline data would need to be collected, and begin to draft IRB protocols. Their excitement in developing a project like this was infectious, and they had ideas that shaped the research trajectory.

The following semester, I taught another section of Soc of Ed on an experimental course schedule, which allowed a small class to meet intensively for a week prior to the regular start date. During this week, I did intensive methodological training with students: we drafted and revised interview protocols, learned about interview technique and conducted practice interviews. It was eye-opening to students as sociological practitioners to comb through interview questions collaboratively: they had no idea how much thought goes to phrasing, order, content of questions, and anticipation of the actual interview setting! It was a useful challenge for them to refract their academic understandings of educational inequalities back into questions they were going to ask real people. Because of this intensive training, students were ready to go interview high school students in September; altogether we collected about 25 interviews, which the students then got to transcribe and analyze for their final reports.

In later semesters, I worked with students in statistics and methods courses taught by my colleagues to clean, code, and analyze data. Students experienced the tedium of data entry, learned the messiness of apparently-quantitative data, and saw first-hand the importance of attention to detail. Students were able to carve out small research questions of particular interest – for example, a notable project compared foreign language study between college-affiliated and non-college-affiliated teens (teens with a parent employed at the college took significantly more foreign language courses).

At the other end of the spectrum, a few students worked with me in one-on-one research projects. These students were able to take on larger research questions, and to master a larger proportion of the data. One built an expert code book; another investigated the unusual educational pathways available in a rural small town which is also home to an elite college. A third, hoping to work for an international policy organization after graduation, compiled all the data and analysis across the project's history to distill a report for the principal.

My top-ten takeaways:

1. Aim small; you are probably underestimating the size of the project by half or more.
2. Students' excitement is infectious; allow this to bubble through the course and the curriculum.

3. Students learn an amazing amount by *doing* the research steps. Allow time to draft, revise in class, practice interviews, listen back, and collectively assess their own work. Have them draft tricky interview or survey questions, compare to each other and talk through their approaches together.
4. Let them spend the long hours coding and transcribing; this is a key part of the research process, and helps them plan more realistically for future projects – but be ready to repeatedly articulate the value of this step, lest they understand it as busywork.
5. A project related to your own research expertise or interests helps you guide the project more expertly, and also can keep you motivated when the details of arranging student participation feel overwhelming.
6. Articulate to students how their input contributes to the design, implementation, and analysis of the project; let them see their impact. For example: I used student drafts to build an interview protocol with a tricky target population; their wording was better than what I developed on my own.
7. Research outcomes or processes that are useful for an audience beyond the instructor (like a community partner) keeps the work meaningful with a real-world accountability.
8. Don't over-promise (on what timeline will you REALLY have a final report to the community partner?), but also, don't let your community partners down. Beyond the obvious problems, this can also damage future working relationships between the college and the community.
9. It's ok for students to experience joining a project mid-stream or leaving it before it ends. This mimics real-life employment experience.
10. Maximize student involvement by integrating students at a variety of stages and levels of depth.

You can read about the project around its midpoint at <http://www.grinnell.edu/news/long-term-service-learning>.

“Accruing the Benefits: Professional and Personal Growth from Project Engagement”

By: Mike Hirsch, Amy Allen, Jammie Price, & Mueni Rudd

Sociological work often provides opportunities for professional and personal growth beyond what we might expect. Professors often speak of what they learn from their students. Research often generates anomalous findings. Learning and growing is part of our profession. But how we grow often goes unexamined. We discussed the benefits of working as a team in a prior publication (Hirsch et. al., 2015). Here we consider professional and personal benefits gained from participating in a project to evaluate five faculty exchange programs between U.S. and Pakistani universities starting in the fall of 2012. Evaluations involve interviews of both Pakistani and U.S. participants. They have also included the use of questionnaires and some site visits in the U.S. and in Pakistan.

Professional Benefits

Expected

The professional benefits members of our team experienced relate to their evaluation roles and where they were in their careers at the time of their involvement. All the members of our team spoke directly with Pakistani participants, and in doing, gained some cultural competency by engaging with members of a non-Western society. Some of us drew Pakistani peers into our professional networks, along with some of the U.S. participants we interviewed.

All of us broadened and deepened our research skills. This is expressed differently for different team members. For Hirsch, the programs' Lead Evaluator, project participation required him to craft more intricate evaluation designs than previously required. For Rudd, our most junior member, project participation allowed her to conduct her first professional interviews after receiving her B.A. in sociology. She also feels more equipped to work with individuals from this region upon completing her Masters in social work.

All members improved their report writing skills by drafting reports and/or by contributing their editing talents. Given the number of reports (as many as eight in a year) written, our report production speed improved. Allen, Price, Rudd and Hirsch continue to share their work annually at conferences. Both Hirsch and Price traveled to different locations in the U.S. to conduct site interviews, strengthening relationships with both U.S. and Pakistani participants.

Unforeseen

The most unexpected benefit from our involvement in these programs may be the positive response our work received among the larger exchange community. Hirsch was first approached in 2012 to evaluate one three-year exchange program. Later, several different exchange project sponsors asked us to provide evaluation proposals. We have now worked on five and hope for more.

The evaluation projects brought invaluable international travel opportunities for our team members. Hirsch and Allen were invited to conduct a week's worth of applied research workshops at Fatimah Jinnah Women University (FJWU) in Rawalpindi in May of 2015. Hirsch also presented a research paper coauthored with a FJWU faculty member at an international conference hosted by FJWU during their visit. Allen and Hirsch's evaluation of an exchange program involving FJWU generated the workshop invitation.

During a March 2016 site visit to the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) in Karachi, Pakistan, Hirsch met and befriended the academy's Director. After several long discussions, we decided that our team would undertake some gratis marketing research for NAPA to better position the academy for government funding. The proposed market study, though outside of our normal research boundaries, is still well within our ability and promises to open even more research opportunities for us in Pakistan.

The exchange programs we're evaluating are funded by the U.S. Department of State and are overseen by the U.S. Consulate in Pakistan. Allen and Hirsch met U.S. Cultural Attaches' while in Pakistan. They asked the Attaches to allow us to do a meta-analysis of the program evaluations that have been conducted of the twenty-plus exchanges done in Pakistan over the past several years. While this may prove to be only an academic exercise, i.e., a study shared at professional conferences and perhaps published in a sociology journal, we hope to delineate best practice for the U.S. Department of State.

Hirsch recently met with the University Partnership and Program Evaluation Coordinator for Afghanistan/Pakistan to discuss this research proposal. In the conversation it was suggested that the seven U.S./Afghanistan exchange programs also be added to the study. We are now hopeful that we will be starting a meta-analysis of 29 programs in the next few months.

As a result of his involvement in these projects, Hirsch initiated a research project on India-Pakistan reconciliation with a government professor in India and a war and diplomatic studies professor in Pakistan. This is a new area of research for him. He and his colleagues submitted a proposal to present a paper on this in Pakistan in September. When she completes her Master's degree in applied sociology, Allen plans to join in on this project.

Personal Growth

Participation in this project enhanced our sensitivity to Pakistani and Muslim culture and traditions. This expanded into our personal lives as our listening sharpens when we hear Pakistan mentioned in the news or in conversation. When scanning for music on the radio, we are now more likely to stop when we hear World music. We are more likely to go to restaurants which serve south Asian cuisine. Allen and Hirsch wear clothing from the region to work. We engage in Facebook banter with our Pakistani friends. Further, we spend time with some of the U.S. program participants who have now also become friends.

Currently we are working to find funding for our new friends to come to the U.S. and present at the meetings of the Association of Applied and Clinical Sociology in October, an organization to which we all belong. Like any indelible life experience, this work has changed who we are and to some extent, how our family and friends view us. We hope this growth will continue as we continue our engagement in these projects.

Hirsch, Michael L., Tina Quartaroli, Jammie Price, and Amy Allen. 2015. "Teaming Up: Program Evaluation through Synergistic Collaboration." *The American Sociologist*: 46(4)

“Beyond Academia”

By: Leora Lawton, PhD



Whether it is by choice or by necessity that you may be considering a career off the tenure-track, often one faces very little information regarding possibilities or strategies for entrance. As more and more universities and academic departments recognize that there are fewer tenure-track positions than there are candidates, one response is to prepare PhD candidates for meaningful careers in other contexts. To meet this need, Beyond Academia, a student-run program at the University of California, Berkeley, emerged in 2012 and recently held its fifth annual workshop and conference event. The model is so successful that several universities across the country are taking notice and asking for help in running similar programs in their institutions.

It consists of one or two days of panels, with local alumni with PhDs from Berkeley or elsewhere who sit on panels or run workshops on topics ranging from ‘data and analytics’, ‘Academic professions’, ‘working in high tech’, ‘starting your own business’, to ‘interview skills’, ‘writing a resume, not a CV’. Each session has time for Q&A, and there are several networking breaks. Because these career paths are so divergent from what most faculty advisors have experienced, panelists and speakers work in many other contexts and bring a perspective otherwise unavailable. Moreover, it doesn’t completely matter which discipline: most of the patterns and guidance transfers. I have twice served on these panels, last year in the data and analytics panel, and this year on a panel for research and program management. The first year the conference sold out its 200 spots: it’s grown to over 300 attendees. If your institution doesn’t have a similar program, see about getting it started. As a result of graduate student efforts, Beyond Academia now has a good deal of formal institutional support from the campus.

To learn more about the Beyond Academia program and resources at Berkeley, explore the BA website: <http://www.beyondacaemia.org>.

“A Sociology Student’s Introduction to Public Health Policy”

By: Ling Tao, MA

Last year, I worked as a Research Assistant at the Center for Health Policy (CHP), which is in the Fairbanks School of Public Health at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. My work at the CHP was focused on the development of an issue brief about behavioral health disparities in Indiana. This work has been disseminated to legislators, government employees, and advocacy groups as part of Indiana’s State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW). The SEOW is a composed of representatives from various government agencies and community and university partners, which is led by the CHP. The primary task of the SEOW is to develop an annual epidemiological profile of substance use and its consequences in Indiana. Before this experience, I thought my education had prepared me to mainly communicate and contribute to the sociological discipline. I did not consider how my training could apply to the field of public health.

Sociology has a long tradition of studying social (including health) inequalities, and a number of theoretical concepts in this area can be directly applied to public health practice. The application of concepts such as cultural capital, social networks, and social distance in public health research offers a more nuanced understanding of health disparities and their roots that allow professionals to formulate more appropriate strategies to address them.

This knowledge assisted me greatly as I developed the issue brief. For instance, my knowledge of sociological research on acculturation of health behaviors and how this process differs for men and women inspired me to consider issues related to immigration and immigrant communities in the policy recommendations.

My understanding of the interactions among structural factors, health behaviors, and the health care delivery system was also very useful. Using this knowledge, I formulated recommendations for policy-makers from broader perspectives. For example, some racial and ethnic minorities have higher proportions morbidity of certain illnesses but are not able to appropriately access culturally competent care delivered in their own language. Therefore, improving the health care systems is far more than having more high-tech equipment or more professional staff. Instead, it is important to recognize and address language and barriers to care.

Over the course of my year working at the CHP, I realized that sociological knowledge can be applied beyond the academe to solve real-world health problems. Young scholars studying sociology who have a passion for helping others may want to consider how their training can apply to the health and allied health professions.

Ling Tao recently graduated with her MA in Sociology from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. She wishes to pursue a Doctorate in Sociology specializing in organizational and China studies.

MEMBER UPDATES

On March 19, 2016, Johanna P. Bishop presented a paper at the most recent meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society in Boston. The title of her paper was GETTING STAKEHOLDERS TO THE ACADEMIC TABLE: SCHOLAR-PRACTITIONERS AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY BOARDS. The abstract of the paper describes the pressure to show how college majors translate to employability. According to Johanna, academic programs are scrambling for relevant data justifying their existence. The return on investment for sociology degrees has been notoriously low when looking at first-year graduates working in the non-profit sector (Dugan, 2015). However, academic programs could, and should, leverage both workplace and community relationships to help prepare students for their ‘day jobs.’

Incorporating experiences from practitioners in the field into the scholarship of academic programs can help to bridge the gap between knowledge and the workplace skills. Academic programs can enhance the academic experience by utilizing members of the practice community in an advisory capacity.

‘Advisory Boards’ made up of community practitioners can contribute knowledge and skills to academic programs to ensure that any academic program can provide job relevant learning.

The presentation explored the practice of creating and maintaining advisory boards in academic programs and described best practices in bringing scholar-practitioners to the academic table.

Johanna Bishop, Director of Behavioral Science Programs at Wilmington University. Dr. Bishop can be contacted at: Johanna.p.bishop@wilmu.edu

Harry Perlstadt, Professor Emeritus at Michigan State University, is assisting three counties with their Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs). The Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, requires hospitals to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to identify health issues encountered in a hospital’s service area as well as to develop possible strategies to address these issues, adopt an implementation plan at least every three years, and be prepared to monitor and measure its progress. The first round of CHNAs was carried out in 2012-2013. A second round begins in 2016. Harry and Travis Fojtasek, a former graduate student, were asked to review the CHNAs of eight rural hospitals. They recommended all hospitals used the same community survey instrument and scripts for focus groups and stakeholder interviews. The hospitals agreed and the data gathering is underway. The plan is to produce a CHNA for each of the eight hospitals, and then a combined CHNA for each county and the tri-county region. He is interested in hearing from others who are conducting CHNAs in rural areas.

BOOK UPDATES

Intimate Coercion: Recognition and Recovery by Marti Loring, LCSW, PhD, a member of our section, has recently been published. The foundation and dynamics of coercion is explored, along with different groups where coercion and trauma operate. Approaches to helping and treating the coerced are also developed in the book. Anyone wanting a discounted price can contact Marti at mloring@earthlink.net to request a 'coupon' from the publisher, Rowman and Littlefield.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology, October 6-8, 2016. Greenwood Village, Colorado. Theme: “Creating, Building, and Designing with Sociology.” Open to academics, policy, program and project leaders, business, health care and government professionals who use sociology, the meeting will be a point of mutual learning and growth among practitioners in the field and professionals challenged with building systems for human improvement. Other disciplines are welcome to share their strategies, projects, policies and programs for improving the human condition. This is a chance to move beyond the “Sociological Imagination” to “Sociological Creativity.” Not just “papers,” conference organizers seek innovation and creativity in content and presentation form. Includes undergraduate and graduate student paper and problem solving competitions. For more information, visit: <http://www.aacsnet.net/>.

Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS) Client Problem Solving Competition for Students

We are soliciting student teams for the AACS Client Problem Solving Competition (formerly Judith Little Problem Solving Competition), which will run concurrently with the annual conference October 6th-8th in Denver, Colorado. The AACS Client Problem Solving Competition (ACPSC) provides students with a meaningful way to exercise their sociological skills. It is a networking opportunity for participants and also provides students a professional experience they can include on their resumes. All students receive a certificate of participation. The competition begins with meeting the representative from the community agency on Thursday, October 6th, during the first session of the conference. The AACS coordinator and the organization representative will present the students with a problem. Student teams will have the remainder of the conference to develop a solution. Students are encouraged to attend conference sessions that may help them develop their solutions. Students are also encouraged to interview conference attendees for information and suggestions. Online research is also encouraged but students should not purchase any additional materials to enhance their presentations. The rubric that judges will be using will be distributed to students at that time.

Solutions are due on Saturday, October 8th, during the last session. Teams will present their solutions to an adjudicating body of judges who are AACS members and the organization representative. The solution they present should be framed as a professional (oral) report to the client organization, accompanied by a Power Point and a printed one-page executive summary. No additional materials should be bought for presentation. The winning team and an honorable mention team will be announced at the completion of the adjudication process. Winning and honorary mention team members will be recognized on the AACS website. A plaque bearing the names of the winning team and faculty advisor will be sent to their respective college or university. Each team and all its members will receive a certificate of participation and a letter from the AACS president. The winning and honorable mention recognition will be included on the individual student certificates.

Teams will be made up of 3 to 5 students with a faculty sponsor. Undergraduate and graduate student teams may enter but not on the same team and will not compete against each other at the conference. Interested faculty sponsors should contact Miriam Boeri at mboeri@bentley.edu to enter a team or receive more information for participating teams.

Annual Meeting

The 111th meeting of the American Sociological Association will take place August 20th through 23rd in Seattle, WA. Below is a list of sessions and meeting sponsored by our section, which will all occur on Monday, August 22nd. We hope to see you there!

Business meeting & Roundtable Session, 10:30 am-12:10 pm

Table 1: Policy Research

Table 2: Public Sociology Teaching and Research on Campus

Table 3: Designing and Delivering Bachelor's, Master's or PhD
Applied/Clinical/Public Sociology Programs

Table 4: Resources for Practicing Sociologists

Table 5: Thinking about a Career Outside of Academe? Meet Practicing
Sociologists

Table 6: Applied and Clinical Sociology-Using Sociology in the 21st Century:
Contributions from AACCS

Table 7: Publishing Community Engaged Scholarship

Table 8: Engaging in Engaged Scholarship with Schools and Districts

Table 9: Engaged Scholarship, Organizing, and Activism

Table 10: Graduate Training and Engaged Scholarship

Table 11: Engaged Scholarship in Chicano/a and Latino/a Communities

Table 12: Applied and Clinical Sociology-Using Sociology in the 21st Century:
Contributions from AACCS #2

Table 13: Applied and Clinical Sociology-Using Sociology in the 21st Century:
Contributions from AACCS #3

Table 14: Applied and Clinical Sociology-Using Sociology in the 21st Century:
Contributions from AACCS #4

Invited Session: Social Change and Social Justice: The Impact of Applied Sociology
Using Applied Sociology to Support Activist Organizing in Immigrant
Communities, Mindy L. Fried.

Changing Workplaces to Work for Workers: Reflections on the Work, Family and
Health Network, Erin Kelly

Moving between Research and Practice: Reflections from Educational Justice
Scholarship, Tressie Cottom

How the Other Half Lives: What's it like to be a Non-Traditional Academic
Briefing the White House?, Sarah O. Meadows

Paper Session: Practicing Public Sociology, 4:30 pm-6:10 pm

Addressing Structural Power for Bullying Prevention: A Critical Content Analysis
of the Olweus Program, Ezra Joseph Temko

Evaluating Transformation across Healthcare Homes, Brittin Wagner, Douglas R.
Wholey, & Katie White

Project Labor Agreements and Tripartite Model for Construction Project
Management Success, Marv Finkelstein & Ronda Sauget

Taking the Learning from Service-Learning into the Post-College World, Kathy
Shepherd Stolley, & Takeyra Collins

Targeting the Prime Downtrodden: The Paradox of Seeking only Vulnerable
Homeless Populations to be Housing Ready, Curtis Smith & Leon
Anderson

Section Reception, 6:30-8pm

Election Results

Congratulations to our section's newly elected officers!

Chair Elect

Melissa S. Fry, Indiana University Southeast

Council Members

Caren Arbeit, RTI International

Catherine Mobley, Clemson University

Douglas Klayman, Social Dynamics, LLC