

contribute their own experiences, points of view, and ideas to the quest.

If students are allowed to respond, as in the discussion format, they become, in effect, the teacher's collaborators, critics, and editors. Their input is particularly useful because they don't share the assumptions of the discipline, which often insulate us professors from the real world. (For further discussion of this point, see Scheff 1992).

If my argument is sound, then the key to the problem of poor teaching lies less in giving more rewards to teaching, than in changing the kind of research that we do. I realize that this is a very large order for the existing disciplines; it would mean a radical change of direction. Perhaps if we were rewarded for even attempting to deal with real world problems, improvements in teaching might quickly follow.

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REPLY TO SCHEFF

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I APPRECIATE AND WELCOME THOMAS Scheff's kind comments on my response to two reviews of *Profscam* that were published in this journal (Yamane 1994a). My "Conversation" piece was not meant to bring the debate over the relationship between teaching and research to some premature closure, but rather to stimulate further, honest discussion of the issue. Professor Scheff's essay represents the kind of continuing consideration I had hoped my own essay would provoke.

Scheff agrees with me that poor teaching is a problem in our profession, and also locates the cause of poor teaching in the conflict between teaching and research. He

extends my analysis by proposing that the conflict is not *inevitable* "but is produced by a certain *type* of research, that is, research that is oriented to what might be called problems of the discipline, rather than to problems of the rest of the world." While students are interested in and concerned with real-world problems, they are uncomprehending of, bored by, and hostile to disciplinary problems.

I think Scheff is on to something here. I have elsewhere argued that excessive focus on disciplinary concerns (narrowly defined) not only inhibits good teaching, but also creates a barrier to engagement with wider publics (Yamane 1994b). In an analysis that parallels Scheff's exactly, Robert Scott and Arnold Shore (1979) have argued that sociology "does not apply" to real-world problems because its point of departure is disciplinary interests rather than the practical concerns of those in a position to do something about the problems. Thus, the same forces that turn faculty members away from teaching will also turn them away from the type of research that would make sociology truly relevant to public issues of the day.

The choice between these two types of research, as Scheff argues, bears directly on the teaching of undergraduates. For example, one of the first choices I made when preparing to teach the introduction to sociology course for the first time was whether I would emphasize teaching students about *sociology* or teaching them about *society*. Of course, the two are related, but they are not identical, as Scheff's aforementioned distinction reveals. I chose to emphasize learning about society, and as a consequence we talk more about the reality of homelessness and poverty than about whether the "Wisconsin Model of Status Attainment" embodies technical-functionalist assumptions.

Though I have at times brought up disciplinary concerns (e.g., how sociologists are like anthropologists in their concern with culture and differ from psychologists in their understanding of socialization), these are almost uniformly the least interesting aspects of the course for students (as judged by their comments in interim course evaluations I collected). Students are most en-

gaged—and *engagement* is certainly a prerequisite for *learning*—when I give assignments that allow them to engage the social world critically. In the class, I try to build upon my students' experience of and interest in society, with the belief that if theology can be defined as "faith seeking understanding," this approach to sociology might best be described as "experience seeking understanding."

Before concluding, let me address one point on which Professor Scheff and I seem to diverge somewhat. While Scheff is correct that conflict between teaching and research is not inevitable, I maintain that there is no intrinsic, necessary relationship between doing the type of research Scheff suggests and teaching better. Teaching about society can be done just as badly as teaching about sociology (though perhaps it is easier to teach strictly disciplinary work badly).

I think the best way to describe the relationship between the practically oriented research Scheff advocates and teaching well is as an *elective affinity*. I suspect that there is an elective affinity between the disposition of faculty members who choose to do that sort of research and the disposition of those who choose to develop the ability to teach. The conjunction of these two dispositions and acquired talents in a single person is highly desirable in my view, characteristic of the faculty member who is neither a mere researcher nor solely a teacher but is a scholar. And I should say that Thomas Scheff is one of the few professors I know who can rightly bear that designation.

In closing, I would again like to express my appreciation for Professor Scheff's effort to continue the conversation on the relationship between teaching and research into which I intervened recently. Unfortunately, a dialogue between Scheff and myself cannot but come to the dead end of mutual adoration; we simply agree on too much. As much as I welcome his comments, I would welcome even more replies by Sullivan, Gilderbloom, and Donald (the original *TS* reviewers of *Profscam*), or others who agree with them. Then we might have a more provocative and sustainable dialogue. Though they declined an earlier offer to comment on my essay, I certainly do not

want to interpret Sullivan, Gilderbloom, and Donald's recent silence on this matter as indicating they agree with me. I'm sure the pages of *Teaching Sociology* remain open to them, or to their allies, should they care to carry this conversation forward.

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THE LABELING PERSPECTIVE IS FAR FROM ABANDONED IN MODERN CRIMINOLOGY: COMMENT ON WRIGHT

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THE JANUARY 1994, ISSUE OF *TEACHING SOCIOLOGY* contained a lengthy review essay by Richard A. Wright on 20 criminology texts published from 1990 to 1992, and a single book review by Judith A. Harris of the sixth edition of one of these texts, published in 1993. As the author of the latter text, I found it very interesting to have my work reviewed twice in the same issue. Though both reviews were more or less positive ones, not surprisingly the authors made different criticisms and came to somewhat different conclusions.

I am obviously pleased that Judith Harris had only "minor" criticisms of the sixth edition of my text, and that she believed I had met my goal of producing a comprehensive, up-to-date, and well-referenced introduction to the field that is also interesting and challenging to students. This was good news because Wright was only mildly enthusiastic about the *fifth* (1990) edition, which he had reviewed. I work hard to improve every new edition over the