MSSA AKD Teaching & Learning Roundtable Handout

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Contents: Three key articles from *Teaching Sociology* on motivating students to read before attending class, including pertinent quotations and personal experiences. The articles are ordered in terms of reasons and methods of motivating students to read, and then lead to methods of achieving deep learning with students.

Hatteberg, Sarah J. and Kody Steffy. 2013. "Increasing Reading Compliance of Under-graduates: An Evaluation of Compliance Methods." *Teaching Sociology* 41: 346-352.

A. "One of the perennial challenges of teaching, especially introductory-level courses, is getting students to read" (346).
   a. 'Studies consistently show only 20-30% of students read assignments.'
   b. Grades are correlated with reading assigned material (Howard 2004)
B. Several methods exist with which to gain 'reading compliance' (see Table 2, p. 350):
   a. **Announced, or planned, reading quizzes**
   b. **Mandatory reading guides & questions**
   c. **Mandatory short writing assignments**
   d. **Mandatory journaling**
   e. *Randomly calling on students in class to answer questions*
   f. *Unannounced, "pop" quizzes*
   g. *Optional reading guides*
C. **Announced, mandatory, and/or planned** assignments are more likely to motivate students to read as compared to *random, after-the-fact,* or *optional* methods.
   a. In-class quizzes will take up much time, but will account for attendance. Online quizzes are more efficient (read, "McDonaldized"), but require randomized questions, time limits, trouble shooting, and other features to guard against cheating.
   b. Personal experience: Some students sometimes verbally announce that they resent "so much work for an Introductory Sociology course," and this might also be stated by students in instructor evaluations. Including in the course syllabus the fact that planned or mandatory pre-class reading quizzes will be used should address this matter with students before and during the semester.
D. "As quizzes tend to encourage 'surface learning' (Roberts 2011:1), we recommend using some combination of mandatory/announced strategies, including writing assignments, reading questions, and quizzes" (351).
   a. Multiple methods engage more students, but require more time of the instructor.
   b. Multiple methods activate more parts of the brain, leading to 'deep learning.'
   c. CAVEAT: This will be time consuming for instructors and students alike.

Howard, Jay R. 2004. "Just-In-Time Teaching in Sociology or How I Convinced My Students to Actually Read the Assignment." *Teaching Sociology* 32: 385-390.

    A. Web-based multiple choice and open-ended quizzes
        a. Use LMS (Blackboard, D2L, WebCT, etc.) to implement quizzes
        b. Set time limit 2 hours before class (personal exp.: set time limit 10 min. before)
            i. Incorporate student answers into the day's lesson
            ii. This requires much time and effort on the part of the instructor
            iii. May interfere with predesigned lecture plans
        c. Use limited amount of questions designed to motivate students to read
            i. One multiple choice question involving counterintuitive questions and answer sets, which exercises the sociological imagination.
            ii. One open ended question that requires students "to summarize or synthesize information from the reading" (387).

    B. Pros and Cons
        a. LMS, web-based systems
            i. Automatically grade some, but not all, items.
            ii. Can be used over multiple semesters, but takes time initially to set up
            iii. Sometimes glitches interfere with students' abilities to take quizzes
            iv. The "digital divide" may not allow for all students to use LMS
        b. Quizzes before class
            i. Motivate students to actually read the material, but it does not necessarily initiate deep learning; therefore, use multiple types of assessment items.
            ii. Incentivizes students to scan and use short-term memory.
                1. Use multiple assessment types, but also add "all of the above" and "none of the above" to every multiple choice item.
                2. Set a time limit of about 1 minute per item (i.e. 10 for 10 items, but about 20 minutes for 30 items).

Roberts, Judith C. and Keith A. Roberts. 2008. "Deep Reading, Cost/Benefit, and the Construction of Meaning: Enhancing Reading Comprehension and Deep Learning in Sociology Courses." *Teaching Sociology* 36: 125-140.

    A. Quizzes save instructors time, but encourage 'surface learning.'
        a. Surface learning involves episodic, short-term memory.
        b. Deep learning involves semantic, meaningful long-term memory that is transformative to students' perspectives (e.g. adopting the sociological imagination/perspective rather than memorizing terms and concepts).
    B. How do we encourage 'deep learning' through 'deep reading' without spending time explicitly teaching these things? Answer: Provide multiple, open-ended assessments.
        a. Connecting to the Test: Visualizing, questioning, responding (linguistic; intrapersonal)—*Use at least one commonly missed item during class lecture.*
        b. Summarizing the readings and visualizing the key ideas (visual/spatial, logical mathematical, and/or linguistics)—*Ask students to do this before and during class.*
        c. Reading response journal: (verbal/linguistic; intrapersonal)
        d. Study groups (interpersonal, verbal/linguistic)
        e. Create a song, rap, and/or music video (musical, [verbal/linguistic])