Control

By Dr. David Hartmann

Sir Claude: If you haven’t the strength to impose your own terms upon life, you must accept the terms it offers you. T.S. Eliot, The Confidential Clerk (quoted in G. Vaillant, Adaptation to Life, 1977, p. 13)

That is jarringly cold when I see it in print and makes me cringe as I recall giving rather similar “advice”, though not often and always, I think, in moments of exasperation. This makes it all the worse, I realize, since it was my own inadequacy to meet the moment that made a slap out of what should have been a nudge. So the first lesson is – beware of tough love – as we always suspected, it may finally really just be an oxymoron.

The second lesson though, is that in the abstract the idea of control may indeed have something to do with adaptation and happiness. And that brings us round to relevance, circuitously as usual in these columns, because after all education has something to do with adaptation and, all else being equal, it might as well have something to do with happiness. Indeed, if what is enacted in education does affect the adaptive capacity of the student, we have perhaps the most powerful of many important reasons to take our part in this enterprise seriously.
Universities may be neatly summarized as an audacious attempt to nurture our collective capacity to do three things which are roughly coincident with three properly human stances toward the world: to appreciate, to understand and to change. These stances must always be taken provisionally, always with respect and always with a humble recognition that you (and all of us similarly striving) have probably got it wrong. But this is, to be sure, our most serious business and our main justification.

To be blunt, that a student does or does not remember some link of a sociological narrative is of little importance: Schleiermacher begat Dilthey begat Weber, … meh. And for reasons good and bad even “facts” are not considered so stubborn as they once were so knowledge of the underappreciated facts of social life, however ameliorative, is not lasting sustenance. Sociological perspectives and social research methods, those processes that constitute themselves and their attendant facts, are more generally useful but what is it that makes them so? It is precisely the potential for adaptation – for application in new and to some extent unforeseen circumstances. In a word, it is the potential to be applied and, as a characteristic of a student, that is properly part of what can be called the student’s capacity.

So our goal – the student’s and ours – is to build the capacity of the student so that he or she can go out and think and act more adaptively than would have been the case without the sojourn through our academy. That’s not bad, I propose, as a way of thinking about what we are here for - what we are about - and there are many implications or paths of implications that can be followed from this premise. Fortunately for you, I have not the time or space to trace even a part of that here. But one core or foundational implication can be singled out.

What we are most centrally after in teaching and learning at the advanced levels is a sort of grounded independence. There are lots of terms that circle around this idea: critical thinking, independent learning, problem solving capacity, openness to alternative perspectives, … But they all have to do with the hope that the learner can do something in the world. And that leads to the core principle I had in mind. Application is not a useful part of thinking and of education – a sort of clarifying experience. It is not an example in a theory class or an internship at the end of the curriculum. It is the essential core and constitution of understanding itself. Sociology, or any discipline, is best thought of a form of understanding and understanding is non-existent, it is not possible, without application. Gadamer is insistent on this and I’ll give him the last word: “Application is neither a subsequent nor merely an occasional part of the phenomenon of understanding, but co-determines it as a whole from the beginning.” Truth and Method 1989, p. 324.

We are here to appreciate and to understand and sometimes seek to affect our world. In many ways, we create our worlds through these processes and there is no doubt that we can do a better job than we have. At the end of the day, that is the mission of the university and of its constituent units. I wish we were better at it but I am proud to be part of the effort.

This particular newsletter highlights some of the real success stories – the outstanding students - in our departmental capacity building operations. I get to admire these folks up close and every day. Now is your chance - read on and appreciate what really impressive accomplishment is going on around here.
Dr. Gu met a young Burmese lady during her fieldwork in Battle Creek a week ago. **Rebeca Tani** graduated from our department (CJ major) in **December 2018**. She recently became the first Burmese American police officer in the United States!

Her story was reported in January’s **Battle Creek Shopper News**. See [https://issuu.com/j-adgraphics/docs/shopper012419](https://issuu.com/j-adgraphics/docs/shopper012419) (pages 8-9).

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**Dr. Whitney DeCamp**


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**Dr. Jessse Smith**

Doris Burris-Kitchen, PhD, 1995
I am the Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice at Tennessee State University. In 2018, I published an article titled “Short Rage Revisited” in the American International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol. 4 No. 4; August 2018.

Monica M. White, PhD, 1998
I am Associate Professor of Environmental Justice at University of Wisconsin-Madison. I hold a joint appointment in the Department of Community and Environmental Sociology and the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies. I am the first Black woman to earn tenure in both the College of Agricultural Life Sciences (1888) and the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies (1970). My book, Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement, came out this year published with University of North Carolina Press.

Linda Marie Robin, PhD, 1998
I am a tenured full professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ. I have published many book chapters and journal articles, and most recently finished a book, co-authored with Dr. Marianne Nielsen, titled "Colonialism is Crime" outlining the effects of colonialism on Indigenous peoples in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The book is being published by Rutgers University Press, and will be in print August, 2019. Our department works closely with the Department of Applied Indigenous Studies, and I am one of the Founding Faculty for the new Indian Country Criminal Justice (ICCJ) major at NAU. The ICCJ major will be available to students this coming fall. This is an innovative, interdisciplinary degree that will educate students on critical dimensions of criminal justice in Indian Country. This unique degree is the only one of its kind in the nation focusing on specialized knowledge required to navigate specific federal and Indian laws regarding social and legal issues on American Indian lands and in American Indian communities.

Janelle Wilson, PhD, 1995
I have been working with a Math Professor, Carmen Latterell, who is my best friend. When I moved to Duluth from Kalamazoo to be an assistant professor of sociology at UMD, we became friends. She was an instructor in the Department of Mathematics & Statistics at UMD. We found a shared interest in similar areas – namely, learning theories.

Collaborative work between a mathematician and a sociologist isn’t typically expected, but we discovered common interests that have resulted in (to date) 11 published articles and presentations. Our interest is in how both math and the profession of mathematician are viewed in popular culture.

Carmen is concerned with recruiting people into the field of mathematics, demonstrating to students that excelling in mathematics need not be viewed as out of their reach. She prepares teachers at the elementary and secondary levels to teach math in ways that attract students’ interests and aptitudes. My work is in the field of social psychology and my research interests are the sociology of everyday life, nostalgia, and generational identity.

Our research agenda is to better understand how students (elementary, middle, high school, and college levels) conceptualize math and their comfort level and competency with math. The methodologies we have employed are commonly used in social sciences – e.g., surveys, semantic differentials, content analysis, and qualitative approaches such as collecting narrative data.

We have been collecting “Math Autobiographies.” My sociological research revolves around memory, identity, and the construction of meaning. The data can tell us a great deal about the influence of previous experiences and the role of individuals in shaping the way they see and feel about math.

It's been quite a privilege to work with my best friend on research that we find fascinating and important!
Angie Evans, PhD, 2000
I am the Director of Institutional Research at Southwestern Michigan College (small rural community college in Southwest Michigan). I’ve been at the college for nearly 20 years and in institutional research for 13 years. It’s a job I love where I get to routinely use my methods and basic statistical skills (though I sure wish I had time to do more advanced level work). Those days in the Kercher Center have come in very handy for survey development and administration. Hope everyone is doing well! Never thought I would say this, but I do miss having time to read soc and crim theory and/or research. A more personal role includes being mom to 10 and 15 year old boys (learned a lot about the nature/nurture debate there! whoa!) and I’m not sure how THAT much time has gone by. My best to all.

Laura Finley, PhD, 2002
I was just promoted to full professor at Barry University, Miami Shores, FL. I have published 26 books and am series editor for two publications, along with more than 30 peer-reviewed journal articles. I also serve on the boards of four non-profit organizations working on peace, social justice and human rights issues.

Rick Matthews, PhD, 1997
Rick is Professor and Chair of the Sociology and Criminal Justice Department at Carthage College, Kenosha, WI. For the past several years he has been doing ethnographic fieldwork on the martial art of Brazilian Jujitsu. His recent publications with Steve Lyng include book chapters on the role that trust plays in sparring, and how martial artists manage risk while training. During the spring semester of 2020, he will be on sabbatical to collect ethnographic data on the ways that conscious thought shapes embodied action among Brazilian Jujitsu black belts.

Yashica Williams, PhD, 2006
Yashica is the Associate Professor and Department Chair of the Department of Sociology and Family Studies at The University of North Alabama.

Yashica Williams (cont.)
Dr. Williams has received the following honors and awards at the University of North Alabama. Outstanding Department Chair Award (2018). College of Arts and Sciences, University of North Alabama. Department Award for Diversity and Inclusion Award (2016). College of Arts and Sciences, University of North Alabama Department Award for Community Engagement Award (2015). College of Arts and Sciences, University of North Alabama.

Her areas of interest are: Juvenile Delinquency; Criminology; Family Violence; Gender-Based Violence; Victimology; Gender and Crime; Media and Crime; Inequality; Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender.

Michael Klemp-North, PhD, 2009
I have taken the atypical route of a PhD student from Western. After receiving my PhD I left my teaching position at Ferris State University and moved to Wisconsin to teach at Northcentral Technical College in Wausau and helped care for my father who was diagnosed with ALS during my doctoral studies; in addition to teaching adjunct for UW-Platteville. In 2012 I left academia and became the Director of Outdoor Ministry at Pilgrim Center which is a year round conference center and youth camp. During my tenure there we completed a 3 million dollar capital campaign and moved the program from running a deficit to a sustainable model. In 2017 I left the camping world to move back to Wausau and become the Director of Operations for Hsu’s Ginseng Enterprises. I currently oversee our day to day operations in the United States and Canada which includes ensuring compliance with the multiple governmental agencies such as the FDA, Customs, and FTC. I continue to teach at UW-Platteville in their criminal justice program.

David Piacenti, PhD, 2009
I’m an Associate Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Metropolitan State University of Denver. I am currently performing research on an Italian-Mexican community in Mexico.
Emily Lenning, PhD, 2008

I am currently a full Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at Fayetteville State University, a historically Black college or university (HBCU) in Fayetteville, North Carolina. I have over 50 peer-reviewed articles, books, book chapters, presentations, and invited lectures in the areas of state crime, state-sanctioned violence against women, media & crime, creative pedagogy, and Queer criminology. In 2016 my book Queer Criminology (co-authored with WMU alum Carrie L. Buist) won the Book Award from the American Society of Criminology's Division on Critical Criminology, and I was also awarded the 2017-2018 UNC Board of Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. I am a founding board member for Fayetteville PRIDE, a non-profit organization that serves the LGBTQ* citizens of Fayetteville, North Carolina, and in 2013 I co-founded FSU's Safezone Office, making FSU the 3rd HBCU in the entire country to have an office or center to serve it's LGBTQ* students. Fayetteville State in Teaching Award Recipient.

Adrienne Trier-Bieniek, PhD, 2011

Adrienne Trier-Bieniek, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology at Valencia College, Orlando, FL has published several books including Feminist Theory and Pop Culture (Sense, 2015), and Sing Us a Song, Piano Woman: Female Fans and the Music of Tori Amos (Scarecrow, 2013). Adrienne recently added one more book to her vita, The Politics of Gender (Teaching Gender), Published by Brill Sense, 2018.

Darrick Brake, PhD

I am a tenure track professor at West Liberty University. I have invented and created a handful of new courses never offered. From the first week of August leading into Summer II I will have 12 publications spanning symbolic interactionism textbooks, to global terrorism, human trafficking, terrorism, finance policy, social psychology, human rights violations, and a lot of other areas.

I am also organizing the first GEMS training session in West Virginia history! It is a program that trains professionals to communicate, interact with, and provide resources for child sex trafficking victims. I am a part of the Northern Panhandle Human Trafficking Coalition, the State of West Virginia Human Trafficking Task Force, partner with the YWCA as a financial partner, and work directly with the U.S. District Attorney's Office.

My fiancée Kayla and I are planning to move into a house in West Liberty, WV. We have a wedding date of October 12th, 2019 and have made most wedding plans already! I am excited that my new career lead to me finding someone so wonderful and that truly cares about me. She is very involved in the Methodist Church and I now attend church every Sunday and go to numerous events throughout the week which is something I enjoy and missed.

David Barry, PhD, 2012

David was recently granted tenure and serves as Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point. For the last three years, Dr. Barry has acted in the role of field coordinator for the sociology internship program. Dr. Barry continues his research in ethno-religious identity and global citizenship, most recently publishing an article in National Identities. This spring, Dr. Barry was awarded the University Leadership Mentor Award by his students.

Miranda (Qiong) Wu, MA, 2012

I am busy finishing up my dissertation and also working on the newsletter for the Sociology Department at UConn. After my dissertation defense I will be a tenure-track Assistant Professor at Central European University fall 2019. I will teach at both Vienna and Budapest campuses.

Codie Stone, PhD, 2017

Code will be starting fall 2019 with a tenure track job in Sociology at California University of Pennsylvania.
Undergraduate Students’ Honors Reception

Above: Dr. David Hartmann, Chair, Dept. of Sociology and Erica Coats, Departmental Presidential Scholar and recipient of the Robin Scholar Award.

Left: Dr. Ron Kramer, Dr. David Hartmann, Chair of the Dept. of Sociology and Charles Despins, Criminal Justice Scholar.

2018-2019 Inductees
Dr. Charles Crawford, Faculty Advisor (pictured right) inducted new members into Alpha Phi Sigma, The National Criminal Justice Honor Society. Pictured on left is Charles Despins.

Alpha Kappa Delta

Four students were inducted into Alpha Kappa Delta, The International Honor Society of Sociology, by Dr. Chien-Juh Gu, WMU Chapter Advisor (Left), Jacob Riccioni, Megan Gust, Charles Despins, Erica Coats.

Above: Dr. David Hartmann, Chair of the Dept. of Sociology and Karen Vanderweele, the Kercher Scholar for the Department of Sociology, 2018-2019.

Not Pictured

Jessica Smith, Sociology Scholar

Alonga Smith, Lloyd Braithwaite Scholarship
2018-2019 Graduate Student Awards Banquet

All-University Graduate Teaching Effectiveness Award and Department Teaching Effectiveness Award presented to Keiondra Grace.

Graduate students who have taught for our Department this year. Left to right: Dr. Susan Carlson, Dr. David Hartmann, Diane Roushanger, Ryan Castillo, Randy LaPrairie, Katherine Brown, Rhoda Marshall, Ronnie Miller, Casey Schotter.

GSA members voted Dr. Greg Howard as the Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award.

Viola Sawyer was awarded the coveted Wally Post Award for 2018-19 for service to the Department by Dr. David Hartmann.

MA Graduates for 2018-2019
Blake A. Darling, Chair: Dr. Patrick Cundiff
Samuel R. Imbody, Chair: Dr. Barry Goetz

Dr. Patrick Cundiff shares about Blake Darling’s MA thesis.

PhD Graduates for 2018-2019
Dr. Yevgeniya Leontyeva Abbot, Chair: Dr. Slava Karpov
Dr. Michael D. Berghoef, Chair: Dr. David Hartmann
Dr. Michael Maaluso, Chair: Dr. Zoann Snyder
Dr. Jessica R. Sullivan, Chair: Dr. Angie Moe

GSA members, Marina Geider and Rhoda Marshall presenting Casey Schotter (PhD Student) with Outstanding Instructor Award.

Dr. Whitney DeCamp presenting Ryan Castillo with the Departmental Level Graduate Student Research & Creative Scholar Award.
Dr. Zoann Snyder offered our Advanced Criminology course as a spring break study abroad component in Utrecht, Netherlands again this Spring 2019. Her course offered a comparative study of the U.S. and the Dutch criminal justice systems to include policing, courts, and corrections.

In collaboration with Heidi van Houten, lecturer, in the Institute for Applied Safety and Security Studies, Hogeschool Utrecht, she developed a program which incorporated formal guest lectures and professional presentations with field trips to a former prison, the International Criminal Court, and Europol.

Thank you to all alumni who shared an update with us. We love to hear from you! We love to share what you have been up to since you left WMU! Email updates to: ann.browning@wmich.edu.