

An On-Campus Homeless Shelter: The Sociological Imagination, Service-Learning, and Applied Sociology

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This paper provides a case study of a unique approach to teaching about homelessness - an on-campus winter emergency homeless shelter. This shelter provides an innovative and engaging pedagogical model tying together Mills' concept of the sociological imagination, service-learning, and applied sociology. Examples illustrate various aspects of Mills' perspective including: breaking down "us" and "them" boundaries; an understanding of structural issues; sociological praxis; making linkages and various levels of analysis; and opportunities for engaging wider audiences in the sociological perspective. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2011 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

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Understanding and addressing homelessness is challenging, especially for students who are just learning sociological concepts and perspectives. This paper provides a case study of one innovative approach to teaching about homelessness - an on-campus winter emergency homeless shelter. Hosting a homeless shelter provides a novel and engaging model tying together theory, service-learning, and applied sociology. The project is, at its very core, social theory in action as students learn to develop and apply their sociological imagination.

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