

Educational Alienation in Contemporary Culture: Addressing Challenges to Students' Socialization into the Major

Ray Muller and S. Hooshang Pazaki¹

“At first when I found out I had to take sociology as a major ...I was angered because ...I was told by my peers that [sociology] was not only common sense, but a major that disregarded academic integrity and was merely an easy ride through college.”

Anonymous Sociology Major

In response to a lack of adequate socialization of sociology students into the major, our department developed and recently instituted a new course entitled *Sociological Inquiry*. In our experience, many of our majors do not have a genuine interest and understanding of sociology and the sociological perspective. Our limited experience in teaching *Sociological Inquiry* does, however, point to some initial success in helping students develop a deeper appreciation for the discipline. We begin the paper with a brief sketch of the major cultural and structural trends contributing to the curricular and pedagogical challenges we encounter. We also propose a typology of *educational alienation* as a heuristic tool with which to explore these challenges and to discuss the rationale for developing *Sociological Inquiry*. In closing, we explore the limitations of the course as it is currently taught and consider how one might best address these limitations in the semesters to come. [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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