SOC 402: EDUCATION PRACTICUM

COURSE STRUCTURE

Students enrolled in the Sociology of Education Practicum work three hours/week for a minimum of 24 hours for the quarter at the school of their choice (determined in the first week of class) aiding taxed teachers and helping struggling students overcome academic problems. In addition to tutoring, students attend a two-hour seminar each week to share teaching experiences, discuss current research in education, and develop research projects. Students also will interact with school administrators, teachers, counselors, and community members. The course serves as a good foundation for a career in education.

HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY’S PRACTICUM IN EDUCATION

UW Sociology's Practicum in Education can be traced back to 1999 when the Seattle Police Department received a grant to study the linkage between juvenile crime and truancy in Aki Kurose middle school. UW sociology graduate student, Ted Welser, designed the truancy study research plan. During the course of the study, he decided to incorporate UW sociology undergraduates as tutors in the study and intervention project.

From conversations with teachers and survey data, Welser saw a need for a program that worked to support taxed teachers and to improve struggling students' academic performance. As students progressed through middle school, severe academic problems could lead to feelings of isolation, inadequacy, and embarrassment and eventually affect student absence rates. Along with sociology graduate students Bruce Hoffman and Jon Agnone in collaboration with the YMCA, Welser placed UW sociology majors in 5th and 6th grade classes to work with students with academic problems. On UW campus, sociology tutors attended a weekly seminar led by sociology graduate students.

Nearly a decade later, Sociology's Practicum in Education is now an integrated part of our undergraduate program. Along with Aki Kurose, Madrona K-8 has joined as a partnering school, as well as select high schools served by MESA. Plans are in the works to expand into others. Currently, 45-50 tutors visit these schools each quarter to aide teachers four hours per week. Students continue to attend a weekly seminar where they discuss their teaching experiences in relation to current sociological readings and work on research projects.

This course continues its long-standing service learning partnership with Aki Kurose Middle School, Madrona K-8, and recently Jane Addams K-8 and the Seattle Bilingual Orientation Center. These schools serve extremely diverse student populations, including children from families who have recently emigrated to the U.S. and from families at or below the poverty level.

Students will have the added opportunity to tutor at select high schools through the Urban League Scholars and MESA (Math, Engineering, Science Achievement) programs.