The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Teaching Sociology: 1973–2009

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Abstract

This article updates and extends research by Baker and Chin, who tracked changes in studies published in *Teaching Sociology* from 1973 to 1983 (Baker) and 1984 to 1999 (Chin). The current study traces manuscripts published in *Teaching Sociology* from 2000 to 2009. We examine both who publishes in the journal and what gets published. In particular, we explore change in the systematic assessment of teaching methods and techniques since Baker's and Chin's studies and the extent to which publications in *Teaching Sociology* reflect improved assessment. We find that while there has been improvement, not all articles reflect the growing scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) movement. While the mission of *Teaching Sociology* is to publish materials that would be "helpful to the discipline's teachers" (see the journal's mission statement at http://asanet.org/journals/ts/index.cfm), the most useful information is arguably that which is supported by the kind of systematic assessment that SoTL requires. We also discuss implications for assessment and sociological SoTL.

Keywords

scholarship of teaching and learning, SoTL journals, learning outcomes

The scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) has occupied a position of increasing centrality in the landscape of academia since the publication of *Scholarship Reconsidered* by Ernest Boyer in 1990. The number of excellent examples of SoTL has increased significantly; some of the more useful examples include McKinney (2007) and Weimer (2006), who chart the landscape of SoTL in higher education and, importantly, how to do it. The growing presence of SoTL is due to the fact that not only almost all faculty teach but also most institutions of higher education must concern themselves with student learning assessment, that is, demonstrating that the pedagogy being employed and the curricula that guide these techniques are in fact preparing students for life after college with skills they did not possess when their studies began (Chin, Senter, and Spalter-Roth 2011).

As a discipline, sociology has been at the forefront of the SoTL movement (Mauksch and Howery 1986). As an indicator of interest in scholarly teaching and SoTL in sociology, the American Sociological Association's (ASA's) Section on Teaching and Learning had 747 members in 2010, making it the 13th-largest section out of 48 in the association. Furthermore, more members of the ASA subscribed to *Teaching Sociology* in 2010 than to any other ASA quarterly except *Contexts*. This is due in part to the fact that *Teaching Sociology* is

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highly regarded both inside and outside sociology as a leader for advancing SoTL (Pike 2011).

One metric of the extent to which SoTL has permeated the discipline is trends in scholarly articles published in *Teaching Sociology,* sociology's flagship SoTL journal. That was the premise of an article Baker (1985) published in *Teaching Sociology,* titled "Does the Sociology of Teaching Inform *Teaching Sociology*?" Baker, one of the first editors of *Teaching Sociology,* examined the first decade of articles published in *Teaching Sociology* (1973–1983) to see if they were informed by what he called the "sociology of teaching." He concluded that teachers of sociology (performing what we now call SoTL) could learn a lot from the sociology of teaching, specifically that which was directed toward the sociology of higher education.[1]

It is important to note that the studies Baker (1985) analyzed were published mostly within what Howard (2010:81) refers to as the "Innovation and Implementation" phase of the SoTL movement (1960–1980) and in the very early years of the "Institutionalization of Teaching and Learning" phase (1980–present). At the historical moment in which Baker wrote, it is no surprise that he found the methodological rigor and theoretical grounding that characterized early publications inadequate. Baker (1985) was particularly critical of sociologists who seemed to dismiss professional standards of inquiry in describing their teaching: "It is my general impression that most sociologists in the classroom are every bit as uncritical, unimaginative, and unscientific as mail clerks, stock boys, and soda jerks" (pp. 361–62). A case in point, and of particular interest to the current study, he found that most studies published in *Teaching Sociology* that described classroom teaching techniques offered little or no reliable evidence for their success. Evaluations of instructional innovations, he observed, could range in complexity from "no evaluation at all" to "systematic comparison," the latter of which employed "a comparison assessment . . . through pre- and posttests, experimental and control groups, or both" (Baker 1985: 366). In between were studies that used "casual data" or a "single system of measurement." Casual data were impressionistic comments, and as Baker (1985) found, they were almost always positive, and "sometimes verge . . . on the ridiculous" (p. 371). He proposed a "sociological law of evaluation: Casual data

(plus) ideological fervor (equals) a self-fulfilling prophecy" (Baker 1985: 371). The "single system of measurement" fared a little better in Baker's scheme (1985: 365), but he remained critical of such measures that were almost always, he claimed, pronouncements of satisfaction. Clearly, in Baker's view (and one shared by many others), systematic comparisons were superior to others, adding rigor and sophistication to inquiries into teaching and learning.

Baker's (1985) publication appeared before the SoTL movement was clearly recognized, and one of Baker's primary criticisms—that "empirical assessment of evidence is rarely rigorous" (p. 371)—has become a defining characteristic of SoTL. (Incidentally, another major criticism raised by Baker was that few sociologists ground their research in theory, and this criticism remains valid in much SoTL work; Atkinson, Buck, and Hunt 2001; Weiss 2007.) Thus, one might expect that articles published in the time period after Baker's publication would demonstrate more sophistication in evaluation. This was the impetus for a replication study (Chin 2002) that analyzed manuscripts published in *Teaching Sociology* covering the 15-year span after Baker's analysis was conducted.

In "Is There a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in *Teaching Sociology?*" Chin (2002), also a former editor of *Teaching Sociology,* focused on assessment or evaluation evident in publications in *Teaching Sociology* from 1984 to 1999. Specifically, Chin was interested in whether there had been an increase in publications that contained solid evidence of teaching effectiveness. He found that most studies "still do not provide rigorous evaluation data; only 12 percent . . . used systematic comparison" (Chin 2002: 59), virtually unchanged from Baker (1985), who found 13 percent used systematic comparison. However, Chin (2002) did find that fewer manuscripts contained no form of evaluation data. For instance, whereas 29 percent of those analyzed by Baker (1985) contained no evaluation, only 19 percent analyzed by Chin (2002) lacked such evidence. There was also an increase in articles that used a single system of comparison, for example, student evaluations (10 percent reported by Baker, 18 percent reported by Chin).

Baker (1985) also analyzed who had published in *Teaching Sociology.* Almost all authors in his

study had made only one contribution to the journal, and most departments had been represented only once. The largest proportion (40 percent) of authors was affiliated with doctoral-granting departments, followed by BA programs (34 percent) and master's-level programs (18 percent). He concluded that "the published achievements of *Teaching Sociology* represent a small-scale cottage industry that is highly diverse" (Baker 1985: 371). He noted that few individuals or departments demonstrated sustained scholarship on teaching.

These findings were confirmed by Marx and Eckberg (2005), who analyzed authorship in *Teaching Sociology* during the 1990s. They found that PhD programs outnumbered other types of programs and institutions in terms of publications in *Teaching Sociology* primarily because these programs employ such large numbers of graduate students. Indeed, they found that more than a third of *Teaching Sociology* authors were graduate students.

Chin (2002) also analyzed characteristics of authors and found little change from Baker's (1985) study. Rather than focus on the "small-scale cottage industry" angle, Chin (2002) suggested a positive spin:

> The assumption that *Teaching Sociology* is a place for graduate students and junior faculty to build on their publication records before moving on to "real" research does not seem to hold. This is important because if the scholarship of teaching and learning is to be credible, senior faculty must participate in it actively. (P. 57)

Howery (2002:155) also warned that if SoTL is conducted only or predominantly by faculty at teaching-oriented institutions, it risks being seen as "interest-group scholarship," and its respectability will suffer.

Another indicator of "respectability" that both Baker (1985) and Chin (2002) examined is the number of studies supported by grants. Both found that most authors had not received financial support for their research. Interesting to note is that the number of studies supported by grants decreased, from 15 percent (Baker 1985) to 5 percent (Chin 2002).

Together, Chin (2002) and Baker (1985) charted the landscape of SoTL within sociology in the latter half of the twentieth century, showing that over time, the discipline had come to embrace aspects of both the SoTL and the assessment movements that have transformed the academy in recent decades. The extent to which these changes have persisted is the focus of our study.

THE CURRENT STUDY

The current project aims to update the works of Baker (1985) and Chin (2002) by examining manuscripts published in *Teaching Sociology* from 2000 to 2009. In addition to basic replication, we seek to go beyond earlier studies by providing additional data on authorship and assessment. By including these additional measures, our goal is to provide a clearer picture of whether published studies in *Teaching Sociology* during the past decade reflect enhanced standards in sociological SoTL.

We first examine author characteristics to determine whether there is change in who is publishing in the journal. We are interested in the extent to which authors or departments show sustained scholarship. We explore another dimension of this question by analyzing the amount of collaboration evident in these publications, and whether these collaborations extend across disciplines and rank (Baker [1985] and Chin [2002] did not include these analyses). We also examine whether publications are defined by more senior scholars from predominantly doctoral-granting institutions.

Like Chin (2002), we are primarily interested in the extent to which research published in the most recent decade reflects a growing emphasis on assessment of learning outcomes to verify whether the trend first documented by Chin (2002) has continued. We also explore whether such learning assessment has become more sophisticated, reflecting advancements in SoTL (Angelo and Cross 1993; Cross and Steadman 1996; Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff 1997; Chin et al. 2011).[2] Thus, we document the number of articles that use no evaluation, casual data, a single system of evaluation, or systematic comparison.

We seek to go beyond both Baker's (1985) and Chin's (2002) analyses and provide more precise measures of rigor in terms of evaluation measures

used in each study. We do this in three ways. First, we explore whether direct or indirect measures of effectiveness are used. Indirect measures of teaching effectiveness or student learning rely on such things as self-assessment of learning or teaching. Direct measures are those that tap students' learning by examining their performance in class or coursework (e.g., content analysis of students' written work, embedded measures on exams, grades) and are thought to be better indicators than indirect measures of learning (Weiss 2002). Of course, measures of student satisfaction of learning are important sources of information, but they are generally not considered sufficient evidence of learning or teaching effectiveness.

Second, because studies that rely on multiple measures (multiple assessments) are likely to be more methodologically sound than those that rely on a single method of assessment, we also consider the number of assessments conducted. In cases wherein a single assessment is used, we pay particular attention to which type of evidence is used to support claims of effectiveness. Specifically, we are interested in whether there is a greater reliance on reports of indirect or attitudinal measures (student satisfaction, self-assessment of learning) or more direct measures (embedded measures, content analysis).

Third, we explore the extent to which teaching techniques have been tested, in a sense, for generalizability. That is, we analyze whether assessment data were reported for multiple classes and, if so, whether the method or technique was used only within one type of institution and by more than one instructor.

The current study, in conjunction with Baker (1985) and Chin (2002), contributes to our understanding of discipline-specific (more accurately, sociology-specific) SoTL. In the spirit of previous conversations about the nature of scholarship on teaching within sociology (Hanson 2005a, 2005b; Kain 2005; McKinney 2005) and the role of assessment in teaching and learning within higher education (Wagenaar 2011; Weiss 2002; Weiss et al. 2002), it also helps to clarify where sociology stands in these disciplinary and interdisciplinary debates. It provides a glimpse into whether sociology has been influenced by, and potentially influences, the SoTL movement. Most important, by documenting shifts and stalls, it can help shape and

inform future work in the scholarship on teaching and learning.

DATA AND METHODS
Data

Following Baker (1985) and Chin (2002), we analyzed each article published in *Teaching Sociology* from 2000 to 2009. Our sample consists of 333 manuscripts and includes all works published in the journal from 2000 to 2009 with the exception of book and film reviews. This sample size is larger than Chin's (2002) ($N = 313$) and Baker's (1985) ($N = 240$). In addition, we created an author data set to analyze the number of contributors and the number of times each individual published in the journal. Overall, there were 598 contributors. These data also allowed us calculate those departments with the highest number of authors.

Coding and Variables

We created a quantitative codebook with clearly defined variables to guide coding by all four authors of the current study. To ensure intercoder reliability, we double-coded approximately 10 percent of the studies; there was a high level of agreement on key variables. For variables on which agreement was lower, we recorded comments for discussion to improve our consistency in coding. Because we sought to update Chin's (2002) and Baker's (1985) studies, we attempted to duplicate variables and values in our study and were able to do so for most measures. In an effort to expand previous studies, we collected more detailed information about assessment and institutional and departmental affiliation of authors.

Author Characteristics

We examined author demographics to determine who was contributing to the literature. We coded information about each author's affiliation, rank, and highest degree earned and whether the research had the support of a grant. We coded information about external support included in authors' notes, and rank was obtained through authors' biographies. If no mention of rank was listed, we conducted an Internet search and consulted the 2010

ASA Directory of Members for these data. Institutional affiliations were classified using the Carnegie classification system (see The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/), which consists of 33 classifications. Coding rank and affiliation for all authors allowed us to examine two aspects of collaboration: the number of studies that involved collaboration and whether collaboration across institutions or ranks was common. In addition, we included a measure to account for the number of instructors who were reported to use the teaching method or technique in each publication (i.e., one, two, more than two).

Study Characteristics

We also examined attributes of published works. We first distinguished types of publication in *Teaching Sociology* (e.g., article, note, conversation) and classified them as surveys, commentaries, or case studies, following classifications by Chin (2002) and Baker (1985). Surveys, as defined by Baker (1985), are "empirical surveys covering such topics as the content of textbooks, the practice of teachers, policies of departments, and the employment opportunities of alumni" (p. 364). Thus, we classified studies as surveys if they use data analyses and research but not if they present research that directly examines classroom or pedagogical activities. Similarly, commentaries do not focus on analyses of classroom activities but are nonempirical articles that address ideas about teaching and learning.

We were primarily concerned with what Baker (1985) calls "case studies"—which he defines as works that report on classroom activities, designs, and programs—because they truly characterize research on SoTL. Chin (2002) also analyzes "case studies" but includes "combination of above" and "other" categories to account for those works that do not squarely fit within Baker's original category. Because the term *case studies* is now understood to describe work that focuses on "one class or course or assignment . . . using multiple forms of data, often both quantitative and qualitative" (McKinney 2007:78)—which is a departure from Baker's (1985) original conceptualization—we prefer the term *evidence-based research* so as not to limit our focus to pure case studies. Thus, evi-

dence-based research can involve a number of methodological approaches, including experiments or quasi-experiments, content analysis, observational research, and so on (see McKinney [2007] for a fuller description of SoTL methodologies).

We conducted additional analyses on evidence-based research studies, focusing on the assessment component. Similar to Baker (1985) and Chin (2002), we examined whether any type of assessment was used and, if so, whether it involved casual data, a single system of measurement, or systematic comparison. Following Baker (1985) and Chin (2002), "no evaluation" consisted of studies in which claims about the effectiveness of innovative teaching were made but no evidence was offered to support such claims. General impressions with no measures of effectiveness were coded as "casual data"; "single system of evaluation" included single measures of effectiveness, usually students' self-assessment of learning or satisfaction; and "systematic comparison" involved more rigorous tests of effectiveness such as the use of pretests and posttests, control groups, and so on.

Additional measures of methodological sophistication included number of assessments used (none, single, multiple), type of assessment (student reports of satisfaction, student reports of learning, direct measures—we coded up to five types of assessments), and number and type of settings in which assessments were conducted (one classroom/group; multiple classrooms/groups, same department; multiple classrooms/groups, multidisciplinary/same campus; one discipline, more than one campus; multidisciplinary, more than one campus).

RESULTS
Who Publishes in Teaching Sociology?

In all, 598 contributors published in *Teaching Sociology* between 2000 and 2009 (an individual author may be counted more than once here). Despite the growing popularity of SoTL, about the same percentage as reported by Baker (1985) and Chin (2002) made only one contribution. We found that 87 percent made one contribution. Thirteen percent made more than one contribution (8 percent contributed twice, 5 percent three or more times—the latter included two individuals

Table 1. Contributions of Authors Who Published in *Teaching Sociology,* 1973–1983, 1984–1999, 2000–2009 (in Percentages)

	1973–1983	1984–1999	2000–2009
Number of times published in *Teaching Sociology*			
1	85	80	87
2	—	14	8
3 or more	5	6	5
Number of authors per publication			
1	85	80	53
2	—	14	29
3 or more	5	6	17

Source: Chin (2002:Table 1).
Note: Dashes indicate percentages were not reported.

whose multiple contributions included replies) (see Table 1).

Articles published in the most recent time period were much more likely to be co-authored compared to those published in earlier periods. About half of the articles (53 percent) published in the past decade were sole authored, whereas 29 percent of the articles were published by two authors and 17 percent by three or more authors. This is a significant change from both Chin (2002) and Baker (1985), who found that 80 percent and 85 percent, respectively, of all articles were sole authored.

In addition, there was more variability in terms of institutions in the latter period. Baker (1985) found that 59 percent of departments were mentioned only once (i.e., only one contribution was made by an individual from these departments) compared to 54 percent reported by Chin (2002). In our sample, 71 percent of departments were mentioned only once. Thus, there was greater diversity of institutions represented in the latter period. Of the institutions that were mentioned more than once, 40 percent were mentioned only twice. There were some star SoTL departments, however, that had multiple SoTL researchers producing numerous articles. To further demonstrate, we created a list of those institutions that have multiple contributors and publications. To include a department in our "most productive" list, we used two criteria: A department would have at least five individuals published and would have produced at least five publications. Although these

criteria are arbitrary to some degree, they allow us to analyze those departments that tend to be most productive in terms of SoTL and to control partially for a high level of collaboration (which would be indicated by many researchers but few publications). Nine institutions met this standard (see Table 2).

We found that seven out of the nine schools listed in Table 2 are PhD-granting institutions. Indeed, many of the publications originating from these programs are produced by, or coauthored with, graduate students. Hence, Table 2 is in many ways a list of programs that have made a mark in the training of graduate students in SoTL. It is important to note that Southwestern University's appearance on the list is primarily a function of one individual who has published extensively with undergraduate students.

Thus, most individuals publishing in *Teaching Sociology* were affiliated with doctoral-granting departments. Regarding the institutions for which data are available, 52 percent of all authors are from PhD-granting departments, followed by 23 percent from master's-level departments, 17 percent from BA departments, and just 3 percent from associate in arts departments (see Table 3). When only first authors are analyzed, there is a slight drop in those from doctoral-granting institutions (49 percent), but these individuals are consistently the leading contributors. In comparison to data reported by Chin (2002), who analyzed first authors only, there has been a considerable increase in the percentage of individuals from PhD-granting

Table 2. Institutions with Most Highly Productive Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Institution	Total Number of Authors of All Ranks (Number of Faculty Authors)	Number of Publications
Indiana University–Bloomington	8 (4)	8
North Carolina State University	14 (5)	10
Pennsylvania State University	9 (2)	5
Purdue University	8 (5)	7
Southwestern University	6 (1)	8
State University of New York–New Paltz	5 (5)	6
University of Michigan	6 (3)	5
University of North Carolina	9 (1)	8
University of Wisconsin–Madison	5 (3)	5

Table 3. Institutional Affiliations and Ranks of Authors, 1973–1983, 1984–1999, 2000–2009 (in Percentages)

Institutional Type	First Authors Only 1973–1983	First Authors Only 1984–1999	First Authors Only 2000–2009	All Authors 2000–2009
PhD	40	38	49	52
MA	18	20	25	23
BA	34	34	19	17
AA	4	2	3	3
Don't know	—	6	4	5
Rank of authors				
Full professor	—	26	24	20
Associate professor	—	26	22	18
Assistant professor	—	20	32	26
Instructor	—	1	3	3
Graduate student	—	7	11	18
Other	—	7	0.3	2
Unknown	—	13	8	13
Unsupported by grant	85	95	88	—
	N = 240	*N* = 313[a]	*n* = 333	*n* = 598

Dashes indicate percentages were not reported.
[a] The sample size was originally reported erroneously as 814.

institutions publishing in *Teaching Sociology,* from 38 percent reported by Chin (2002) to about 50 percent from 2000 to 2009. In the latest period, there was a significant decline in publications from individuals at BA institutions (34 percent reported in Chin [2002] versus 19 percent). The percentage of authors from PhD-granting departments from the past decade is also higher than that for authors publishing during the 1990s (43.3 percent), as analyzed by Marx and Eckberg (2005). Unfortunately,

it is difficult to make a direct comparison to Baker (1985), who does not indicate whether only the first author or all authors are calculated, but by either account, there are more publications by individuals at doctoral-granting institutions than others in the latest period. Thus, we see a consistent increase in *Teaching Sociology* authors from doctoral-granting institutions.

When examining first authors, we found that among articles published from 2000 to 2009, most

Table 4. Type of Evaluation Used for Evidence-based Studies, Articles, and Notes Published in *Teaching Sociology,* 1973–1983, 1984–1999, 2000–2009

	1973–1983	1984–1999	2000–2009
No evaluation	48 (29)	58 (19)	7 (4)
Casual data	80 (48)	80 (51)	21 (10)
Single system	16 (10)	54 (18)	133 (65)
Systematic comparison	21 (13)	35 (12)	41 (20)
Total	165 (100)	299 (100)	204 (100)

Source: Chin (2002:Table 1) and Baker (1985:Table 2).
Note: Values in parentheses are percentages.

were published by faculty members who hold the rank of assistant professor (32 percent), followed by full professors (24 percent) and associate professors (22 percent), and by graduate students (11 percent). The remaining articles were published by instructors (3 percent) and others such as undergraduates (less than 1 percent); rank was unknown for 8 percent. (Data for all authors reveal similar patterns, although students, both graduate and undergraduate, assume a bigger role; see Table 3.) Thus, there is a marked change from Chin's (2002) finding for first authors' rank for articles published between 1984 and 1999, where only 20 percent of the published articles were by those holding the rank of assistant professor (compared with one third of all articles published in *Teaching Sociology* by assistant professors in the latest period). Meanwhile, Chin (2002) found that full professors and associate professors each published 26 percent of the articles between 1984 and 1999, very similar to our findings. Baker (1985) did not report these data.

Between 2000 and 2009, 88 percent of articles were published without the support of grants, which is a decrease from Chin's (2002) finding that 95 percent of articles published from 1984 to 1999 were published without the support of grants but similar to Baker's (1985) finding (85 percent). Across all time periods, we see most studies were not supported by external grants.

What Gets Published in Teaching Sociology

Similar to Baker (1985) and Chin (2002), we found that case studies, or what we term here *evidence-based research studies,* were the most common types of publications. Here, we do not

distinguish type of publication (article or note) or mode of innovation (e.g., classroom device, total course design) as earlier studies have done because these distinctions are not central to our analysis, which is concerned with type of evaluation, regardless of classroom mode or publication type.[3]

Over time, we expected to see articles exhibiting more sophisticated evaluation measures, reflecting greater awareness of and commitment to SoTL. Table 4 shows that there is a general trend toward more rigorous evaluation measures. The category of articles containing no evaluation data fell from 29 percent of all articles in Baker's (1985) sample (1973–1983) to 19 percent in Chin's (2002) sample (1984–1999) to 4 percent from 2000 to 2009, an overall decrease of 25 percent from 1973 to 2009. The category of articles containing casual evaluation (i.e., impressionistic data, unsolicited comments from students but not systematic comments such as student evaluations) went from 48 percent of all articles from 1973 to 1983 to 51 percent from 1984 to 1999 to 10 percent from 2000 to 2009, an overall decrease of 38 percent. The category of articles with a single system of evaluation increased from 10 percent from 1973 to 1983 to 18 percent from 1984 to 1999 to 65 percent from 2000 to 2009, an overall increase of 55 percent. The category of articles using a systematic comparison design remained reasonably stable—from 13 percent in the first period, 1973 to 1983, to 12 percent from 1984 to 1999—increasing to 20 percent from 2000 to 2009; this is an overall increase of 7 percent.

Recall Baker's (1985) lament that single systems of evaluation often included a measure of teacher satisfaction or an attitudinal measure (e.g., "I enjoyed this course") rather than a highly valid

Table 5. Type of Assessment in Studies Wherein Only One Assessment Was Used (2000–2009)

Assessment	Frequency (%)
Student report of satisfaction	12 (15)
Student self-assessment of learning	36 (46)
Direct measure of learning (embedded, content analysis of writing)	30 (39)
Total	78 (100)

measure of learning. Hence, we delved more deeply into the types of evaluation used. In particular, we were interested in whether researchers relied on student reports of satisfaction, which are generally considered poor indicators of learning (Wiers-Jenssen, Stensaker, and Grogaard 2010); students' self-assessments of learning, which also may be unreliable (Dochy, Segers, and Sluijsmans 1999); or more direct measures of learning, such as embedded measures in student assessments (e.g., exam questions that assess comprehension) or content analysis of student writing, which provide more direct measures of learning (Weiss 2002). First, it is interesting to note that of the 204 evidence-based studies we reviewed, only 78 used just one form of assessment. Table 5 shows that of these, 36 (46 percent) used student reports of learning, followed by direct (e.g., embedded measures) (39 percent), and student satisfaction reports (15 percent).

Most studies, however, use multiple assessment measures (average number of assessments is 1.64 per study). For example, Persell (2004) used direct measures of learning and engagement (e.g., she coded the number of references students made to other students' online posts), students' self-assessment of learning (at two time periods), and students' self-reported satisfaction with online learning.

As seen in Table 6, of the 204 studies that reported some type of assessment, a total of 317 measures of effectiveness were reported (here the unit of analysis is assessment rather than study). Students' self-assessment of learning remained the most common; of the 204 evidence-based studies

we analyzed, 133 reported such data, followed by direct measures ($n = 117$). Assessments of student satisfaction remained the least common ($n = 67$), and these were likely to be used in conjunction with other assessments rather than as the sole measure (recall from Table 5 that only 12 studies used only student satisfaction measures).

Clearly, evidence of teaching effectiveness has become more sophisticated over time in publications found in this journal in terms of number of assessments used and reliance on more direct measures of student learning. On the other hand, we found that slightly more than half claimed to employ the technique or method under question in different settings (classrooms or institutions). For instance, among those evidence-based studies for which information was given, 41 percent reported to use the technique with only one class, about 50 percent claimed to use it in multiple classes, and 7 percent did so on more than one campus. Application of techniques or methods across more than one discipline was very rare, accounting for less than 3 percent of the studies. It was more difficult to determine the number of instructors who had used the teaching innovation because many authors, including those who coauthor the article, do not explicitly state who implemented the innovation or whether multiple instructors had done so. Assuming that sole-authored articles indicate one instructor, we coded whether the technique or method was used by one instructor, two, or three or more. Among those studies for which information was provided and could be determined ($n = 150$), 70 percent involved one instructor, 23 percent two, and just 7 percent three or more. Thus, the extent to which teaching strategies have been tested for reliability, or generalizability, is limited.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study replicates and extends previous studies by Baker (1985) and Chin (2002) by investigating publications in *Teaching Sociology* from 2000 to 2009. Baker (1985) analyzed articles published from 1973 to 1984, mostly during the period of "innovation and implementation" (Howard 2010:84) but before SoTL had emerged as a recognizable social movement. Chin (2002) analyzed

Table 6. Number and Types of Assessments Used (Unit of Analysis Is Assessment Measure), 2000–2009

Type of Assessment	Assess 1	Assess 2	Assess 3	Assess 4	Assess 5	Total
Student report of satisfaction	52	11	3	0	1	67
Self-assessment of learning	62	60	9	0	2	133
Direct measures	65	31	18	3	0	117
Total	179	102	30	3	3	

publications from 1984 to 1999 to determine whether the increased emphasis on assessment (Weiss et al. 2002) and the growth of the SoTL movement (Howard 2010) were evident in these publications. Given the natural link between SoTL and assessment (Wagenaar 2011), we would expect increasing attention to assessment in the discipline's flagship SoTL journal, *Teaching Sociology.* Indeed, whereas Baker (1985) found that few studies offered solid evidence of teaching effectiveness, Chin (2002) found that the SoTL movement had a positive effect on the prevalence and quality of assessment data being collected, analyzed, and reported in studies published in *Teaching Sociology.*

We, too, found that there has been continued emphasis on assessment data to support claims of teaching effectiveness. For instance, only a small percentage of studies we examined offered no data or only casual data (14 percent combined) compared to 77 percent reported by Baker (1985) and 70 percent reported by Chin (2002). Most studies published in the current sample used a single system of evaluation rather than systematic comparison (although more did use systematic comparison in the latter period compared to earlier), but these single systems were far from simple pronouncements of satisfaction, as Baker (1985) noted. Rather, they often employed rigorous measures of learning. For instance, when only one type of assessment was used, the vast majority used either students' self-reports of learning or direct measures of learning; fewer than one in five used only student reports of satisfaction. In addition, many studies employed multiple types of assessments, student satisfaction being just one.

We also saw interesting changes in authorship. Baker (1985:371) claimed that contributors to *Teaching Sociology* in the early period represented a highly diverse, "small-scale cottage industry," observing that there was little evidence of sustained

scholarship from individuals or departments. This seems to have changed. There are clearly individual leaders in the sociological SoTL area and departments that consistently publish SoTL (most likely, even more than we have seen here since we analyzed just one journal). No doubt such change is due in part to the institutionalization of SoTL within the ASA and academia as a whole.

An additional insight concerning top SoTL programs deserves mention. Of our top schools, only 3 (Indiana, Purdue, Wisconsin) appeared in the top 30 most productive sociology programs reported by Marx and Eckberg (2005). Marx and Eckberg (2005) did use a slightly different rating system (for coauthors from different schools, credit was split among departments, and authors could be counted twice), but it is nonetheless interesting that so little overlap occurs. For example, the most productive program on our list (North Carolina State) did not make Marx and Eckberg's top 30. It would be interesting to conduct case studies of those departments that have sustained productivity and those that have emerged on the SoTL scene in recent years. What factors do they share in common? Is institutionalization necessary for a SoTL program to be sustained?

We noted other changes in authorship from earlier studies. First, current SoTL is much more likely to be published by scholars at PhD-granting institutions and much less likely by those in BA-granting institutions than noted in previous periods. This is likely to reflect increased acceptance of SoTL as research within academia and perhaps signals the end of the struggle for legitimacy that has plagued SoTL researchers for more than two decades (Huber and Hutchings 2005; McKinney 2007; Schroeder 2007). On the other hand, sociological SoTL is generally not being supported by grants, which we might expect to see if it indeed had gained legitimacy (there was an increase from the

1984–1999 period, but virtually no change from the 1973–1983 period). It would be interesting to know whether this lack of external support characterizes sociological SoTL more than other disciplines or areas of research within the discipline.

We also found a much greater instance of collaboration than reported by Baker (1985) or Chin (2002). Three factors likely account for this change. First, as methodological sophistication increases and as scholars rely on others for assistance in research design and analysis, we would expect greater collaboration. Second, one of the key features of SoTL is that it makes teaching public. Thus, as conversations about teaching occur (in offices, across disciplines, at conferences), commonalities are discovered and collaborations born. Third, we found evidence of departments that specialize in training graduate (and, to a lesser extent, undergraduate) students in SoTL. As with other types of research, we would expect these relationships to produce coauthorships. These findings suggest that sociology has already moved in directions suggested by Howard (2010:89), such as growing "the next generation of scholars who will continue to value teaching learning in sociology" and involving students in SoTL research.

Taken together, the two past studies (Baker 1985; Chin 2002) and the current study serve to map the landscape of SoTL within sociology and provide insight into whether sociology remains at the forefront of SoTL as we move into the twenty-first century. SoTL is no longer found in just a few disciplines, as it was when Baker (1985) wrote his article; it has been embraced across academia and clearly within sociology. Overall, we find evidence of the kind of change we would expect the SoTL movement to inspire: greater attention to methodological rigor in assessing teaching effectiveness, greater use of multiple assessment measures, greater collaboration, and evidence of SoTL training within top-ranked universities.

Despite these positive changes, we find some evidence of lag. First, although SoTL has clearly gained the attention of some top-ranked universities, among the doctoral-granting institutions from which the most sociological SoTL is published, none lists SoTL or Teaching and Learning in the *2010 American Sociological Association Guide to*

Graduate Departments of Sociology (ASA 2010) as one of its "Special Programs and Areas of Expertise," although schools often provide information under "Teacher Training Available." And within those departments, only one lists a dissertation title in the most recent year that sounds remotely related to SoTL. As such, we might ask just how institutionalized and accepted SoTL has really become.

Second, the number of studies supported by grants has remained relatively constant. It would be instructive to compare SoTL studies to other areas within sociology and to SoTL within other disciplines; perhaps it is not so low in comparison. But the fact that the rate is roughly the same as that from 1973 to 1983 (but higher than 1984–1999) is noteworthy. On the other hand, as Howard (2010) outlines, the earliest period of sociological SoTL flourished because it had the support of several influential organizations such as the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the Carnegie Foundation, and the Lilly Endowment. These organizations funded some of the major programs within ASA that gave rise to the institutionalization of SoTL that we now see. The fact that more studies within the past decade have been funded by grants compared to the middle period is promising. New funding initiatives, such as the Carla B. Howery Teaching Enhancement Grant, are definitely positive signs.

Third, although methodological sophistication is clearly increasing, very few studies appear to test the reliability of teaching methods or strategies by employing them in multiple classrooms or in different institutional types or by having different instructors test them in their own classrooms. As sociologists, we know that social context matters, and the classroom is a dynamic social setting. Thus, it is important to determine whether teaching methods work in different contexts. Only in this way can SoTL have a broader impact by making it more applicable across settings.

Finally, we found very little evidence of interdisciplinary SoTL in publications during the past decade (about 15 percent of studies were authored or coauthored with individuals outside of sociology). Of course, SoTL has always been primarily discipline specific (McKinney forthcoming), but increasingly, the conversation has moved to ways

to cross disciplinary boundaries, where insights and findings from different disciplines can be shared (Huber and Morreale 2002). Sociology has long been recognized as a leader in the SoTL field and will remain so only if we join in this wider conversation. In this way, we can help frame the next wave of the SoTL movement.

One final note—there are many forces beyond the scope of this study that undoubtedly have an impact on what ends up getting published in *Teaching Sociology.* Any of these could and probably do have an effect on the prevalence of SoTL in *Teaching Sociology* and could be the basis for future research.

First, every journal has a culture. This is determined by a number of factors but begins with the editor. In the process of selecting an editor for *Teaching Sociology,* the ASA, specifically the Committee on Publications, requests a statement of editorial philosophy from each applicant. (One might even argue that the path an ASA journal takes is determined first by the Committee on Publications.) In this statement, a candidate maps out a vision for the journal. It is possible, but not likely, that all of the editors in the 35-year history of *Teaching Sociology* have articulated very different visions for the journal, and this could have an impact on the proportion of articles that reflect SoTL. While this might make an interesting study in itself, it is our guess that "editor" is closer to a constant than a variable. We believe that most editors of *Teaching Sociology* have stated they would, and tried to encourage authors to, incorporate SoTL as part of their research agenda.

The second major factor in predicting the outcome of SoTL in *Teaching Sociology* is the journal's contributors. The editors can say whatever they want, but ultimately they can publish only what comes through the door. If 100 percent of articles that come across the transom are SoTL, editors of *Teaching Sociology* can publish issues with only SoTL work. If zero submissions contain SoTL, no SoTL work will be published. Editors must fill their issues, and they can work with only what they receive.

Finally, there is the larger academic community. It is our belief that there exists in sociology a critical mass of individuals who believe in the value of SoTL. They populate faculties of undergraduate and graduate programs that produce students who understand SoTL, they serve in the ASA's Section on Teaching and Learning, and of course they contribute to *Teaching Sociology.*

It is the interplay of editors, contributors, and others in the academic community that determines the journal's direction. We believe that many of the indicators we have attempted to measure in this study provide a reasonable proxy for the increasing popularity of SoTL in sociology, and we hope that this research triggers subsequent work that enhances our understanding of the prevalence of SoTL.

NOTES

Reviewers for this manuscript were, in alphabetical order, Michael DeCesare, Diane Pike, and Gregory Weiss.

1. This journal hosted a conversation about the current status of scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) in sociology, raising the question of SoTL's relationship with the sociology of education and the sociology of higher education (Hanson 2005a, 2005b; Kain 2005; McKinney 2005).
2. We do recognize that criteria for evaluating SoTL vary across disciplines, but sociological SoTL is typically expected to follow methodological standards of scientific research (Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff 1997; Moore 2001; Grauerholz and Zipp 2008).
3. We found no statistically significant difference in types of assessment found in notes versus articles.

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