as just flexible enough and just familiar enough to have potentially broad appeal to those of us in the academy interested in pedagogical experimentation.

Why have students write books? Let me begin the answer by noting a few of my own reasons for pursuing a class book project in a college classroom, and why I think many of us tend to avoid projects of this sort, despite their pedagogical potential. First, I see most of my students learning many ways to be excellent consumers of knowledge (e.g., carefully reading texts, thoughtfully using library databases, and efficiently studying for exams) but few ways to produce knowledge outside of a standard research paper. This may seriously hobble our students' ability to thoughtfully produce and effectively communicate their expertise to others. Second, the knowledge they do produce often holds little meaning for them because it is essentially produced for an audience of one (me) and may garner 30–60 minutes of careful attention before it is returned with a grade and quickly forgotten or physically disposed of by the end of the term. I worry that this trend mirrors what we often decry in other parts of our culture as the unchecked growth of the quickly consumed, quickly disposed of economy, that is, fast food, fast fashion, and now, fast education. Third, although many of us recognize the many downsides of an education that encourages and rewards individuals within a primarily competitive framework, we also shy away from the much-maligned ''group project'' which, when announced in class, almost inevitably results in a chorus of groans and grimaces based on the particularly salient past experiences our students have had with similar, typically failed ventures. Often our concern for both potentially poor student evaluations and, more legitimately, dicey student learning outcomes overrides our instincts to encourage cooperation and peer education.

In my own experience, a book project provides students with an array of benefits that may otherwise not come with a more typically designed course. First, students seem to quickly feel investment in and later ownership over the project themselves. I think immediately of Marx's alienation from the product of one's labor when I see how meaningfully students connect to this kind of activity (and perhaps their species-being if we take the analogy further) in comparison to most other assignments. Second, students walk away from the course with something quite tangible, essentially physical, and easily explained to others, including friends, family, and so on. ''What did you do in Course X?'' ''I wrote a book!'' It is something that they can take pride in and a potential tool for communicating the value of what they are learning to people they know. Third, students gain a better sense of how important professional presentation is, and how to achieve it. They tend to produce better work when they know it will be read by others in (and outside of) the class and that their name will be attached both to the book as a whole and their specific contribution, though they also mention knowing that others in the class are counting on them as a motivating factor. Finally, I think students come to a place of greater compassion for the author's of the works they read throughout the class as they realize how difficult good, clear writing for a public, albeit somewhat educated, audience can be.

The basic premise behind the theory book project is one that students readily adopt when I introduce it at the midpoint of the semester, that is, students need a more concise resource to understand each of the theorists that are covered in a typical sociological theory course. At this point in the term, students have waded through a combination of often difficult to decode primary source material written by the theorists themselves and secondary interpretations of each theorist's work from the perspective of a sociologist specializing in theory (e.g., George Ritzer). Even then, students often hang on my every word to try and make some sense of what the contribution of each theorist actually is and how it in fact helps reveal something important about our world. In short, they understand how useful this resource could potentially be for themselves and students like them in other theory courses.

The book is organized in a fairly simple way as an alphabetical listing of important sociological theorists. The first edition included 17 theorists, from Theodor Adorno to Max Weber and totals 346 pages, including a simple table of contents. For consistency of formatting and the fair distribution of work among students, each theorist is allotted exactly eight pages in the book. Each theorist profile includes the following brief material: name, theoretical orientation, a photo, lifespan in years, and three to five major concepts. Subsections of one to three paragraphs include a quotation from that theorist with a meaningful explanation, the sociohistorical context of the theorist's life, connections to other theorists and/or historical figures, an explanation of his or her theoretical perspective, an explanation of each of his or her major concepts, details on his or her notable writings, criticisms of the theorist, and an overall assessment of the lasting impact of the theorist. Each profile wraps up with a list of three to five useful texts for further readings about the theorist as well as a list of citations, numbered to correspond with the endnote numbers in the text of the profile itself.

For the first edition, each student in the course chose a theorist card from a deck of cards I'd printed up using online photos, theorist names, playing card designs, heavy weight paper, and the department scanner/printer. They could exchange their theorist with any other student in the class or return their card to draw again, but few took me up on the idea. With theorist in hand, each was handed a paper copy of the theorist profile template (detailed in the paragraph previously) as well as a link to an online version of the template in Microsoft Word that they would be typing into directly. This was essential for keeping the work on formatting down to an absolute minimum and to make certain that the pages would "fit" correctly into the printed version of the book.

Students were asked to use a combination of three major sources to assemble their theorist's profile: (1) 15 theory texts I'd placed on two-hour reserve at the library, (2) our course text—   by George Ritzer, and (3) online academic research databases (JSTOR, ProQuest, SocIndex, and Google Scholar). Students were required to turn in their work in stages (outline, rough draft, second draft, and

third draft) on a weekly basis, and time was allotted in each of those sessions for general questions as well as peer review of their work in pairs. Their completed profile was handed in on paper for me to evaluate as well as digitally (via a specified folder on the course Moodle page) to facilitate the work of the editors combining all of the profiles and revising each profile as needed.

Once the profiles were handed in, I copied and pasted all of them into a single Microsoft Word document in alphabetical order by theorist's last names, taking time to correct the inevitable formatting bugs that crop up during this process. Having added a title page, an ''About the Book'' page explaining the project, and the table of contents, I inserted page numbers. At this point, I added each student's name next to their theorist profile reference in the table of contents to allow everyone to claim their own work while not unnecessarily disrupting the flow of the body of the book itself.

For printing purposes, I used an online self-publishing press called Lulu (www.lulu.com). Although there are now a variety of options available to instructors, I have been generally quite pleased with the quality of their books, the efficiency of their turnaround time, and the simplicity of their uploading process. For the first two editions, I chose a pocket size of $4.25'' \times 6.88''$, perfect (adhesive-based) binding, standard black and white interior pages, and a full color paperback cover. The body text was set to 8 point Arial font with larger text for titles and the like (for the third edition, I changed the size of the book to $6'' \times 9''$ and moved the body font to 12 point Arial accordingly). As a consequence, the Microsoft Word template the students used was always set to $4.25'' \times 6.88''$ with mirror margins chosen in the document formatting process. Before uploading the document, Lulu requires that you upload it as a PDF file. The generation of cover material (front, back, and spine) was fairly straight forward, though I spent more time on it than I probably should have as I wanted to guarantee that students experienced a favorable first impression of the book. I included the name of every student as the main material for the back cover. I ordered a copy of the book for every student in the course, allowing two weeks for printing and shipping, and five copies for myself. Including shipping, the books cost roughly US$10 each to purchase (oddly, the larger $6'' \times 9''$ format books are generally a few dollars cheaper). I made sure that the books arrived before the last day of class, so that I could hand it to them, garner their reactions, and discuss what they thought of the project now that it was complete. The general feedback from students was that it felt somewhat satisfying and a bit shocking to have coauthored a book that they can hold in their hands.

Although the results from the first edition of the theory book were surprisingly good, I decided that I would continue the process with the next theory class to improve upon what I'd learned during this time. I could, I th1(thd4.4(oR55.1elt)-39.9((cop2c9

Although the theory book project was always meant to occupy the second half of the

changes. This opened up discussions of what it meant to be a part of a growing online academic community and how Wikipedia functions as an experiment in information democracy. By the end of that semester, what I discovered through student feedback is that the Wikipedia project supplied students with confidence, experience, and a skillset that allowed them to produce a theorist profile of reasonable quality for the

errors. It contains the work of every student that completed the class, including all of the ''A'' students   all of the ''D'' students.

It wasn't until the third edition of the book that I began to tackle this problem of

*B   A B tt   *, I had the students collaborate to publish their reviews of books on ethical consumerism on a website (www.ethicalconsumerbookreviews. com) using a popular website service called Wix (www.wix.com). My intention was to make this the first of a series of similar websites, but by the time I taught the next section of the course where students reviewed books on global citizenship, the website had changed many of its online tools and no longer allowed this particular kind of java-based formatting to be used. This threw a wrench into the works of the project right as the editors were placing the work online, and as a result, that second website remains inaccessible to the public (including the students themselves). I mention this only as a warning about the potential downsides of these technology dependent projects.

In spite of these technologically based challenges, I have decided that the fourth edition of the theory book will be published as an app for smartphones and tablets using one of the many online app building services (in this case, AppyPie). I am venturing down this somewhat new path for four reasons. First, I have long desired a broader audience for this project, and while the students may share the books with a small circle of their friends and family, it is unlikely to move beyond that reach. Similar to Wikipedia, an app allows for a global audience to benefit from this work, and it is more likely to end up in the hands of interested sociology faculty and students. Second, apps have finally begun to reach the stage that websites arrived at years ago—construction without the need to code. Many app building services are allowing users to ''drag and drop'' (and ''cut and paste'') their way to the creation of useful, well-designed apps. I've chosen AppyPie due to a combination of (1) reasonable pricing for aesthetically pleasing and user-friendly results and (2) the ability for the app to be translated instantly across devices (smartphones and tablets) and platforms (iOS, Android, Windows, and Blackberry). Third, nearly all of my students have smartphones on them day and night. The medium speaks to them, and they are really excited about the possibility of creating their own app that they can carry with them in their pocket. This is a level of enthusiasm that I find difficult to ignore when it comes to sociological theory–related projects. Finally, as of the third edition, 42 theorists are now included in the book. And while I expect a few more theorists will be added, we are quickly running out of new material to research. I now divide students' time between new research and checking, editing, updating, and revising their predecessors' work. The app opens up new avenues of online research including audio archives, short videos, university lectures, thoughtfully constructed charts, creative images, and so on. I may even consider having student create and produced videos of themselves summarizing what we know about particular theorists. In any case, going digital opens new avenues for this work that may otherwise have gone unexplored in the world of physical texts.

To this day, I find these kind of book projects immensely satisfying at a number of levels. First, I think there is something to be said for creating a lasting physical

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