



The Teaching-Research Nexus

A guide for academics and policy-makers
in higher education

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Examples from Australian universities

Introduction to Sociology: Incorporating research into first year sociology

Ms Anne Seitz
Swinburne University of Technology

Broad discipline area:

Arts and Humanities

- Sociology

Year level:

- First year undergraduate

TRN strategy:

- Design learning experiences around contemporary research issues
- Draw on personal research in designing and teaching courses

Teaching and learning context:

- Large group lectures (100-120 students)
- Small group classes/ tutorials (25 students)
- Curriculum design

Brief description of the initiative:

Introduction to Sociology is a first year subject taken as part of the Bachelor of Social Science, with typical enrolment numbers of 100 to 120 students. This academic discusses a different theme in each lecture to enable students to get a feel for the diversity that exists within the field of Sociology. The academic considers it very important to keep up to date with the research in the discipline, in order to share the findings with the students and to demonstrate the connection between theory, research and “real life” events/situations. Where possible, she will also discuss her own research approaches and experiences, and believes that by using examples of research findings in addition to teaching the theory, students find the lectures more interesting. For example, she applies Marxist and Weberian theory to the employment level and class/status dimensions of immigrants in Australia, thereby illustrating the theory to the students in a context that they are familiar with. The unit includes a module on research methods as well as referring to research findings in the other eleven modules. Since 2006 there is a prescribed text book and a book of readings which refer to and use primary materials.

For further details:

Anne Seitz

Swinburne University of Technology

aseitz@swin.edu.au