



Sports policy and practice

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What are the links between teaching and research?

The lecturer is developing student appreciation of research/consultancy in the discipline by bringing data/findings from staff research/consultancy into the curriculum.

Context:

Course title: BA (Hons) Sport, Durham University (UG)

Module title: Sports Policy in Practice

Level: 2

Year: 2

Module aims:

This second year module sets out to make policy (particularly as it relates to sport) relevant and accessible to undergraduate students.

Teaching and learning

I routinely includes examples and case studies from my own research to inform her teaching. This provides students with a wide range of examples to 'ground' or to bring to life the theoretical and conceptual material covered in the curriculum, and it exposes students to the wealth of possibilities that 'research' (sometimes perceived as dry and boring!) can open up. Examples include:

- teaching notions of social inclusion/exclusion through the exploration of soccer and refugee women and sport in communities of disadvantage
- exploring theories of risk as seen through the lens of extreme sport
- Investigating constructions of policy problems through the stigma of public housing.

As a teaching strategy, photographs and other visual aids taken as part of my research are used, as well as sound bytes from interviews where relevant and appropriate, to bring to life the links between teaching and research.

Much of my research has been conducted in Australia and France, which provides students with an international and comparative perspective. In addition, some of my other research has involved working directly with policy makers (sport and alcohol, sport and social inclusion, problem gambling). This has enabled me to draw on these experiences to provide first-hand examples of other issues and challenges that relate to social policy (ethics, research transfer, iterative research, dissemination). For example, I co-teaches interactive sessions on this module with policy makers /practitioners. Both role play some of the more thorny problems that applied social and policy research can bring up for junior researchers, and suggest strategies for students to overcome these challenges.

Assessment

The need to graduate students who are 'job-ready' is addressed by making explicit the links between curriculum, teaching and learning styles and career opportunities.

After the main periods of assessment and towards the end of the module, I provide students with numerous job advertisements from a broad range of areas (policy, journalism, marketing, sports development etc). Students are asked to note the person specifications, skills and knowledge that the job requires (i.e. good written communication skills, knowledge of policy, project management, data analysis etc).

They are then reminded of the various pieces of work that they've submitted, and how these directly link to the sorts of skills and knowledge that employers are looking for.

Hot tips:

'Ensure there are lots of visual examples and links to publications that have arisen from the research to support classroom content'

'Being able to draw on a wide range of examples from real life research also facilitates the teaching research methods modules, as well as policy based ones'

Feedback:

Student evaluations consistently rate the relevance of the material covered to their own interests and career aspirations.



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