

The Centre for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP)

C-SAP is one of 24 Subject Centres which comprise The Higher Education Academy's National Subject Network. C-SAP supports the disciplines of sociology, anthropology and politics, and is based at the Nuffield Learning Centre at the University of Birmingham.

The Centre is made up of an academic and administrative team of staff who employ a diversity of methods to promote scholarly and disciplinary-specific approaches to new and innovative ways of learning and teaching across the social sciences, developing and enhancing the student learning experience.

Edited by Helen Howard

Published by

**Centre for Sociology, Anthropology and
Politics (C-SAP)
Subject Network for the Higher Education
Academy
Nuffield Learning Centre
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT**

enquiries@c-sap.bham.ac.uk

www.c-sap.bham.ac.uk

**Copyright C-SAP
Spring 2010**



Welcome 3

News 4

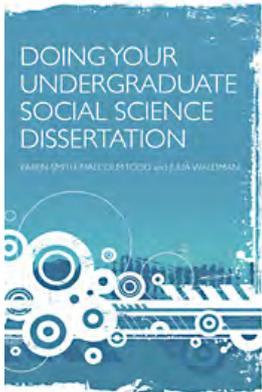
Events 8

Specialist Interests 13

Spotlight on... 15

Book Reviews 19

Book Reviews



Title *Doing Your Undergraduate Social Science Dissertation*
Author(s) Karen Smith, Malcolm Todd, Julia Waldman.
Editor(s), Edition
Year of Publication 2009
Publisher Routledge
Price £12.99
ISBN 978-0-415-46749-0

David Abbott, Open University, London Region

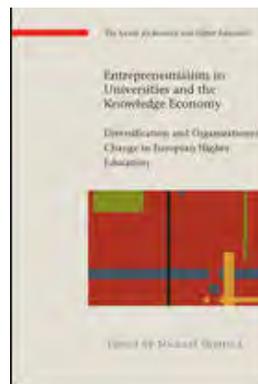
This helpful book gives a comprehensive tour of all the key points that any aspiring dissertation writer needs to consider before taking the plunge. Little is assumed and the authors carefully explain exactly what a dissertation is and how to set out the foundations of a good piece of work. These are necessary steps; the reasons for what can sometimes seem arcane academic habits are often forgotten or tutors may simply assume that the rules are so obvious that they do not merit a mention. The core of the book consists of five chapters which outline and analyse the advantages and disadvantages of different research methodologies. This middle section of the book was particularly well done; it would be all too easy to simply repeat standard methodological recipes, but the authors succeed in presenting the material in a fresh way which is firmly tied to the needs of undergraduate researchers.

At the same time there is also plenty of practical advice on what might be called the 'housekeeping' of research; making appointments and contacts with potential interviewees, managing notes, as well as a very clear explanation of how to make effective online search strategies. All of these things are not obvious to the beginner and need to be taught. If there is a reservation to be made, it might be that the book seems to assume that most undergraduates will be write a dissertation based on empirical research, so although more theoretical types of dissertation are covered, there is understandably less detail about them. A few more examples of student writing would also have helped make some of the lessons more easily accessible.

Advice is given on how to develop an 'academic voice' and avoiding plagiarism; this is all helpful, but perhaps many undergraduates need more

help with the difficult skills of academic writing. This book however, will take them a good deal of the way towards delivering high quality work. The inclusion of advice as to how to make use of the dissertation and a reminder of the skills which students have gained may be obvious and common practice now, but I certainly wish it had been the norm when I was an undergraduate.

Perhaps the book which is now needed from these authors is a companion volume, aimed at tutors, and focussing on how to teach undergraduates the skills needed to research and write a dissertation.



Title *Entrepreneurialism in Universities and the Knowledge Economy: Diversification and Organisational Change in European Higher Education*
Author(s) many contributors
Editor(s), Edition Michael Shattock (editor)
Year of Publication 2009
Publisher Open University Press
Price £28.99
ISBN 0335235719

Mark Turin, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge

This collection of 11 essays, the product of a major EU funded research programme based on twenty-seven institutional case studies, offers some insights into the nature and practice of entrepreneurialism in European universities through a series of cross national thematic studies.

This collection grew out of a European framework programme grant to study the relationship between university entrepreneurialism and the Europe of Knowledge (the EUERЕК Project). Building on a large number of partners, the grant commissioned not only the design of a theoretical framework for understanding entrepreneurialism in higher education, but also a series of case studies. The latter make for some of the most interesting reading in the present volume.

The first chapter, by the volume's editor Michael Shattock, Visiting Professor at the Institute of Education, and an authority in the field, sets

Book Reviews

out the context for entrepreneurialism and organizational change in higher education. Drawing on Clark's foundational work in the late 1990s, Shattock argues that entrepreneurialism should not be understood only in economic terms, but as a 'reflection both of institutional adaptiveness to a changing environment and of the capacity of universities to produce innovation through research and new ideas.' An important component of success is the fostering and support of 'intrapreneurs', individuals who innovate within the system. One of the conclusions of the case studies is that while one might anticipate that private universities with independent funding would be at the forefront of entrepreneurial activity, it is in fact usually state funded institutions that are more likely to provide such 'intellectual dynamism'.

As an academic familiar with these debates only in as much as they appear to percolate down from university management, I found it interesting to learn of the original research that lies behind decision making and read about other universities around Europe.

Focussing on financial issues, Gareth Williams shows that institutional entrepreneurial activities are encouraged when state funding is tight but not inadequate, when income earned from new initiatives is returned to the producers of the ideas, and when a commercial culture is acceptable to a significant number of academic staff. Conversely, entrepreneurialism can be discouraged when government funding is 'too generous'. After a further chapter by the volume's editor on research, technology and knowledge transfer, Paul Temple addresses teaching and learning which are often overlooked from an entrepreneurial perspective.

The next chapter, also by Shattock, evaluates human resource management in a number of different national contexts, and reaches the intriguing—if slightly worrying—conclusion that in general there is 'too much comfort' in university reward structures. Mora and Vieira assess university organisational structures and governance and offer a framework for comparison, while Kwiek's contribution covers European studies and focuses on the role of the 'strengthened steering core'. Martinez and Kitaev unpack the implicit conflation of internationalisation with entrepreneurialism, showing them to be two distinct processes. Lambert's tabular presentation of the impediments, inhibitors and barriers to university entrepreneurialism is particularly helpful, and will be of interest to both policy makers and academics.

Rinne and Koivula deal with how universities and their staff stimulate and respond to change, while Shattock's final chapter sets out the policy conclusions that the contributors have drawn from the project. By 'drilling down into institutional case studies', he suggests, it is possible to provide an alternative and more nuanced picture of organisational change which can offer 'a corrective' to some of the conclusions reached in earlier policy documents.

As an academic familiar with these debates only in as much as they appear to percolate down from university management, I found it interesting to learn of the original research that lies behind decision making and read about the organisational context of other universities around Europe. While all of the contributions are of a certain style and therefore rather homogenous in presentation, the content is interesting and a recommended read.