

Note on Threshold Learning Outcomes for Sociology, from Raewyn Connell

Thanks to the reference group for a good start with this, and an excellent effort at the impossible task of defining sociology. I agree it's important to have wording that will work for small programmes as well as big ones.

The ALTC requirements to which TASA is responding are an almost perfect illustration of the neoliberal policy imperative: *make yourself auditable!* I wonder if we can make use of this, by building in more reflexivity to the draft. I am concerned that the draft at present (a) tends to reproduce a Northern/professional disciplinary conception of sociology rather than a more inclusive view, (b) may at some points inhibit curriculum experimentation by sociology programmes (though I'm sure none of the Reference Group wants either outcome).

It's all a matter of balance, but I'd like to suggest these amendments:

Outcome 2: "Demonstrate an understanding of sociology as an academic field, in its social, historical and world context; including awareness of its principal concepts and theories, and the global social forces that shape social science and its uses."

Outcome 3: "Demonstrate an understanding of sociological research processes, including design, methods, and ethical relationships with participants and users; including awareness of the diversity of approaches to research, and the social forces and needs for knowledge that drive research."

Outcome 6: [This outcome as drafted seems at present mostly to replicate 3 and 5. Can we instead insert a conceptual skill, that we do always teach?] "Demonstrate an ability to use sociological concepts appropriately and accurately, in dealing with empirical findings and public debates on social issues."

Outcome 7: "Demonstrate an ability to communicate sociological ideas and knowledge to both specialist and non-specialist audiences, and an understanding of the uses of sociological knowledge by communities, social movements, and policy-makers."