Festival of Learning Showcase

**Facilitator(s):** Dr Jan Baldwin, Department of Social Sciences and International Studies

**Strategic theme:** Equipping graduates

**Subject Title:** Ethnography: Stepping into the field of anthropology and sociology

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**Brief Description:**

Applied anthropology and sociology encouraged early in university studies can be useful in assisting students to understand the theoretical frameworks of these complex disciplines. This paper examines the role of doing ethnography in enhancing the learning experience of first year students of anthropology and sociology at Curtin University.

**Benefits:** Applying anthropology and sociology is crucial to the enjoyment and learning experience of first year social science students and through this exercise the students become more culturally aware of their intellectual and social environment.

**Time/Day:** Tuesday 17 March 2015, 3.00-3.30pm

**Duration:** 15/20 mins

**No. of Sessions:** One

**Venue:** Building 400: Room 230

**Special Requirements:** No special requirements needed

**Abstract from the T&L Forum:**

Applied anthropology and sociology encouraged early in university studies can be useful in assisting students to understand the theoretical frameworks of these complex disciplines. This paper examines the role of doing ethnography in enhancing the learning experience of first year students of anthropology and sociology at Curtin University. A short ethnographic exercise serves a purposive role in developing writing skills but also as a means of viewing the world from a less ethnocentric lens, along with consideration of the ethical consequences of research and behaviour of the observer and the observed. My observations were conducted over several years of teaching this unit and my findings that this exercise is an integral component of a first year unit offered in the Faculty of Humanities at Curtin University and its learning outcomes lead onto to further research in the second and third year and, indeed, post graduate research. I argue that applying anthropology and sociology is crucial to the enjoyment and learning experience of first year social science students and through this exercise the students become more culturally aware of their intellectual and social environment. Short ethnographic accounts have the potential to become part of a much larger body of work and this practical exercise assists students to understand the complexity of research.