



May contact email

Sociology is good for you. The oldest person in the U.S. is 113-year-old Goldie Michelson, who has a master's degree in sociology from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her thesis was titled "A Citizenship Survey of Worcester Jewry" and examined why many of the city's older Jewish immigrant residents did not pursue American citizenship or learn English.

I hope those of you who live in Melbourne (and anyone else of course) will try to come to at least some events of the Annual Conference in November (28 Nov-1 Dec). I have decided to present paper there this year on an issue which seems to overlap what is taught in Universities and its commercial application. The issue is the poor quality of questionnaires. I see a lot of questionnaires particularly on line, which cannot, with any certainty, deliver what they promise. I don't know how questionnaire design is taught these days but if some of the designers are products of universities, they have not been taught the consequences of what they do. They offer mismatch of alternatives, a limited number of possible answers, ask for your assessment of a range of organisations that you have no knowledge of, and so on. I hope this will enable a good discussion on questionnaire design and a look at whether people designing commercial questionnaires have had appropriate training. The questionnaire is an important research tool and it is important that questionnaires should be of the highest quality. If you have any comments on the subject you would like to pass on, I will be glad to receive them.

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I note that the John Wiley & Sons (Publishers) Polity Books Series catalogue does not have a section on Applied Sociology. Whether this is because Applied Sociologists don't have the time to write books or because Wiley's have never heard of Applied Sociology. The Catalogue does have some titles that may be of interest. 'The Sociology of Consumption', by Joel Stillerman, (A global study), 'Labour Movements' by Stephanie Luce (Unions against Neoliberalism), 'Overworked and Underpaid' by Trebor Scholz (How workers are disrupting the digital economy), 'The Night Cleaner' by Florence Aubenas (The problems of the West's postindustrial economy and getting a living from part-time or temporary jobs.), 'The Causes of Structural Unemployment' by Janoski, Luke & Oliver. (Factor keeping people from jobs), 'The Sociology of Work' by Grant & Nixon, (A comprehensive overview of the world of work.), 'Globalization and Work' by Williams, Bradley, Devadasan & Erickson. (Deals with synthesis between Work & Globalization), 'Civic Capitalism' by Colin Hay & Anthony Payne, (Suggests a way to a sustainable and environmentally friendly society.), 'Can financial Markets be Controlled?' by Howard Davies, (Does control of financial organisations work?), and finally 'Homo Economicus, the lost prophet of modern times' by Daniel Cohen. (Argues a rebalance between competition and co-operation. Now there is a nice lot of books I haven't read but may get round to in time.

I discovered today that at least one person lists their occupation as "Inventiologist, Psychologist and Executive Coach." I can't imagine what an inventiologist does, and it seems to me that people in

executive position should not need a coach unless they are the relations of the boss or in jobs for the boys straight for being nothing. Now I think about it, I was in the position many years ago of trying to tell the managing director what he had to do (He was an English forester, but the family said it was his turn to take over the Australian operation). At the same time, in the same company, I was also trying to tell the shop steward how to be a shop steward. The previous one had left and the Union rep had pick one woman and said you are the Shop Steward and walk out. Aint life interesting?

Alan Scott, Continuing Education Officer.