Adoption case study:

**Case et al, Criminology**
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I teach on first year modules to a cohort of around 140 students from the Criminology, Criminology and Sociology, and Psychology and Criminology undergraduate degree courses.

We have used Newburn: *Criminology* as the recommended text for these modules for the past six years but opted to replace it with Case et al, *Criminology* for two of our first semester core modules in September 2017.

The main reason for swapping textbooks was because Case et al’s book, with its student focus and ‘ABC’ (‘Always Be Critical’) approach, seemed a better ‘fit’ for our courses during the first semester. It seemed to hit the mark perfectly in addressing the key challenges we face in teaching these modules early on: helping students to engage, understand, think critically, and to care about the subject and their place within it. Our undergraduates have tended to be somewhat ‘reading shy’, and we have also faced challenges in getting them to attend all classes, and to understand the importance and application of some of the theoretical topics.

A particular issue we encountered when using *Newburn* as the key text from the start of the course was that by the second semester, when we begin to expect a little more of them, students were not engaging with the set reading to the extent that we would have liked. They were coming to rely on *Newburn* as their main reference point for assessments rather than exploring and drawing on the wider debates and literature.

I and every member of the teaching team involved in teaching the first years have been really impressed with our new book. *Case et al* fits with our aims and complements the learning journey perfectly, and its accessibility and student focus is unmatched by any other introductory text I have read – the ability of this book to engage and inspire even the most textbook-reading-shy student is remarkable! This year’s students have been extremely engaged with their study, and we attribute this at least in part to the change in text for this cohort.

I have also noticed that *Case et al* is cited less in student essays than *Newburn* was. This may sound like a bad thing, as though they aren’t using it, but they are; they just aren’t relying on it. They are using it as inspiration and a starting point to understand the context, and can now see what to search for in the primary academic literature. *Case et al* has helped to encourage and embed important academic skills and practices (such as critical thinking and extended reading) from the outset, and students then build on them throughout the degree.

The book offers excellent coverage of key areas of criminology, mapping very well to our course – I couldn’t ask for much more in an introductory text. One of the most unique things about it is the variety of approaches used to engage the students; the review questions are really useful but the book goes well beyond this. I love the learning features and use them in my teaching all the time. The ‘What do you think?’ and ‘Controversy and debate’ boxes in particular have really helped us to encourage the students to engage in independent critical thinking, and I find that all the book’s complementary aspects (the interactive elements, the online materials etc.) make teaching modules with this as the key text a breeze!

I’m really glad that we made the switch to this book. Recommending it has made a demonstrable difference for our teaching team and students, and I consider it a must for any undergraduate criminology reading list.