



## The Teaching-Research Nexus

A guide for academics and policy-makers  
in higher education

[www.trnexus.edu.au](http://www.trnexus.edu.au)

### Examples from Australian universities

---

#### Teaching Students about Research Approaches in Sociology

Ms Anne Seitz  
Swinburne University of Technology

**Broad discipline area:**

Arts and Humanities

- Sociology

**Year level:**

- Third year undergraduate

**TRN strategy:**

- Teach research methods, techniques and skills explicitly within subjects
- Build small-scale research activities into undergraduate assignments
- Infuse teaching and research with ethical standards

**Teaching and learning context:**

- Tutorials/Seminars
- Group/Team work
- Assessment (Assignment)
- Research field work
- Inquiry-based learning methodology

**Brief description of the initiative:**

This academic discusses sociological research in her lectures from first year. In *Research Approaches*, which is offered in third year of the Bachelor of Social Science program, students learn how the sociological theories they have discussed in earlier years are used to develop sociological research designs. Students are expected to undertake a small individual or small team research project, in which they must produce a research proposal, conduct a project and write a research report. The academic teaches the students about the different types of research methods available, and supervises the work of the students while they are designing and conducting their project. Lectures and tutorials also cover research ethics and their philosophical underpinnings. An example of different approaches to a particular topic such as environmental issues would include micro-level, interpretive methods (what and how do individuals deal with water savings, pollution etc) meso-level (what, how and which councils, community groups and other social agents are engaged in these

issues), as well as macro-level concerns (who and what research has been undertaken about global warming, environmental degradation etc).

The academic finds that the students' appreciation and understanding of the research process is markedly improved after having some practical experience in the area. Students receive a Learning Guide with appropriate and relevant questions and references for lectures and tutorials. A Unit Outline provides details about the unit's aims, objectives, assessment criteria, modules and topics and the weekly schedule.

**For further details:**

Anne Seitz

Swinburne University of Technology

aseitz@swin.edu.au