

How to: Turn your academic research into an article for *Teaching Geography*

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Many of the best articles in *Teaching Geography* originated from some form of academic research. For example, recent articles by Brand (2020), Trolley (2020) and Persaud (2015) were based on Masters, PGCE and Doctoral projects respectively. Turning a piece of academic writing into a journal article enables well-researched ideas to reach a wider audience, which can have a real impact across the geography teaching community. Yet it is not always a straightforward process. This 'How to' suggests a series of points for writers keen to share their research to consider.

1. Find the right journal

Teaching Geography is a professional journal for busy geography teachers. As such it is something that might be read and discussed by teams of teachers who are looking for new ideas and insights, but who are not likely follow the methodology to recreate the research for themselves. Articles with a strong geographical component, and where the methodology is central to the research, may well be more suited to *Geography*; research more relevant to primary teachers would find a better outlet in *Primary Geography*. Guides to writing for these two journals can be found on the GA website.

2. Find the key message

One of the most important considerations for any article in *Teaching Geography* is being able to say, succinctly, what it is all about. Being able to summarise the article in a few sentences is a useful exercise at the start of your editing process. It might be the sharing of a new idea, a new classroom resource, or a way of teaching a topic. This needs to be central to the article. To ensure you do not try to tackle too many ideas at once, include the key idea in the title and use it to drive the rest of the content.

3. List essential references only

Most academic projects have a wide-ranging literature review, whereas articles in *Teaching Geography* are quite short and practical, and should ideally contain no more than 10 references. Unlike academic writing, not every point made needs to be cited, although that does

not mean wild assertions can be made! Having decided on your key message, identify two or three references that are central to this message. For each, say why it is important and how this work contributes to the message. If these are articles from past issues of *Teaching Geography* so much the better; the GA website's search facility and access to archived journal material for subscribers is a great way to find what has already been written on the topic.

4. Edit the methods section

In most academic research courses there is, quite rightly, a focus on the methodology. This ensures rigour and reduces bias. Teachers are not going to be re-creating your research, so generally you can leave out the methodology unless the article doesn't make sense without it. A simple sentence acknowledging that the ideas in the article are derived from your research can be helpful, and it may be appropriate to outline some basic methods as long as it does not get in the way of the key message.

5. Select the results to share

Unlike the methodology, some of the results of the research project might well be central to the article, especially if it is in the form of student work that has been annotated, or a short transcript of an interview, for example. The results should support your key message. They can be placed in a text box, or figure. Larger images, or additional supporting material, can be a download on the *Teaching Geography* area of the GA website.

I hope these points may be of value to readers thinking about converting a research project into a journal article. The process will mostly involve careful editing of already existing text, rather than a complete re-write from scratch. Ensuring the right 'tone' is important, and reading some previous *Teaching Geography* articles will help in this regard. You can always consult the Editor prior to submitting your article, although do not send in the entire research project unedited. Contact details for the Editor of *Teaching Geography* can be found inside the front cover of this edition. | **TG**

Richard offers advice on turning your academic research into an article for Teaching Geography.

References

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