

Researching Writing: A Formal Research Project

ENG 453
Dr. Alison Witte

WHAT IS A RESEARCH PROJECT?

In this assignment, I ask you to design a primary research project that researches some aspect of writing in your field. After collecting your data, you will analyze it and write a research report. The research report is a formalized write-up of your research project, the data you collected, analysis of that data, and conclusions you draw from the data.

While the topic of this project is up to you, you must collect some primary data from human participants. This can take many forms: interviews with experts or professors, surveys of classmates or the general campus population, experiments that test some aspect of writing or responses to writing, etc.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Your 8-12 page research report draws on a fairly standardized form common to most published research. Your research report should contain the following 5 sections: (1) overview of your project, (2) a literature review, (3) a description of your actual methods, (4) your data and analysis of that data, and (5) conclusions you've drawn from your data. You will also include a Works Cited Page and your data instruments as appendices.

Overview

Your overview should:

- Introduce your project, including a brief statement of your research questions
- Show why your project is unique and important
- Present your thesis (points to the conclusions you've made from your data)

Literature Review

Your literature review should:

- Cite studies relevant to your topic including background information, similar studies, etc.
- Show how the literature you cite is related to your study

Methods

Your methods section should:

- Describe the methods you actually used (how you recruited people, collected data, etc.)
- Describe any issues you had with your actual research and how they influenced your data
- Discuss any limitations of your method choice

Data & Data Analysis

Your data and data analysis should:

- Present the data from your study in appropriate forms (quotes, charts, graphs, etc.)
- Discuss how you sorted the data
- Discuss what the patterns are in your data (what does it tell you about your topic and how does it answer your research questions)

Conclusions

Your conclusions should:

- What did you learn from your data?
- Why should your data matter to other people?
- What, if any, recommendations do you have for the people you were researching? For other people with similar issues?

Works Cited Page

Your Works Cited Page should:

- Contain all the sources used in your report
- Be correctly formatted in AMA, APA, Chicago, or MLA style
- Connect accurately to your in-text citations

Appendix

Your Appendix should:

- Contain a copy of your data instrument(s)
- Be correctly formatted in AMA, APA, Chicago, or MLA style

*NOTE: If the formatting style you choose requires an abstract (APA, AMA), you'll need to include it in your project.

*NOTE: If the formatting style you choose requires footnotes or endnotes in addition to a Works Cited page, you'll need to include those in your project.

IMPORTANT DATES

Tuesday Oct. 17	Research Checkpoint #1: Research Questions
Thursday Oct. 26	Research Checkpoint #2: Research Proposal
Thursday Nov. 2	Research Checkpoint #3: IRB Form and Data Instruments
Tuesday, Nov. 21	Research Checkpoint #4: Collected Data
Tuesday, Nov. 28	First draft due for Workshop
Thursday, Nov. 30	Final Research Reports due to Moodle

ASSESSMENT

This project is worth 250 points (25% of your final grade). It will be graded based on the rubric below.

	Purpose & Content	Organization	Presentation & Design	Requirements
An A Report (225-250 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research report provides clear background information that explains the main concepts necessary to understand the study and relates the study to other research The research report clearly explains the methods used to collect the reported data so that another researcher could replicate the study The research report presents meaningful data and explains how that data answers the research questions The research report draws logical conclusions from the data and presents an argument about how the data is meaningful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research report has a clear thesis that makes a claim about how the presented data tells readers something new or important The major sections are presented in the assigned order Information is consistently presented in an order the helps the reader understand the project Transitions, including headings, are used to guide readers through the document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes effective use of charts and graphs to represent data. All charts are labeled and referenced and explained in the text. The Works Cited Page and in-text citations are correctly formatted in AMA, APA, Chicago or MLA style The research report makes use of design principles to create a visually appealing document. The research report is free of major spelling and grammar errors and contains only a few minor errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets the length requirements. Includes data collection instrument(s) in an appendix
A B Report (200-224 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research report provides mostly clear background information that explains the main concepts necessary to understand the study and relates the study to other research with a few minor omissions The research report mostly clearly explains the methods used to collect the reported data so that another researcher could replicate the study with a few minor omissions The research report mostly presents meaningful data and explains how that data answers the research questions with a few spots where needed data is omitted or unnecessary data is provided The research report mostly draws logical conclusions from the data and presents an argument about how the data is meaningful, but the conclusions are unsupported by the data in a few spots OR the argument is weak or unclear in a few spots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research report has a clear thesis that makes a claim about how the presented data tells readers something new or important The major sections are presented in the assigned order with a few minor lapses Information is mostly consistently presented in an order the helps the reader understand the project with a few minor lapses Transitions, including headings, are mostly used to guide readers through the document with a few minor lapses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly makes effective use of charts and graphs to represent data with only a few spots where charts/graphs seem unnecessary or unconnected to the nearby text. All charts are labeled and referenced and explained in the text. The Works Cited Page and in-text citations are correctly formatted in AMA, APA, Chicago or MLA style The research report makes use of design principles to create a visually appealing document. The research report is free of major spelling and grammar errors and contains some minor errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets the length requirements. Includes data collection instrument(s) in an appendix

	Purpose & Content	Organization	Presentation & Design	Requirements
A C Report (175-199 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research report provides generally clear background information that explains the main concepts necessary to understand the study and relates the study to other research with some minor or a few major omissions The research report generally clearly explains the methods used to collect the reported data so that another researcher could replicate the study with a some minor or a few major omissions The research report generally presents meaningful data and explains how that data answers the research questions with some spots where needed data is omitted or unnecessary data is provided The research report generally draws logical conclusions from the data and presents an argument about how the data is meaningful, but the conclusions are unsupported by the data in a some spots OR the argument is weak or unclear in some spots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research report has a thesis that makes a claim about how the presented data tells readers something new or important, but that claim is unclear The major sections are generally presented in the assigned order with some minor lapses Information is generally consistently presented in an order the helps the reader understand the project with some minor or a few major lapses Transitions, including headings, are generally used to guide readers through the document with some lapses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally makes effective use of charts and graphs to represent data with some spots where charts/graphs seem unnecessary or unconnected to the nearby text. Most charts are labeled and referenced and explained in the text. The Works Cited Page and in-text citations are generally correctly formatted in AMA, APA, Chicago or MLA style with some minor issues The research generally report makes use of design principles to create a visually appealing document. The research report contains some minor and a few major spelling and grammar errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets the length requirements. Includes data collection instrument(s) in an appendix
A D Report (150-174 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research report provides some background information that explains the main concepts necessary to understand the study and relates the study to other research with many minor and some major omissions The research report somewhat explains the methods used to collect the reported data but omits necessary information that would prevent another researcher from replicating the study The research report somewhat presents meaningful data and explains how that data answers the research questions with many spots where needed data is omitted or unnecessary data is provided The research report somewhat draws logical conclusions from the data and presents a minimal argument about how the data is meaningful, but the conclusions are unsupported by the data in most spots OR the argument is weak or unclear in most spots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research report lacks a thesis that makes a claim about how the presented data tells readers something new or important The major sections are somewhat presented in the assigned order with many major lapses Information is somewhat presented in an order the helps the reader understand the project with many minor and some major lapses Transitions, including headings, are somewhat used to guide readers through the document with many lapses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somewhat makes effective use of charts and graphs to represent data with many spots where charts/graphs seem unnecessary or unconnected to the nearby text. Some charts are labeled and referenced and explained in the text. The Works Cited Page and in-text citations are somewhat correctly formatted in AMA, APA, Chicago or MLA style with many issues The research generally report makes use of design principles to create a visually appealing document. The research report contains some minor and a few major spelling and grammar errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fails to meet the length requirements. Does not include the data collection instrument(s) in an appendix

	Purpose & Content	Organization	Presentation & Design	Requirements
An F Report (Less than 150 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research report provides minimal or no background information that explains the main concepts necessary to understand the study and does not relate the study to other research • The research report fails to explain the methods used to collect the reported data and omits necessary information that would prevent another researcher from replicating the study • The research report minimally or never presents meaningful data and/or fails to explain how that data answers the research questions • The research report minimally draws logical conclusions from the data and/or presents no argument about how the data is meaningful, OR the conclusions are unsupported by the data throughout OR the argument is weak or unclear throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research report lacks a thesis that makes a claim about how the presented data tells readers something new or important • The major sections are not presented in the assigned order • Information is rarely or never presented in an order that helps the reader understand the project with many minor and some major lapses • Transitions, including headings, are rarely or never used to guide readers through the document with many lapses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research report somewhat makes effective use of charts and graphs to represent data with many spots where charts/graphs seem unnecessary or unconnected to the nearby text. • A few or no charts are labeled and referenced and explained in the text. • The Works Cited Page and in-text citations are not correctly formatted in AMA, APA, Chicago or MLA • The research generally report makes use of design principles to create a visually appealing document. • The research report contains numerous minor and major spelling and grammar errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to meet the length requirements. • Does not include data collection instrument(s) in an appendix