

## Research Proposal & Poster

**Assignment goal:** To help 390B students understand the necessity of inquiry within writing center studies and how/why research fits into the work of writing centers. To help students gain a better understanding of the Purdue Writing Lab, tutoring, and writing center studies as a field/discipline.

**Summary:** In this course, we have looked at (and will continue to look at) the types of work published in writing center studies. Now, we are switching to understanding how inquiry-based research works in writing centers. In particular, we will be considering a problem, issue, or question gained through our experiences in the Purdue Writing Lab, and figuring out how we would go about studying this phenomenon. **You will be putting together two documents to share the study design you develop as a response to your inquiry: a formal proposal and a research design poster.** The proposal will lay out your interest in your subject and why it should be studied, the relevant literature that already exists about this subject, and information about how you will carry out your study. A proposal is an argument for why research matters, so think of it as a way to justify your choices and to argue for the importance of your ideas and methods. The poster will be a visual display of how you plan to carry out your research. Unlike the proposal, which is specifically written for someone already versed in writing center work, the poster needs to appeal to a wide variety of audiences with varying levels of familiarity with writing centers and the Writing Lab.

### **Deliverables, DUE Dec. 6:**

- Completed research poster, done individually or in groups of no more than three people
- A 3-4 page written proposal, in hard copy
- Attendance by at least one group member at the end-of-year poster session, to be held on Wednesday, Dec. 6., at 11:30-12:20.

### **Grading:**

- Proposal = 200 points, based on assignment completion, thoughtfulness and consideration of the problem and research questions, use of methods and existing literature
- Poster = 50 points, based on effectiveness of design, assignment completion, and strength of research concepts displayed

### **Required Proposal Components:**

- Title + header that include your name
- Statement of the gap or problem being researched and why it is important
- Specific research questions
- Discussion of relevant literature, with citations
- Detailed information about how you plan to carry out your research

### **Required Poster Components:**

- Specific research questions
- Explanation of research methods and participants
- Expectations of what you think you'll find
- Visual component (at least one) – pictures, tables, graphs, flowcharts, etc.
- Citations for important literature related to your work
- Title and names

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**Optional Proposal and/or Poster Components:**

- Interview questions, survey, or other specific instrument for research
- Description of other, similar research done on this topic (literature review)
- Description of how this project might fit into a larger research agenda
- Preliminary findings

**Resources:**

- Purdue Writing Lab tutors, administrators, and staff
- Collection of books available in the Lab (Room 228 specifically)
- *Bedford Guide*
- Jackie Grutsch McKinney, *Strategies for Writing Center Research*
- Rebecca Day Babcock, “Examining Practice: Designing a Research Study” (in book *Tutoring Second Language Writers*)
- Purdue Library (I particularly recommend looking at the *Writing Center Journal* archives)
- *Writing Lab Newsletter*
- Purdue Writing Lab annual reports (available in hard copy through me or through the Purdue OWL)
- Me, your instructor who happens to do writing center research as her “job”
- Examples of research design posters

**Planning Space:**