

To: Professor Patricia Sullivan  
From: Allen Brizee  
Date: April 29, 2006  
Subject: Research Proposal for Studying Undergraduate Writing in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering and the Department of History at Purdue University

## ***Introduction***

This document proposes a research study on undergraduate writing and writing instruction in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) and the Department of History (DoH) at Purdue University. This research is important because continuing, empirical assessment of writing instruction in higher education is necessary to adjust institutional policy and improve teaching methods<sup>1</sup>. In addition, a number of studies show that students may not receive the type of writing instruction they need to navigate college requirements and succeed in the workplace<sup>2</sup>. Since students often spend only 16-32 weeks of their college career in English courses, it's not unreasonable to conclude that students may be completing the majority of their writing in classes outside of English. If the English Department is committed to an effective writing program at Purdue, it's in the Department's best interest to study writing instruction outside Heavilon Hall. Lastly, a study of this kind has not been conducted since 1999 when then Director of Composition, Dr. Irwin Weiser, surveyed Liberal Arts faculty on writing and writing instruction.

The purpose of this research is to examine writing requirements and writing instruction in ECE and DoH to see how they align with university goals. In turn, researchers will study how these two programs' goals influence their course organization and assignment design. Researchers will also examine undergraduate writing in ECE and DoH to determine how university and program goals manifest in writing artifacts (types and amounts of compositions). Lastly, the study will determine attitudes and impressions of administrators, instructors, and students regarding writing goals and writing instruction in ECE and DoH.

The overall goal of the research project is to help administrators and teachers in the Department of English, ECE, and DoH understand writing and writing instruction in ECE and DoH. The study will help us move to a more comprehensive knowledge of writing and writing instruction at Purdue, so we can adjust policy and curricula to better suit students' needs and to more closely reflect the latest composition research. If this study proves successful, its methods can be used to study writing and writing instruction in other colleges / schools / departments at Purdue. In addition, researchers hope to refine communication with other departments to promote a positive and effective writing program at the University. Other possible beneficiaries of this information are writing program administrators and scholars in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID). Specifically, our goals are as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> White, Edward M. *Developing Successful College Writing Programs*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1989. 197-200.

<sup>2</sup> Chenoweth, Ann N., John R. Hayes, et al. "Are Our Courses Working? Measuring Student Learning." *Written Communication* 16.1, January 1999: 29-50. Paul V. Anderson. "What Survey Research Tells us About Writing at Work." *Writing in Nonacademic Settings*. Eds. Lee Odell and Dixie Goswami. New York: Guilford Press, 1985. 3-83.

- Develop replicable methods for researching writing and writing instruction in departments outside of English at Purdue University
- Research University writing expectations and how they influence ECE and DoH policies
- Research the methods of writing instruction in ECE and DoH
- Research the types and amounts of writing undergraduates complete in ECE and DoH
- Help teachers of writing in the Department of English—as well as other composition scholars—learn about the types and amounts of writing undergraduates complete at a large, land grant state university that does not maintain a WAC / WID program
- To help the Department of English and other interested parties at Purdue coordinate efforts for writing instruction.

The scope of this research is limited to looking at writing requirements at Purdue and writing instruction in ECE and DoH. Researchers will also study the types and amounts of writing undergraduates complete in ECE and DoH at Purdue. Operating under the assumption that we must first understand current writing artifacts and methods of writing instruction before we move to any sort of university-wide assessment, our objective is to establish data baselines for pedagogy and types and amounts of compositions rather than evaluate writing quality. Therefore, researchers will not make any sort of quality judgments measured against assignment or program requirements. Put simply, researchers will not be determining whether students wrote “good” or “bad” papers.

The research methods for the proposed study are as follows:

- Analysis of print and electronic media – study University writing goals, ECE and DoH writing goals and methods, instructor syllabi, and student writing artifacts
- Surveys – gather data from administrators, instructors, and students on writing goals, writing instruction, and writing artifacts
- Interviews – gather data from administrators, instructors, and students on writing goals, writing instruction, and writing artifacts.

The next section outlines the problems researchers hope to address in the study.

### ***Problem***

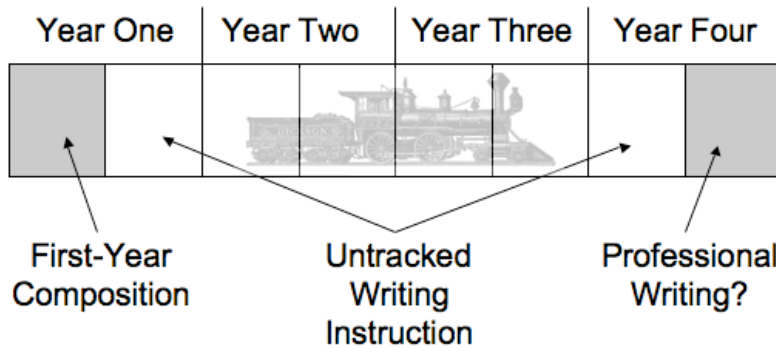
Studies show that college students may not improve their writing skills after one semester of coursework in FYC (Chenoweth, Hayes, et al.). Other studies show that recent college graduates may not possess the skills they need to write effectively in the workplace (Anderson). If one of the primary goals of university composition programs is to prepare students to write in college, and if one of the primary goals of our college system is to prepare students for the workplace, our current institutional policies and writing pedagogies may not be as effective as they could be. In short, students may not be receiving the type of college-level writing instruction they need to develop essential communication skills to participate in academic and workplace discourse communities. To address this problem, English departments are working to develop assessment programs to study the effectiveness of their writing instruction.

However, there is a gap in the knowledge of writing and writing instruction in programs outside English departments.

The Department of English at Purdue maintains a relatively comprehensive understanding of in-house writing and writing pedagogy. Specifically, Introductory Composition at Purdue has built a defined structure of the types and amounts of writing taught in FYC courses through the following methods:

- The Goals, Means, and Outcomes for English 106 and English 108
- The TA and technology mentor programs
- Observations and evaluations
- The English 106 / English 108 colloquium held annually in January
- A developing assessment program.

However, Purdue University currently has no way of tracking the writing students accomplish in courses outside of English. This is a problem because students may spend only 16-32 weeks writing in the English Department, whereas they may be receiving the majority of the writing instruction in courses in their own disciplines. The graphic below highlights the amount of



Untracked Writing Instruction at Purdue

potential writing time students spend untracked by the University. This study proposes developing a replicable method to research discipline-specific writing pedagogy and track the types and amounts of writing undergraduates complete outside English, specifically in ECE and DoH. The following section details the gap addressed.

### ***Gap Addressed***

A good amount of research exists detailing the types and amounts of writing students complete in English departments and within FYC programs. And while studies have been conducted within WAC and WID at other institutions, little current research exists on the types and amounts of writing undergraduates do at *Purdue* outside of English. The last study of this type was conducted by Dr. Irwin Weiser in 1999 when he surveyed Liberal Arts faculty on writing and writing instruction. Our research will dovetail and expand upon Dr. Weiser's study. It will look specifically at ECE and DoH using more comprehensive procedures (outlined below in Research Design) as a pilot to construct replicable methods for studying writing outside the English Department. The following section details the research questions driving this study.

### ***Research Questions***

Our overarching research questions are as follows:

- What expectations do programs outside English at Purdue have for undergraduates, and how do they fulfill these expectations?
- What types and amounts of writing do undergraduates complete in programs outside English at Purdue University?

Other important questions we seek to answer during this study are as follows:

- How do University expectations influence program requirements?
- How do University and program expectations manifest in writing artifacts?
- How do the different departments involved in the study define their writing assignments? In other words, to make sure we're all on the same page, are we defining a "research paper / report" the same way as, say, Electrical Engineering?
- How important is writing to these other programs?
- How do the other programs teach writing?
- How do the two programs involved in the study define page count and work? In other words, some programs include process work and drafts in their page count. Is this consistent across the selected study programs, or do the programs just count polished, finished pages?

The following section outlines some of the previous work conducted in this area of scholarship.

### ***Background / Previous Research***

A growing number of English departments and composition programs are studying and assessing in-house writing and writing instruction. In addition, WAC and WID programs (along with a number of Writing Centers) maintain a relatively good understanding of writing at their institutions. This section overviews some important previous work in these areas. We have organized this research in descending order of influence on the proposed study on writing and writing instruction in ECE and DoH at Purdue.

"Local Research and Curriculum Development" by Dr. Irwin Weiser

Clearly, Weiser's research at Purdue, published in *The Writing Program Administrator as Researcher* (1999), forms one of the most influential frameworks for the proposed study. For his research, Weiser surveyed Liberal Arts faculty on writing to "...provide the introductory writing program at Purdue with the information we need to revise..." first-year composition (96). Specifically, Weiser, developed a questionnaire to gather "...as much information about as wide a range of courses as possible..." (97). Of the total number of surveys sent, 184 faculty members responded. Some of Weiser's key findings are quoted below:

1. ...Ninety percent of the respondents (165 of 184) indicate that they require students to write...
2. ...eighty-two percent of the respondents who teach...[100-level] courses assign some writing. In upper-level courses, 97 percent (200- and 400-level) to 99 percent (300-level) of the faculty report requiring some writing.
3. ...most of the writing completed by students is for examinations...in 300- and 400-level courses, students do more extended writing, particularly in the form of short, documented research papers of seven to twelve pages and reviews of books or articles.
4. ...students write increasingly more as they take more advanced courses, although at the 100-300 level, ten to twenty pages is the most typical amount of writing...at the 400-level, more faculty indicated they assign between twenty and forty pages per semester...
5. ...sixty respondents indicated that students have over four weeks to complete most writing assignments and forty-two respondents indicated that students have between two and four weeks...
6. ...nearly all respondents (155) report that their writing assignments ask students to 'Display an understanding of course materials.' Other frequent goals of assignments: 'Apply a theory or concept to a situation or problem' (120); 'Argue a position' (116); 'Respond to a text, performance, or personal experience' (107); 'Review or summarize others' positions' (93). However, the comparatively low number of respondents (72) who indicated that students are asked to 'Practice writing in a form often employed in your discipline' suggests that undergraduate students are not being introduced to specific disciplinary or professional discourse genres.
7. Seventy percent (115) of the respondents report that they expect students to incorporate information from sources other than those assigned in the course...
8. In 100- and 200-level courses, students are typically not expected to read and use scholarly journals; but in 300- and 400-level courses, they are. (Weiser 98-99)

Weiser concludes that the FYC course he developed as WPA needed to prepare students for the types and amounts of writing they would complete in other college courses at Purdue. In addition, his data showed that composition courses should integrate some kind of writing students might complete in their discipline after graduation. Weiser's research reveals much information on writing instruction in programs outside English, which can help composition instructors as well as instructors outside English who want to improve their teaching methods. From Weiser's results, we can see the value of this type of local research, especially when the stakeholders are the faculty, administration, and students at the university. Importantly, as Weiser states in the chapter, these types of empirical studies produce information that can guide policy and curriculum improvement based on data-driven decisions, not hunches or anecdotes. The proposed study seeks to mirror this type of work and expand on its important conclusions.

“A Writing Center without a WAC Program: The De Facto WAC Center/Writing Center” by Muriel Harris

Although Harris’ chapter in *Writing Centers and Writing Across the Curriculum* (1999) focuses on the Writing Lab at Purdue, her insight on writing at the University and the institutional tension that exists here (one reason for the lack of a WAC program), provides vital information for the proposed study. Since the proposed research, essentially, falls into work that could be conducted by a WAC, and since Harris makes it clear that the Purdue Writing Lab is, as her title suggests, the de facto WAC center at the University, her views have impact on our efforts.

Harris outlines the role our Writing Lab plays as the de facto WAC center. She explains the goals the lab maintains and the relationships between the lab and other programs on campus. She also discusses the tutorial organization within the lab: undergraduate peer tutors and graduate tutors. In addition, Harris outlines the differences she sees between the lab’s role as campus Writing Center and what a true WAC center / program could achieve. She explains that

When there is careful, thoughtful integration and mutual working out of goals and responsibilities, each [a WAC and a Writing Center] can complement and strengthen the other’s work. But without institutionally provided resources and institutional sanction for WAC, a Writing Center has limits beyond which it cannot go in working with students Writing Across the Curriculum and the teachers assigning that writing. (Harris 90-91)

This information underscores the importance of the proposed study. Without an official WAC program, it’s vital that awareness of writing and writing instruction be promoted and assessed.

Harris goes on to describe some of the programs outside of English. For example, some programs at Purdue “...maintain a small staff of writing professionals to teach courses and offer writing support...;” but she stresses that there is little oversight or shared knowledge between programs. Harris concludes that the Writing Lab can be successful in helping students improve writing, but that this improvement exists on a small-scale rather than moving in the overarching changes possible with a WAC program.

Other chapters in *Writing Centers and Writing Across the Curriculum Programs: Building Interdisciplinary Partnerships* valuable to the proposed study are as follows:

- “The WAC/Writing Center Partnership: Creating a Campus-wide Writing Environment” by Robert W. Barnett and Lois M. Rosen
- “Situating Writing Centers and Writing Across the Curriculum Programs in the Academy: Creating Partnerships for Change with Organizational Theory” by Karen Vaught-Alexander.

“The Case for Research: One Writing Program Administrator’s Story” by Nancy Sommers

Sommers’ article in *College Composition and Communication* highlights her latest findings from, and impressions of, the extensive longitudinal research project, ‘The Harvard Study of Writing.’ This article, and the large amount of available results from the Harvard study, form an important base for the proposed study. The Harvard Study, begun in 1997, seeks to “...gain a better understanding of the role writing plays in a college education and to compose as complete a portrait as possible of the college writing experience” (Sommers, Harvard Study Online).

Sommers, and her staff, “Through a combination of surveys, in-depth interviews, and analysis of individual essays...tracked the writing experiences of 400 students, a quarter of the class of 2001” (Sommers, Harvard Study Online). Although the Harvard Study has broader goals than the proposed study, similar research methods make it an important reference for our work.

*Developing Successful College Writing Programs* by Edward M. White

Although this text’s purpose is different from the proposed research at Purdue, many chapters in the book speak to common interests. Chapter 1, for example, discusses the need to improve the campus climate for writing, and White details important writing studies conducted in the past to establish grounding for the following chapters. In Chapter 4, White stresses the importance of writing as a socializing and “individualizing” process vital to the undergraduate experience (62). In Chapter 7, he outlines the steps for establishing a writing program in colleges and universities, which is important because he explains the administrative and institutional challenges WPAs face when building writing programs in higher education. This chapter is also very important because White underscores the need for empirical research to help WPAs justify shifts in policy and increased spending on writing.

*Writing in the Academic Disciplines: A Curricular History* by David R. Russell

Most of the sections in this book fall outside the scope of the proposed study; however, some of the chapters very clearly reinforce and inform our work. In his introduction, Russell discusses the shortcomings of the compartmentalization of the modern university. Compartmentalization, he asserts, leads to a lack of communication and curriculum development that isolates knowledge in pockets rather than creating an interdisciplinary approach most beneficial to students (23). Chapters 9 and 10 speak to the importance of research in rhetoric, composition, writing and writing instruction.

*Programs That Work: Models and Methods for Writing Across the Curriculum* by Toby Fulwiler and Art Young

This influential WAC text takes a detailed look at successful WAC programs in higher education in the United States. The authors seek to overview all the important aspects of WAC programs to provide outlines for others to follow when creating their own WAC programs. Schools studied include, Georgetown University, UCLA, Prince George’s Community College, Michigan Tech University, and The Baltimore Area Consortium.

Though the book focuses on the positive elements of these programs in order to inform future WAC directors, the in-depth discussions of institutional challenges make this an important source of information for the proposed study.

*Administrative Problem-Solving for Writing Programs and Writing Centers: Scenarios in Effective Program Management* edited by Linda Myers-Breslin

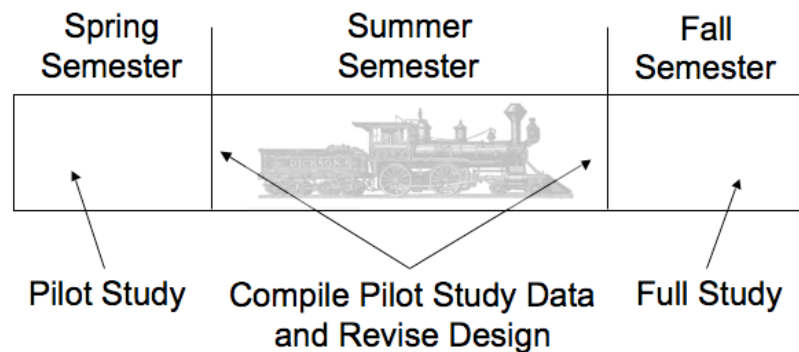
Linda Myers-Breslin's book takes the useful approach of organizing chapters around specific scenarios WPAs and Writing Center directors might face while developing their programs. Therefore, this text is especially helpful because it is process-oriented. The book begins with a section on selecting and training undergraduate and graduate tutors, portfolio assessment, and developing a writing program at a small college. The next section is on program development, and it discusses human resources, WAC, budgeting, and technology. The final section deals with departmental politics, authority, and professional development.

The following section explains the design of the proposed research.

### ***Design of Research***

The proposed study will use the following empirical research methods: print and electronic source analysis, surveys, and interviews. We will run a pilot study prior to the main study to help fix problems and to reduce inaccurate data. The pilot testing will occur during the spring semester so the study can be refined over the summer. The main study will occur during the following fall semester. The graphic to the right illustrates the timeline of the study:

Analysis of print and electronic sources will begin with research on Purdue University writing expectations and requirements. We will then study the expectations and requirements of ECE and DoH



Study Timeline

to see how they align with Purdue's goals. Next, we will analyze syllabi and writing assignment sheets from courses within ECE and DoH. Finally, we will analyze student work to track how writing expectations and requirements flow from the University level, through program policy, syllabi, course assignment sheets, to writing artifacts. Again, we will not be evaluating the quality of writing artifacts; rather, researchers are merely establishing data baselines to see how writing policy works at Purdue and how this manifests in ECE and DoH.

Surveys for the study will include questionnaires for the three levels of organization we perceive as important in ECE and DoH: administrators, instructors, and students. We will conduct pre-pilot qualitative surveys of five people at each level to form research categories. Using these categories, we will then conduct full surveys for the pilot study. The bullet list below outlines the surveys and their purposes:

- A survey of program administrators on the types and amounts of writing they perceive as necessary to fulfill their department's requirements
- A survey of professors, instructors, and TAs on the types and amounts of writing they assign for their classes and the methods they use to teach writing
- A survey of students on the types and amounts of writing they must complete in their coursework.

Below are some sample questions from the survey of faculty (some of these questions are derived from Weiser's study published in 1999):

1. How would you explain the *undergraduate* writing requirements outlined by Purdue University?
2. How would you explain the *undergraduate* writing requirements of your school / department?
3. How do you try to satisfy the University and school / department writing requirements?
4. Which of the following best describe the writing assignments you make?

Short answer (1-5 sentences) exam responses	_____
Several paragraph-length essay exam responses	_____
Review of books or articles	_____
Short (7-12 pages) documented research papers	_____
Longer research papers	_____
Original research projects (case studies, etc.)	_____
Technical / professional reports	_____
Other (please specify)	_____

Likert-scale questions in the student survey will help researchers determine if undergraduate writing requirements and instruction in their program are realistic / successful:

On a scale of 1-5 (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), please respond to the following statements:

The writing assignments in my classes this semester were manageable:	SA-A-U-D-SD
The writing assignments in my classes this semester helped me learn subject matter:	SA-A-U-D-SD
The writing assignments in my class this semester helped me learn about my field:	SA-A-U-D-SD
The response to my compositions helped me improve my writing skills:	SA-A-U-D-SD

Interviews for the study will include meetings with administrative personnel, instructors, and students from a writing intensive course and a non-writing intensive course in ECE and DoH. The bullet list below outlines some of the goals of these meetings:

- Program administrator
  - Research her / his impressions of the University writing requirements
  - Research the types and amounts of writing s/he perceives as necessary to fulfill their department's requirements
  - Research methods of assessment (if any)
- Professor, instructor, and TA
  - Research her / his impressions of the University writing requirements
  - Research the types and amounts of writing s/he assigns for her / his class(es)
  - Research methods of writing instruction
- Students (four) from ECE and DoH. Researchers will interview two students from ECE, one from a writing intensive course and one student from a non-writing intensive course. Researchers will interview two students from DoH, one from a writing intensive course and one from a non-writing intensive course. Researchers will ask participants to bring writing artifacts with them for the interviews:
  - Research her / his impressions of the University and program writing requirements
  - Research the types and amounts of writing s/he must complete in her / his coursework
  - Research her / his impressions of writing instruction in her / his program.

Researchers will look at writing artifacts that include, but are not limited to, research papers, presentations, websites, reflection papers, personal journals, lab reports, Internet blog or listserv responses, and / or articles written for publication. Not included in the study will be writing such as class notes. The graphic below illustrates the research methods for the proposed study:

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School of Electrical and Computer Engineering	Research Methods	Department of History
Program Requirements Syllabi Student Writing	Analysis	Program Requirements Syllabi Student Writing
Administrators  Professors Instructors TAs  Students	Surveys and Interviews	Administrators  Professors Instructors TAs  Students

**Research Methods**

The following section discusses the data coding scheme for the study.

***Data Coding Scheme***

The coding schemes for the study will follow the methods of research conducted for the study: print and electronic research, surveys, and interviews. The following lists outline the types of coding schemes researchers will use for the study:

***Print and Electronic Research***

- Researchers will code data to plot the writing requirements for the University, the programs, and the courses within the selected programs
- Researchers will code data to record whether or not the selected programs outline writing requirements
- Researchers will code data to plot the types and amounts of writing students must complete in the selected program

Researchers will compare and contrast generalized information from this data.

### *Survey Data Coding Schemes*

- Researchers will code data based on short-answer questions
- Researchers will code data based on Likert scale questions to determine the attitudes of study participants
- Researchers will code data based on qualitative, open-ended questions

Researchers will conduct comparisons, T-tests between different populations, significance tests to see if administrators, instructors, and students have different ideas on writing and writing instruction in ECE and DoH, and they will look for correlations.

### *Interview Data Coding Schemes*

- Researchers will code data based on qualitative, open-ended questions

Researchers will determine important points (ethnographic), pull out specific quotes to support survey data points, transcribe interviews, and look for patterns.

The next section outlines the types of statistics and information researchers expect to generate during the study.

### ***Types of Statistics and Information***

The types of statistics and information we expect to find break down into the methods of research planned for the study: print and electronic research, surveys, and interviews. The following list outlines the statistics and information from these three methods:

#### *Print and Electronic Research*

- We expect to develop statistics and collect information from the research on the writing requirements of the University and the individual programs (ECE and DoH)
- We expect to develop statistics and collect information from the research on whether or not the programs outline their writing requirements and how those requirements are fulfilled
- We expect to develop statistics and collect information from the syllabi and the writing assignment sheets instructors use in their classes
- We expect to develop statistics and collect information from the research on the types and amounts of writing students produce in the courses.

#### *Survey Data*

- We expect to develop statistics on the attitudes of the study participants regarding University and program expectations, the importance of writing in their program, and the types and amounts of writing required, assigned, and produced

- We expect to develop statistics on impressions of success of writing instruction in ECE and DoH.

### *Interview Data*

- We expect to collect information derived from open-ended questions on the writing expectations of the University and the individual programs
- We expect to collect information from questions on the teaching methods instructors use to implement University and program writing requirements
- We expect to collect information from questions on the types and amounts of writing students complete in their programs and whether students believe the writing instruction is successful.

The following section outlines the site of the proposed research.

### *Site of Research*

The site of the research will be Purdue University's West Lafayette, Indiana campus, specifically, the following programs: ECE and DoH. We will distribute surveys via campus mail and in class. Researchers will conduct interviews on the Purdue campus, and they will work from the Department of English in Heavilon Hall. In addition, researchers will work on the Internet and from the Purdue University library system. The next section discusses the researchers roles in the study.

### *Researchers' Roles*

All researchers involved in this study will be CITI certified, and the study will be approved by the Purdue IRB. We will follow all of the CITI and IRB rules and regulations to ensure participant safety and to ensure ethical, accurate data collection. Researchers' roles will follow the study design outlined above. Researchers will create and pilot test the study before conducting the full version of the investigation. Researchers will collect the data from the print and electronic investigations, surveys, and interviews. They will then develop quantitative and qualitative information and interpretations. Researchers will develop conclusions based on the findings. The next section identifies the participants in the proposed study.

### *Research Participants*

The participants of the proposed study will be limited to administrators, TAs, instructors, professors, and students in ECE and DoH at Purdue. We will assemble five participants from each category (administrator, instructor, student) from each program (thirty total) to conduct the pre-pilot survey.

After we have established survey categories, we will run the pilot test (during the spring semester). Participants in the pilot study include five individuals from each category from each program (thirty total).

The full study will expand the number of participants significantly. Researchers will interview as many administrators and instructors as possible and interview four students: one from a writing intensive course in ECE, one from a non-writing intensive course in ECE, one from a writing intensive course in DoH, and one from a non-writing intensive course in DoH. We will survey as many administrators, instructors, and students as possible during the full study. The next section discusses the possible limitations of the study.

### ***Possible Limitations***

Possible limitations of this study include the lack of interest or involvement from the selected study programs at Purdue and the local nature of the research and data. Individuals in ECE and DoH may have to commit some time to cooperating with researchers. In addition, instructors will have to sacrifice a small amount of time during their classes to administer surveys to students. Other possible limitations include the following:

- Application of data and conclusions to
  - smaller or larger universities
  - non land grant, research-1 state universities
  - universities maintaining WAC / WID programs
  - universities outside the American system
  - developing writing goals and assignments in programs outside ECE and DoH
  - other situations markedly outside the context and parameters of this study.

Regardless of these possible shortcomings, a wide range of people might benefit greatly from this research. Writing scholars, WPAs, WAC and WID directors, and individuals in programs outside English departments will be able to use this research and its data to help them better understand writing in courses outside English. Dr. Weiser, in his chapter on the research he conducted at Purdue, asserts, “Such work must be recognized, valued, and rewarded by the institutions that use and are transformed by it” (102).

### ***Conclusion***

Institutions of higher education across the country are developing better methods of assessment to measure the effectiveness of their policies and their instruction. Individual programs within these institutions are following suit. Assessment is an important part of self-analysis and critical inquiry, and the first step in assessment is determining the basic requirements established by the institution. The next step is studying how these requirements manifest in programs within the institution and how people inside these programs understand and carry out these expectations.

Lastly, it's important to study the types and amounts of artifacts produced under the direction of these requirements.

We cannot make a fair and effective assessment of the quality of our work at Purdue University until we study our goals and understand how these goals are achieved. The proposed research seeks to take these first few steps, so that ECE and DoH have a better idea of the writing and the writing instruction completed within their programs. In addition, data produced by this study will help the Department of English adjust their policies and instruction to better prepare students for the types and amounts of writing they will complete after FYC. If successful, the research methods developed for this study could form a framework of assessment used in programs throughout the Purdue University system and beyond.

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