



Assignment: Process Research Report

College Composition • ENG 1030 • Fall 2024

1. BACKGROUND

We have now complicated (and possibly cast doubt on) your ideas of the writing process that you've been taught, or at least have been using, for years. With a little self-awareness and metacognition, you can learn more about the way you work and write and then make changes to improve the process in the future.

A common research method used by composition researchers is a "think-aloud protocol" in which an author is asked to say everything that comes to mind while writing. Though this method has serious shortcomings, discussed briefly by Carol Berkenkotter and Murray (1983), it can still bring insights, especially on a small scale. Like Sondra Perl (1979) did years ago, you will observe a writer's process to see what you can learn. Unlike Perl, you will be your own research subject by both creating and analyzing a record of your own adaptive writing processes. Then you'll need to report your findings to other interested researchers. In academia, we often do that through journal articles. For this assignment, you'll create an academic journal article appropriate for publication in a writing-studies journal. In other words, you'll want to model your work after other writing scholars' articles.

In addition, you have resources to help you structure your writing. Recently, you found a handout about the moves authors make when creating research-paper introductions, as created by John Swales (1990). To start your introduction, recall what you learned from the other authors you read from. Compare your findings to the suggestions they offered in their research. Then show how your research relates to the work of others before you. To do that, establish the territory of what is already known, identify a niche within the field of research, and occupy that niche by presenting your findings. (If you need a refresher or suggested sentence starters, refer to the CARS Model handout.) Then, follow the traditional IMRD pattern to structure the remainder of your report.

As you can see, this paper will both document and demonstrate your understanding of the readings and concepts from class. Once you've created your initial

draft, we will create opportunities to follow advice from Anne Lamott (2005) by conducting in-class peer review.

2. PROCEDURE

Samples of how former students have completed this assignment can be found in Canvas. Additionally, online searches for "imrd articles" generate an overwhelming volume of ideas. Models to emulate are easy to find. The general stages of the process to get you to a similar draft generally include:

Brainstorming: What would you like to learn about your own writing process?

Researching: Use a writing assignment from another class as your testing scenario. Record yourself writing that paper so that you can analyze your process in that assignment for use in this one.

Analyzing: Evaluate the recording you made all of your writing process. Note what you do when and look for trends or patterns.

Planning: Determine the conclusions you reached through your analysis and how they relate to research findings from authors you've read previously.

Drafting: Be sure to include both the CARS and the IMRD steps to mimic the structure of a scholarly research report. [For examples to emulate, refer to Rose (1980) or Berkenkotter and Murray (1983).]

Revising: Be prepared to make substantial revisions to your first draft. Refer to the rubric to make sure you meet the expectations you have for your own grade.

3. ASSESSMENT

Because your writing process is distinctive, and your instructor will not watch your video, this assignment clearly cannot be graded in terms of accuracy—there is no way to verify whether what you identify as your writing process is correct. Instead, what you need to do in your paper is show the thinking that you have done while

trying to create it. What have you observed while doing your research? What have you learned about yourself while doing this project? What might you rely on more or even do differently as a result of what you have seen?

By approaching this paper as an opportunity to share your growth and development as a writer and your learning and experiences as a researcher, you can create a paper that is interesting, informative, and personally valuable. Your success is determined by how clearly you identify and answer your research question, how well you show your awareness of your writing process, how thoroughly you reflect on what you have learned, and the clarity with which you compose the paper. (See Table 1 for details.) Using the CARS and IMRD steps will help ensure that your writing is clear and professionally organized.

REFERENCES

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	QUESTION	AWARENESS	REFLECTION	CLARITY
Excellent	Provides an insightful answer to the stated research question.	Writer expresses meta-awareness of growth or change as a result of research.	Author analyzes the research conclusions and applies them to future situations.	Writing is clear and easy to follow/understand.
Adequate	Identifies and attempts to answer a research question.	Writer shows awareness of the writing process as seen in primary research.	Author reflects on the study and draws conclusions about their process.	Text has occasional issues that do not severely detract from readability.
Falls short	Provides no clear research question, perhaps resorting to a thesis statement.	Writer does not show awareness of the writing process found in research.	Author presents research findings but without connections to other work.	Technical problems make the writing detract from the author's ethos.

TABLE 1. Process Analysis Grading Rubric