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Formalized Curiosity: Outcomes of an Empirically-Based Research Methods Course for English Majors

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Formalized Curiosity: Outcomes of an Empirically-Based Research Methods Course for English Majors

Introduction

What are the outcomes of a course designed for English majors that teaches empirical research methods and uses quantitative and qualitative data collection?

- Researchers are students enrolled in research class using human subjects;
- Outcomes studies focus primarily on STEM fields;
- Little to no research to date on outcomes specific to English majors;
- Growing body of literature on the role of research in humanities, English studies, and writing studies;
- In English 3470, students conduct one individual research project, as well as participate in a class/group project.

This study breaks new ground and analyzes what the outcomes are for students who complete a class in empirical research methods and quantitative data.

Methods

Our participants were 80 people who completed English 3470 and 2 professors of the course. Our methods included:

1. Survey
2. Interviews
3. A textual analysis of several artifacts:
 - English 3470 Syllabi
 - A list of topics from previous English 3470 individual projects
 - Research posters
 - Whole-class projects, individual projects and publications produced as a result of English 3470

This project is in compliance with USU's Policy 584: Protection of Human Participants in Research.



Results

- Prior to ENGL 3470, 52% of participants felt that they did not understand how numbers and statistics function in their field.
- 92% of students, believed that their ability to conduct research increased as a result of ENGL 3470.
- 88% of students reported having a stronger understanding of how numbers and statistics function in their field after taking ENGL 3470.
- Most of students (80%) agreed that their ability to structure an infographic or graph improved as a result of ENGL 3470.

Conclusions

As a result of successfully completing English 3470, Approaches to Research in English Studies, students

- View themselves as researchers;
- See research questions everywhere;
- Discover how to satisfy their curiosity;
- Understand the far-reaching application of English studies

Figure 2 – Students' Use of Skills Acquired in ENGL3470 in Other Classes or Situations

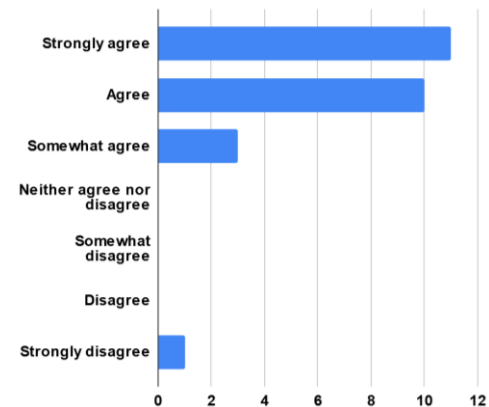
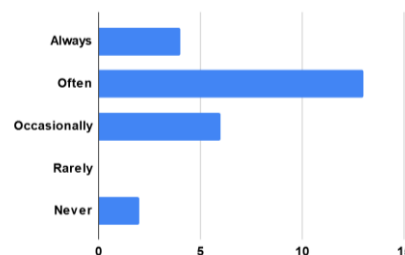


Figure 1– Survey Responses for “I felt a sense of accomplishment and pride in my research project when completed.”



Researchers: Tristan Brockbank, Kameron Chapman, Kate Chapman, Amanda Horning, Taybri Jackson, Katie Jenkins, Bailee Kent, Addy Kirkham, Savannah Leonhardt, Casey Mack-Gifford, Arlene Mair, Allison McMurray, Aaron Piscione, Sabrina Satterwaite, Maigan Sorensen, and Samantha Stringham (UTF)

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