

# Ways of Research: The Status of the Traditional Research Paper Assignment in First-year Writing/Composition Courses



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**Abstract:** I created my Exploratory Survey on the Status of the Research Paper Assignment in First-year Writing/Composition Courses to learn whether the traditional research paper remained as common an assignment in 2009 as it had been in the past. My survey updates results from two previous surveys on the status of this assignment. Ambrose N. Manning's survey, conducted in 1961, found that 83% of colleges and universities in the United States included the traditional research paper assignment in first-year writing/composition curricula. James E. Ford and Dennis R. Perry's 1982 survey concluded that 78.11% of the colleges and universities that required first-year writing/composition courses included the assignment, a decline of 5%. My survey results indicate that in 2009, at survey respondents' schools, only 6% of research assignments in first-year writing/composition courses are traditional research paper assignments, a decline of 72% since 1982, while 94% are alternative ones. This shift appears to reflect trends in scholarship as well as changes in assessment practices, structure of first-year writing/composition programs, and technologies for writing, researching, and teaching.

## Introduction

To begin his 1961 article, "The Present Status of the Research Paper in Freshman English: A National Survey," Ambrose N. Manning declares, "we might as well face it: the research paper in Freshman English is here to stay!" (73). By the research paper, Manning means what we refer to today as the traditional research paper: an informational or explanatory piece of writing that reviews a prescribed number of sources. This type of writing, Manning reports, was required in 83% of first-year writing/composition courses at American colleges and universities in 1961 (73). He adds that the research paper appears to be "the one thing . . . consistent in most of our Freshman English courses" (73). In 1982, James E. Ford and Dennis R. Perry produced a follow-up study, "Research Paper Instruction in the Undergraduate Writing Program," reporting that "instruction in the research paper is required in 78.11% of freshman composition programs offering it" (827). However, in their concluding paragraph, Ford and Perry explain that some respondents reported discussions among faculty to review this requirement.

Since the 1990s, a large number of articles discussing alternative research assignments began appearing in first-year writing/composition scholarship. In 2000, for instance, Robert Davis and Mark Shadle surmise that the majority of first-year writing/composition programs still require instruction in the traditional research paper (417). They point out, though, that the research paper assignment, especially as presented in research writing textbooks, "reinforce[d] unoriginal writing" (418). So, in their article, Davis and Shadle propose a number of alternative research assignments, which they argue offer students more opportunities for engagement and pleasure in research and writing processes than the traditional research paper (418). Authors of publications appearing since 2000 have tended to support Davis and Shadle's position. This scholarship, which usually reports results from a small number of first-year writing/composition classes on a single college or university campus, suggests a more widespread trend; however, a nation-wide study exploring the extent to which these discrete, local reports reflect more general acceptance of alternative research assignments has not been conducted. The present study was designed to perform that work. [1](#)

## Entrenchment

I created my Exploratory Survey on the Status of the Research Paper Assignment in First-year Writing/Composition Courses [2](#) to learn whether the traditional research paper assignment remains a common feature of first-year writing/composition curricula at four-year colleges and universities in the United States (see [the Appendix](#)). I undertook this study primarily as a response to, as Davis and Shadle note, the absence of a current nationwide study (417). Referring to Ford and Perry's 1982 survey, Davis and Shadle explain, "the survey has not been repeated, but our own informal research suggests that the [traditional] research paper is still taught in most

composition curriculums, typically at the end of a first-year composition course or course sequence” (417). James C. McDonald makes a similar observation about the status of the traditional research paper assignment in *Reforming College Composition: Writing the Wrongs*, one echoing Manning’s conclusion in 1961 that the assignment “has become entrenched” in first-year writing/composition courses (Manning 74). McDonald maintains that “the [traditional] research paper remains the 400-pound gorilla in the first-year composition course, probably the most institutionalized undergraduate writing assignment in higher education” (137-38).

This type of observation appears in scholarship that also mentions Richard L. Larson’s 1982 appeal “to abandon the concept of the generic [traditional] ‘research paper’” (816), a form of writing that he identifies as a “non-form of writing” in the title to his article, “The ‘Research Paper’ in the Writing Course: A Non-Form of Writing” (811). Davis and Shadle and McDonald are just two examples of authors who not only discuss Larson’s 1982 article but also agree with both of its premises: one, “the generic [traditional] ‘research paper’ as a form of writing taught in a department of English, is not defensible”; and two, in teaching the traditional research paper, “we mislead students about the activities of both research and writing” (Larson 812).

## ***Complaints in Theory***

Davis and Shadle and McDonald also offer historical perspectives on the traditional research paper assignment; they argue that the assignment reflects a past perspective on teaching and learning. Davis and Shadle attach the traditional research paper “to a modern era, now passing” (423). McDonald considers it “a legacy of current-traditional textbooks, which dominated composition instruction as the research paper became a requirement in the freshman English course” (*Beyond* 139); David R. Russell estimates that this occurred in the early 1900s (79). Following Russell, Davis and Shadle fit the traditional research paper assignment to an educational context in which teachers perceived students as apprentices (Davis and Shadle 423; Russell 80), a perception that largely no longer informs dynamics between teachers and students in higher education classrooms.

Although some modernist ideas may have carried over into contemporary first-year writing/composition pedagogy, in particular those proceeding from notions that writing can produce discovery or that writing is an exploration, others have not: for instance, as Davis and Shadle argue, modern teachers viewed students as reporters of what was known; contemporary teachers acknowledge them as knowledge producers (423). The traditional research paper assignment asks students with the latter identity construct to act as the former; hence, Davis and Shadle posit, the necessity for alternative assignments that offer students opportunities not only for reporting what is already known but also for making what they learn from research matter in personal or social ways (426). McDonald agrees with Davis and Shadle that “it is not at all clear that there is a compelling need to teach freshmen to write a generic academic article” (*Reforming* 145) and “it is important for students to learn . . . to use research to write other genres for other purposes and audiences,” but he does not maintain that revising the assignment is enough. McDonald argues, instead, that survival of the traditional research paper assignment is “connected to unsettled questions” about first-year writing/composition courses more generally; consequently, he advocates widespread review of “the content and function of the course.” In his opinion, it is impossible “to expect easy reform [of the research assignment] or abandonment of research paper instruction” to address all of the issues raised in the history of complaint about the assignment (*Reforming* 145).

Although most scholarship on this topic does not take up McDonald’s call—and, before him, Sharon Crowley’s call, in *Methodical Memory: Invention in Current-Traditional Rhetoric*—to assess the overall need, function, and content of first-year writing/composition courses, scholarship since the 1980s has provided evidence of ongoing complaints about the traditional research paper assignment and of disagreements among scholars and teachers about the role and necessity of the assignment in first-year writing/composition curricula. Larson’s article, for instance, which appeared the same year that Ford and Perry’s study was published, argues for dropping the traditional research paper requirement, while Ford and Perry report that 78.11% of colleges and universities with a first-year writing/composition requirement include instruction in writing the traditional research paper in their curricula (827).

This apparent discrepancy between scholars’ positions, many favoring not retaining the traditional research paper in first-year writing/composition curricula, and reports of classroom practices that include instruction in the assignment, has also informed articles written since 2000. Daniel Melzer and Pavel Zemliansky, for example, oppose continuing instruction in the traditional research paper in first-year writing/composition courses. Citing Larson’s article, as well as Doug Brent’s *Reading as Rhetorical Invention*, Robert Connors’s *Composition-Rhetoric*, and Bruce Ballenger’s *Beyond Note Cards and The Curious Research*, which also recommend alternatives to the traditional research paper, [3](#) Melzer and Zemliansky state that the intention of their study is to “contribute to the argument in favor of replacing the traditional research paper with a variety of alternative researched writing assignments.” However, data from their study of research writing instruction across the disciplines reveal that “innovative research

writing assignments appear in significant numbers, alongside the traditional research paper.”

## 2009 Exploratory Survey

My survey, which was designed to update Manning’s 1961 and Ford and Perry’s 1982 findings, benefits from these debates, as survey questions address some of the recurring issues; in particular, there is one question about typical research assignments and another about learning outcomes associated with research assignments. I hoped that the results from these and other survey questions would either confirm Manning’s 1961 prediction and demonstrate that the traditional research paper is still here to stay or, suggesting that practice was currently more in line with theoretical perspectives than it was in 1982—or even 2003, indicate a shift away from the traditional research paper assignment in a majority of first-year writing/composition courses at survey respondents’ schools. In addition to collecting data about research paper assignment types and learning outcomes associated with research paper assignments, my survey also asked respondents to provide demographic information about their schools, to share information about the status and role of first-year writing/composition courses in their curricula, and to discuss the connection, or lack of connection, of research instruction in first-year writing/composition courses to research instruction/research expectations in other courses across the curriculum at their schools. The results of my survey, which collected usable data from 166 respondents out of a large national sample, suggest some distinct trends among respondents’ schools regarding: the shape of research paper assignments in first-year writing/composition courses; the uses of the research assignment in course and program assessment; the place of first-year writing/composition courses in undergraduate curricula; and unanticipated, but provocative findings indicating possible connections between the type of respondents’ schools (public or private), the preparedness of first-year undergraduates at those schools to produce college-level written work, the role of first-year writing/composition courses, and the location of research instruction in first-year curricula.

## Method for Conducting the Survey and Calculating the Results

### *Thoughts Regarding Survey Design*

My Exploratory Survey on the Status of the Research Paper Assignment in First-year Writing/Composition Courses (see Appendix A) contains five questions about respondents’ schools and thirteen questions related to the research paper assignment; these thirteen questions seek to learn the research assignment’s place in curricula and its current form. I included survey questions that had been asked on Manning’s 1961 and Ford and Perry’s 1982 surveys and others that were modeled on concerns about the assignment raised in writing/composition scholarship published since 1960 in an effort to collect comparable data, to determine the extent to which issues raised in scholarship comport with current practice, to address anecdote and lore about the assignment, and to produce updated, nationwide findings regarding the status of research paper assignments in first-year writing/composition courses. I sent my survey out to a larger and more homogeneous population of schools, however, than had been the case with previous surveys.

My survey was created to ascertain the status of the research paper assignment in first-year writing/composition courses; however, I did not mention the traditional research paper assignment in the survey, and the survey did not contain a definition or description of any research assignment. I referred to assignments as “typical research assignments.” This decision was an intentional one. Previous researchers seem not to have provided definitions or descriptions of assignments either, although their articles suggest that their studies focus on the traditional research paper assignment. For example, the introduction to Manning’s 1961 article explains the research paper assignment in this way: “Regardless of what it is called – research paper, term paper, source paper, reference paper, investigative, library paper, or documented paper (and all of these terms are used), a great majority of colleges and universities throughout the country, 83% of them, require a paper during the freshman year based on the student’s use of the library or ‘controlled research’ materials” (73). I made the decision not to provide a definition or description, in part, to follow the model offered by Manning and other previous researchers. Primarily, though, I wanted to avoid bias and to create the opportunity for respondents to provide their own definitions and descriptions of typical research assignments in first-year writing/composition courses at their schools. Consequently, the traditional assignment was only mentioned when respondents voluntarily discussed it in comments to survey questions. I present respondents’ definitions and descriptions of both traditional and alternative research paper assignments in the Discussion of Survey Results section. Interestingly, respondents provided consistent definitions and descriptions of the traditional assignment in their survey responses.

I referred to assignments other than the traditional one as alternative research assignments for two reasons. This is the way that the assignments are referred to in scholarship, and respondents describe typical assignments at their schools that are not traditional research paper assignments in this way. Characterizing assignments as traditional and alternative proves misleading, however, since responses to my survey indicate that assignments included in the alternative category currently appear a more predominant feature of first-year writing/composition courses than does the traditional research paper assignment.

Previous surveys collect data from more than one type of school: Manning's survey, for instance, was sent to four-year public and private colleges and universities, faith-based colleges and universities, two-year community colleges, and vocational/technical schools. These previous studies report total numbers and percentages but do not present results by types of schools. Manning presents the results from his study by region of the country, though. I decided to focus on collecting data about research paper assignments in first-year writing/composition courses at four-year co-ed, secular, liberal arts, private and public colleges and universities in the United States, since these schools share a liberal arts educational mission and serve populations of students with similar educational goals. By doing so, I hoped to find out whether my results follow trends identified in previous research about a more heterogeneous population of schools and, in addition, to discover the current status of research paper assignments in a narrower, national sample. Future research on this topic can, then, following my design, focus on collecting data from other institutional populations, comparing results to those about four-year public and private schools' curricula and to those collected in the past from a more diverse sample of schools.

## ***Conducting the Survey***

I sent out my survey to Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) at four-year co-ed, secular, liberal arts, private and public colleges and universities in the United States. I created my mailing list from The University of Texas at Austin: U. S. Universities by State (<http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ/state>). In April 2008, I created a blog on the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA Council) website (<http://www.wpacouncil.org>) to announce the survey and to communicate updates. In addition, I created a website (<http://researchpapersurvey.wetpaint.com>) which contained links to the survey and cover letter. These two electronic spaces were intended to extend the reach of my survey to potential respondents whose names and contact information I was unable to locate through the University of Texas web list and to facilitate access to the survey for those respondents who might prefer completing it in a web format. I included a link to the research paper website in the December 2008 update to my WPA Council blog. Following that post, I began sending the survey out as email attachments to WPAs whose email addresses I was able to locate through the University of Texas web list (T = 750). I sent the survey out a second time in February 2009 and a third time in April 2009. By April 20, 2009, I had received completed surveys from 32% (239) of recipients. Only 22% (166) of those responses were usable, however; I had to eliminate surveys that did not contain information about respondents' schools and surveys that provided no answers or comments to the first two survey questions.

## ***Calculating Survey Results***

To most effectively organize and read the data from my survey, I created an Excel spreadsheet. Many of the survey questions (questions 1, 2, 3, 9, 12, and 13) were presented in such a way that respondents could answer yes or no. I coded yes answers as a 1 and no answers as a 2 when I entered responses to those questions on the spreadsheet. Questions 5, 6, and 11 were easily quantified: I coded the first answer choice as a 1 and the second answer choice as a 2 for all of the responses to those three questions. I also numbered choices for the first five questions, which reported information about respondents' schools. I was able to create a list and assign numbers to each list item from respondents' answers to questions 7 and 8. Responses to questions 4 and 10 required qualitative analysis, as was the case with respondents' comments to all questions. Question 4 received a large number of non-responses, and question 10 only received comments when respondents' schools had dropped a required research paper assignment from first-year writing/composition, which occurred at 12 schools (7% of total respondents).

In their comments to survey question 7, outcomes associated with research paper assignments (see Table 2), respondents generally stated more than a single outcome; consequently, the total number of responses to this question is much larger than the sample size because, when I coded the responses to this question, I included all of the outcomes that each respondent provided. Some of these outcomes correspond directly to *WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition*: specifically, survey outcomes 2-7, 9, 10, 12, 16, 18, and 22. I used that list of outcomes when I coded responses from survey respondents who stated that the first-year writing/composition programs at their schools used *WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition*.

Survey question 8 provided private and public school respondents with the opportunity to elaborate on the types of typical assignments offered in first-year writing/composition courses at their schools (see Table 1). From respondents' descriptions of typical assignments, I was able to code 149 typical research assignments. Some respondents included examples of typical research assignments; even when their schools did not require a research paper assignment in first-year writing/composition, teachers typically assign writing projects that use research. In addition, most respondents included more than one typical research assignment, and some included complicated assignments that were staged. Consequently, most respondents provided information about more than one type of assignment, and I coded each respondent's comment to this question for all of the types of assignments represented by the materials provided.

One of my goals was to compare my survey results with those collected from previous surveys. Results from surveys conducted in the past were reported as total numbers and percents. I present my results in the same ways.

## Discussion of Survey Results

From 1961, when Manning reported the results of his survey, until 1982, the year of Ford and Perry's follow-up study, instruction in the traditional research paper assignment declined in first-year writing/composition courses by 5%. The results of my exploratory survey reveal that since 1982, among the population of survey respondents, instruction in this assignment has declined even more sharply. [4](#) Survey respondents [5](#) report that the traditional research paper is a typical research assignment 6% of the time; respondents characterize 94% of research assignments as alternatives to the traditional research paper.

### *Traditional Research Paper Assignments*

Respondents to my survey as well as those to Manning's and to Ford and Perry's surveys describe the traditional research paper in much the same way. Respondents to my survey who describe the typical assignment as the traditional research paper consider the assignment an informative/explanatory piece of writing, written in an objective voice, using library resources (including online databases). For instance, one respondent offers the following description of a traditional assignment: in the research paper assignment, students "must be able to incorporate outside sources in their writing . . . [through] quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing and documenting sources." This group of respondents does not always describe the traditional assignment as a thesis-driven piece of writing. A small number specify that resources available to students are closed (all students use the same sources); most traditional research paper assignments, however, are open (students locate their own sources). Topics for traditional research paper assignments also vary; students select their own topics in some programs and, in others, students choose topics related to course content.

Item	Assignment type	Number of responses	Percentage of total
1	No typical research paper assignment	24	14%
2a	Traditional research paper on topic of student's choice	7	5%
2b	Traditional research paper on topic related to course content	2	1%
<b>Alternative research assignments, identified by genre/rhetorical mode:</b>			
3	Analysis (of a career issue, an issue in student's major, a trend in popular culture, a law/policy/cultural or historical movement/legislation, a local/public culture/landmark/space/history, a piece of literature, a personal experience)	18	12%
4	Evaluation (of a campus service/event/issue/problem, a current/historical/controversial issue)	3	2%
5	Investigation (of a contemporary issue)	3	2%

6	Cause and effect	3	2%
7	Compare and contrast	1	1%
<b>Alternative research assignments, identified by format:</b>			
8	argument/researched argument	54	36%
9	annotated bibliography	11	7%
10	proposal	9	6%
11	write up of an interview/observation/survey	6	4%
12	advocacy paper	3	2%
13	collaboration	3	2%
14	article (for a popular publication)	2	1%
15	profile	2	1%
16	translation (of one genre of writing to another)	2	1%
17	action plan	1	>1%
18	brochure	1	>1%
19	ethnography/autoethnography	1	>1%
20	I-search paper	1	>1%
21	intellectual biography	1	>1%
22	multigenre project	1	>1%
23	problem-solving paper	1	>1%
<b>Alternative research assignments, mixed media:</b>			
24	An essay or written project using research that also included oral/visual/graphic/multimedia/other computer-assisted content or presentations	13	9%

**Table 1: Assignment types.** This table contains a breakdown of all research assignment types specified by 166 survey respondents. The number of particular assignment types (T=149) and the percent of total respondents (T=166) follow assignment descriptions. 24 or 14% of respondents indicated that there was no typical research paper assignment at their schools, so that number is not included in the calculations.

## ***Researched Argument Assignments***

Of the variety of alternative research assignments offered at the schools surveyed, researched argument assignments were the most common (36%). Some respondents describe researched argument assignments that grow out of issues raised in course reading. Prompts for this type of researched argument assignment range from “Was the West a place where women could have more autonomy than in more settled areas of the country?” to “Does a sub-culture experience its self-image and cultural image through advertising?” and to prompts asking students to create an argument about an argument presented in a single text; the respondent who provided the latter prompt used Charles Krauthammers’s “Crossing Lines: A Secular Argument against Cloning.” Others prompt students’ writing by drawing their attention to features of arguments. For instance, one respondent provides an assignment that directs students “to create an argument, an analysis, of a written textual argument . . . [that focuses on] a single element, or a set of elements in an argument (claim, support, warrant, logical fallacy, inductive or deductive logic, etc.) . . . from one of the articles in your reader.” A smaller number of respondents describe

researched argument assignments that require students to formulate their own topics and argument perspectives; students might write a preliminary proposal as part of this type of assignment, but even if they do not, the teacher usually approves their topics and oversees the direction of their research.

Although respondents' researched argument assignments are quite diverse, they distinguish themselves from the traditional research paper assignments because, as one respondent notes in a researched argument assignment description, "this essay is to be an argument, not a report." These prompts also suggest another distinction: respondents who assign researched argument assignments provide instruction in conventions characteristic of the argument genre. Finally, students' writing should demonstrate their ability not only to locate, evaluate, and synthesize research, outcomes relevant to all research paper assignments including the traditional research paper assignment but also to make choices about how they use research to suit the rhetorical purposes of their essays, the genre, and their argumentative stances.

Scholarship does suggest the turn to alternative research assignments, however not necessarily by 72%, and scholarship does not predict such a large percent preference for researched argument assignments. The effect Robert A. Schwegler and Linda K. Shamon note in "The Aims and Process of the Research Paper" could account for this finding: teachers might create assignments that offer students opportunities to demonstrate their strengths. Schwegler and Shamon contend that teachers elect to require a researched argument paper instead of the traditional research paper assignment in first-year writing/composition courses because students tend to write better arguments (817). They criticize this practice, though, explaining that a research paper is not an argument "because they [traditional research papers] do not focus on altering the values, ideas, or emotional attitudes of an audience or on moving the audience to action of some kind" (817-18). Rather, as a form of "scientific discourse," the traditional research paper presents valid information about a topic (818). Since 1982, however, researched argument assignments might, increasingly, better represent the types of writing tasks students perform in other courses, in their workplaces, and in their personal lives than the traditional research paper assignments.

## Arguments and Outcomes

Survey results suggest that researched argument assignments have another advantage over the traditional assignment, one perhaps more evident since 1982 as assessment practices have been instituted or revised at colleges and universities across the country, which might contribute to its choice as a typical research assignment. Respondents' comments demonstrate that all research assignments commonly produce similar student outcomes: ability to locate resources, ability to evaluate resources, ability to integrate resources, evidence of critical thinking, and ability to use format/documentation/citation style.

Item	Student learning outcome	Number of responses	Percentage of total
1	Ability to integrate/synthesize resources	70	12%
2	Ability to use format/documentation/citation style	66	12%
2a	MLA	14	2%
2b	APA	1	>1%
2c	Both MLA and APA	13	2%
3	Ability to evaluate resources	50	9%
4	Evidence of critical thinking/reading/writing	43	8%
5	Ability to locate a variety of resources	42	7%
6	Ability to argue a point/solve a problem	39	7%
7	Ability to use the library (traditional/electronic sources)	33	6%
8	Evidence of writing process	26	5%
9	Ability to formulate/use a thesis	25	4%

10	Attention to audience	24	4%
11	Information literacy (using the Internet)	23	4%
12	Ability to design and conduct primary research (observation/survey/interview)	19	3%
13	Ability to summarize/paraphrase/quote resources	19	3%
14	Avoidance of plagiarism	14	2%
15	Ability to conduct secondary research	12	2%
16	Ability to formulate/use a research question	10	2%
17	Computer literacy (formatting/presentation tools)	10	2%
18	Evidence of collaboration/peer review	9	2%
19	Ability to construct organized and coherent writing	8	1%
20	Ability to reflect	8	1%
21	Facility with Standard American English (syntax/grammar/punctuation)	8	1%
22	Ability to assess multiple points of view/biases	6	1%

**Table 2: Student learning outcomes.** Survey responses for all student learning outcomes (T=564) specified by survey respondents. The number of respondents who indicated a particular outcome and the percent of total respondents follow outcome descriptions.

Researched argument assignments, though, require an additional outcome, one specifically related to writing in that genre: ability to argue a point/solve a problem, which respondents consider an important outcome as often as an ability to locate resources. Consequently, the shift to this type of assignment might have resulted from the realization that the traditional assignment does not provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate as many learning outcomes as a researched argument assignment. The turn to researched argument assignments might have also resulted from a combination of factors: its effect on outcomes, in addition to the fact that the assignment achieves the service role of the first-year writing/composition course more effectively and fosters more student engagement than the traditional assignment.

Preference for researched argument assignments might also be connected to the resources available for teaching first-year writing/composition courses. Over the past twenty-five years, writing handbooks have generally supported instruction in the traditional research assignment, as Thomas Trzyna observes in “Approaches to Research Writing” (203), while textbooks and readers created for first-year writing/composition courses have provided content associated with more varied writing and researching assignments. Recent editions of writing handbooks provide guidelines for conducting research and frequently include an example of a student research paper written in MLA or APA form. The guidelines tend to correspond to those suitable for the traditional research paper assignment, and the sample student paper often models the traditional research paper. Rhetoric and composition textbooks and readers for first-year writing/composition courses, however, increasingly have included chapters on argument, as well as chapters on writing in disciplinary genres and in other rhetorical modes. The growing interest in teaching argument in first-year writing/composition courses may also have contributed to the climate for publication of texts devoted specifically to instruction in this type of writing such as Andrea A. Lunsford, John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters’s *Everything’s an Argument*. Writing programs and individual teachers might have turned away from the traditional research paper assignment, instead designing researched argument assignments, as a result of adopting these kinds of texts for their first-year writing/composition courses.

## ***Other Alternative Assignments***

In addition to researched argument, a large number of survey respondents describe analysis, mixed media, annotated bibliography, and proposal assignments as typical research assignments at their schools. One respondent

describes an analysis assignment that requires students to “provide an interpretation and analysis of a cultural phenomenon” and to “persuade your reader that your analysis is accurate.” Students select their own topics for this assignment; they can choose a “popular culture phenomenon, image, icon, artifact, event, product, or practice.” In addition, this assignment encourages students to use rhetorical strategies for persuasive effect and to produce an interpretive rather than an informational piece of writing.

Another respondent provides a mixed media assignment that challenges students to collect images and to write about the rhetorical impact of those images. In the assignment description, each student is instructed to “write an essay contextualizing a photo [or photos], advertisement [or advertisements], or storyboard [or storyboards] that offers both an explanation and an analysis of its meaning.” The assignment description directs students to focus on contemporary or historical “political or social issue[s].” In addition, students are asked “to integrate images into the body of the essay” and to submit their essay as well as their image portfolio for a grade.

Like the argument and the analysis assignments, this one poses challenges for students that the traditional research paper assignment – as a piece of writing that presents information on a topic in an objective way – does not. The respondents providing these assignments, and assignments similar to these, create first-year writing/composition courses that offer students an opportunity not only to learn and to demonstrate research skills but also to use their research for purposes related to genre in some assignments and, in others, to accomplish/interpret rhetorical effects, to practice integrating visual artifacts into written texts, or to make meaning from/analyze meaning of more than one form of discourse.

## ***Public/Private Divide***

Respondents from public schools mention these types of alternative research assignments four times more often than respondents from private schools. In addition, public schools seem to be moving slightly more quickly than private schools toward computer-assisted research projects. Public schools tend to favor the annotated bibliography assignment more often than private schools while private schools favor the proposal assignment more often than public schools. Unlike preference for researched argument assignments, which seems to correlate with outcomes as well as trends in scholarship and available course materials, preference for other types of alternative assignments appears less related to outcomes associated with particular alternative assignments; in fact, my survey results do not provide convincing evidence for connecting specific outcomes to any particular writing tasks characteristic of these alternative assignments. The choice of these alternative assignments might follow from other considerations such as: amount and kind of available institutional resources, student demographics, or teachers’ expertise.

None of these considerations offers a convincing explanation for survey data indicating that the traditional research paper is the typical assignment at 16% of private schools, but at only 4% of public schools. A review of some related survey data, however, provides some insights. First, slightly less than three quarters of private schools require entering students to take one or more first-year writing/composition courses, while almost 100% of public schools require at least one course. Of those private schools that require first-year writing/composition, half require a research assignment, compared to 85% of public schools. In other words, 36% of private schools that require first-year writing/composition also require a research assignment; 16% of those schools, or 6% of the total number of private school respondents in the survey, list the traditional research paper as a typical research assignment. Respondents from 15% more private than public schools report that none of the first-year students require developmental writing courses; in addition, respondents from 14% of private schools, compared to respondents from only 3% of public schools, note that more than half of the entering students test out of first-year writing/composition courses. The latter two pieces of data suggest that private schools offering first-year writing/composition courses enroll predominately students who do not test out of the first-year writing/composition course. Public schools, on the other hand, work with larger numbers of developmental writers, and students test out of the first-year writing/composition courses less often than at private schools. Second, respondents from private schools include evidence of writing process as an outcome associated with the research assignment more often than respondents from public schools. In addition, some of the private school respondents indicate that the research assignment is the example of students’ work used to assess first-year writing/composition courses and programs at their schools. Finally, survey data reveal that teachers at private schools complain about the research assignment more often than teachers at public schools, 34% compared to 23%.

These findings indicate that the research assignment, whether the traditional research paper or an alternative assignment, is an important one in first-year writing/composition curricula at private schools that require it; they also suggest that the assignment carries perhaps more weight inside the classroom and within the context of institutional assessment than survey respondents from private schools seem to feel it warrants. This might mean that the research assignment needs to accomplish more student learning outcomes and to provide more assessable data

than any other single assignment in the sequence of courses offered. If this is the case, the research paper assignment might be the context for teaching both research skills and writing process, as well as providing the example of students' work for program assessment, at a majority of the private schools that require the traditional research paper assignment. Perhaps, schools that do not require the traditional assignment provide writing process instruction in the first course in the sequence and research instruction in the second. If this is the case, more than one assignment, possibly even more than one assessment instrument, might be used to evaluate student learning outcomes for writing process and research skills. Neither of these scenarios is directly indicated by my survey results, though; further study of the place of traditional and alternative research assignments in assessments of first-year writing/composition courses could provide a less conditional interpretation than my data permit.

## ***Benefits of Genrelessness***

My survey results also provide indirect support not only for correlating an increase in alternative research assignments at respondents' schools to a growing tendency to diffuse instruction in research across writing/composition course curricula, permitting scaffolding of teaching goals and learning outcomes, but also for understanding the tenacity of the traditional research paper assignment. Because the research assignment had to accomplish more course goals than it reasonably could and still retain the form of any disciplinary writing, the final product would inevitably look genreless. Despite this, the traditional research paper assignment has survived in first-year writing/composition curricula at a small number of respondents' schools. My survey results, which reveal an overwhelming shift from the traditional research paper assignment to alternative research assignments, a shift consistent with trends in scholarship, suggest that schools retaining the traditional assignment do so for reasons unrelated to the form of the final product; in other words, genrelessness matters less, perhaps, than that the assignment accomplishes course goals and fits ongoing assessment practices at those schools. In other words, unlike researched argument or the other alternative research assignments described by respondents to my survey, the traditional assignment is not intended to model a genre of disciplinary writing – in fact, its genreless form could be considered its most significant virtue – as the traditional research paper assignment specifically, and simply, provides the occasion for students to demonstrate a set of transferable research skills, genre conventions not among them.

The structure of first-year writing/composition programs could also be a factor, especially if the teaching faculty comprises those whose full-time, primary responsibility is to programs or disciplines other than writing/composition and if the students taking first-year writing/composition courses represent the minority that do not test out. During the 1990s, the structure of many first-year writing/composition programs began to change; for instance, many colleges and universities created Writing Program Administrator positions, hired full-time teaching faculty, and expanded writing/composition course offerings. As well, during the past twenty years, many have instituted or revisited their assessment practices. These changes have not taken place at the same rate and in the same way at all colleges and universities, though. Revising assessment practices requires resources and training; adopting new pedagogical approaches and creating new curricula require even more (Penrod ix). If first-year writing/composition courses function primarily as remediation, for example, initiating reform of either aspect of the first-year curriculum might not be a faculty or an institutional priority. Consequently, scant allocation of resources to first-year writing/composition programs, which might have occurred at schools like the small number that have retained the traditional research paper as a typical research assignment, could have led to pedagogical reliance on an assignment with a long, even though troubled, history and presence in first-year writing/composition courses.

## ***Complaints in School***

Unlike their peers who offer alternative research assignments, teachers at private and public schools where the traditional research paper constitutes the typical assignment appear to have less involvement in the design of research assignments, which might account for the higher percentage of teacher complaints, particularly noted among respondents from private schools. Most of these complaints, however, concern student plagiarism, not the form of the assignment. Respondents' comment that teachers also complain about the quality of students' work, students' lack of readiness to write research papers, not enough time to teach research effectively, instruction in writing research papers does not reflect the way research is actually conducted, courses in the disciplines do not continue teaching research, and the inadequacy of library orientations. Some respondents note that teachers understand the value of the assignment even when they voice complaints. Respondents from both private and public schools report that students complain approximately 50% of the time. The largest number of respondents indicates that students' complaints are not specifically directed at research paper assignments; some respondents point out that students complain about research paper assignments as often as they complain about other types of writing

assignments, and others report that students complain about all of their school work. A smaller number of respondents comment that they are more likely to hear complaints in classes where the traditional research paper is taught. However, respondents also report that students complain because they wrote research papers in high school. Students also complain, though, because of the assignment's difficulty or because they fear it. Many respondents explain that students might complain initially but end up valuing the assignment. A few respondents comment that, despite their fears or struggles with the work, students appreciate the assignment and accept it as a college-level learning experience.

Scholarship on the research paper generally associates teachers' and students' complaints of this sort with the traditional research paper assignment; scholars who argue for alternative assignments often explain that the nature of alternative assignments, in particular the focus on primary research and the extent of students' investments in their topics, precludes plagiarism. Interestingly, although the majority of respondents note that students' plagiarism generates the largest number of teacher complaints, avoidance of plagiarism is an outcome that overall survey respondents mention only 2% of the time, a finding that comports with the total number of respondents who describe alternative research assignments as typical assignments at their schools. However, among respondents from schools that do not require students to take a first-year writing/composition course, a population largely comprised of respondents from private schools, that outcome doubled.

## ***More on the Public/Private Divide***

When taken together, this survey data might imply that private schools are slower to reform first-year curricula than public schools. However, survey responses indicate that private schools have created first-year seminar programs at a more accelerated rate than public schools. So the survey data might suggest, instead, that reform has occurred in one way at public schools and in another way at private schools; in fact, private and public school curricula that include instruction in the traditional research paper might actually reflect thoughtful and intentional choice. In addition, among private schools, which survey results indicate require first-year writing/composition courses less often than public schools, use first-year writing/composition courses primarily for remediation more often than public schools, and offer first-year seminars more often than public schools, that choice might follow from growing disenchantment with the first-year writing/composition course as a means to transition first-year students or to provide a foundation in academic writing and research.

Overall, fewer private than public school respondents to my survey report that their schools require a first-year writing/composition course, which suggests a trend in my survey results for this population of schools not to require a first-year writing/composition course, and perhaps to require a seminar instead. [6](#) Although my survey responses indicate that 94% of typical research assignments are alternatives to the traditional research paper, the discrepancy between private and public schools deserves further attention; perhaps a substantial comparison of the curricula at two or three private and public schools would offer more of an explanation than is supported by the data from this survey. Since my exploratory survey focuses on the first-year writing/composition course, not on the first-year seminar, I did not collect data regarding the role of research instruction or the status of the traditional research paper assignment in first-year seminars. Responses to my survey suggest, though, that a study of first-year seminar research curricula – at both public and private schools that require them – could help to clarify some of the concerns posed by the data I was able to collect.

## **Looking Ahead**

Results from my exploratory survey raise at least as many questions about the status of the research paper assignment as they answer. Although the results from my survey are not definitive, they do suggest directions for further study. In particular, subsequent studies could focus on the broad set of issues that are suggested by the results to my survey from private school respondents. In addition, the institutional and curricular relationship between first-year seminars and first-year writing/composition courses merits consideration, in relation to the form, status, and place of introductory research instruction but also, more generally, in relation to the kinds of questions McDonald and Crowley raise about the overall purpose of the first-year writing/composition course in undergraduate curricula.

Additionally, an examination of research assignments at all types of schools not represented by this survey, but in particular at community colleges, is warranted, since many students who graduate from four year public colleges and universities frequently attend, complete their first-year writing/composition courses, and receive their introduction to research writing at community colleges or four year institutions other than the one from which they graduate. A comprehensive assessment of the status of the research assignment in first-year writing/composition courses,

therefore, would need to include data from first-year writing/composition programs at these schools. A survey of community college WPAs, for instance, might produce data similar to that I collected, a finding that would offer support for the trends suggested by my survey results. However, data from a survey of community college WPAs might demonstrate entirely different trends, those specific to the overall mission of two-year institutions and to the needs of community college students.

In addition, high school preparation of first-year college student populations might influence the type of research assignments required in first-year writing/composition courses at colleges and universities. This supposition follows from the fact that high school students often have the opportunity to take first-year writing/composition courses at local colleges and universities and to complete comparable AP courses for college credit during their junior or senior years. In addition, first-year writing/composition courses frequently facilitate first-year students' transition to college-level academic work; when either is the case, teachers might design writing assignments that build on the knowledge and habits student bring into the classroom. Faculty in a first-year writing/composition program that works with a majority of first-year students who had no research writing experience in high school and faculty that instruct a majority who did might make different assignment choices. Consequently, an examination of high school curricula and of college level learning experiences offered to high school students could provide data to aid understanding of the reasons some colleges and universities provide instruction in the traditional research paper assignment and others in alternative research assignments.

Third, Melzer and Zemliansky's 2003 article presents results from a study of assignments in one first-year writing/composition course at one school and from a review of 800 assignments in writing across the curriculum (WAC) courses at 48 colleges and universities. My survey results suggest that this type of study should be expanded. A nationwide survey of WAC assignments would provide data to interpolate in relation to data on research paper assignments in first-year writing/composition courses such as that which I collected. This interpolated data could provide evidence of the extent to which first-year instruction in research, whether through traditional or alternative assignments, meets the needs of disciplinary courses and whether WAC courses further develop the writing and researching skills that students begin learning in their first-year writing/composition courses. My survey data reveal that, at a majority of respondents' schools, communication between first-year writing/composition programs and WAC programs is negligible. For instance, a large number of survey responses indicate that respondents do not know if research instruction takes place in major courses and in second-, third-, or fourth-year writing courses. Even when they do, respondents comment that they are unsure what type of research assignments teachers require in those courses. An expanded study, modeled on Melzer and Zemliansky's, might produce findings that could assist in establishing collaboration between first-year writing/composition and WAC programs, collaboration that might involve sharing of resources and pedagogical ideas, creating course connections, and building on the work of previous courses, therefore eliminating unnecessary repetition. That the latter does not occur is survey respondents' predominant reason for dropping the research assignment from the first-year writing/composition course.

For reasons similar to those for expanding Melzer and Zemliansky's 2003 study, a systematic examination of the relationship between research instruction in first-year writing/composition courses and that which occurs in undergraduate research programs would be an important addition to scholarship on this topic. My survey does not include any questions about undergraduate research programs, primarily because these programs are frequently located in academic disciplines other than writing/composition. However, these programs, which usually began in science departments but, since 2000, more and more often include social science, humanities, and arts research as well, have become growing presences on American as well as international college and university campuses. A dedicated study of the types of research projects promoted by undergraduate research programs and the nature of the writing required for students to publish, co-publish, or present their findings could offer insight into the ways in which introductory forms of research and writing might prepare students for the discipline-specific research and writing they could produce later on as members of an undergraduate research program. As might be an effect of a WAC study, a study of undergraduate research program curricula and assignments in relation to those for first-year writing/composition courses could lead to important collaborations. Scholarship chronicles the marginalization of writing/composition courses in American colleges and universities and notes the cordoning of research instruction to the first-year writing/composition course and, within the course, to a single assignment. An expanded study of research instruction in WAC courses and in undergraduate research programs in relation to research instruction in first-year writing/composition courses could provide useful data for initiating undoing these entrenched disconnections, for aligning research instruction at the first-year level to that occurring elsewhere in the undergraduate curriculum.

My last comment concerns technology. Recent scholarship suggests that alternative research assignments tend to involve more researching and writing in new media formats than the traditional research paper. However, my survey results do not support that conclusion, nor do they include more than a small number of web-based assignments

similar to those Michael Day, Dagmar Stuehrk Corrigan and Chidsey Dickson, Michael J. Cripps, or Davis and Shadle discuss. Among that small number were staged assignments that require students to evaluate web resources at one stage of their work, and assignments that require students to share their research with the class or with an audience outside the class as PowerPoint presentations. A few assignments provide students with opportunities to write up their research in more than one genre; students might choose to create a website to display their multigenre work. A slightly larger number of assignments ask students to locate an image relevant to their topic on the Internet, to insert the image into their text, to discuss the image, and to cite the image on a References or Works Cited page. Overall, though, mixed media research assignments constitute only 9% of typical assignments, multigenre projects 1%. Adoption of mixed media research assignments might be limited by institutional resources, socioeconomics of the student population, teachers' training in pedagogical uses for computers, students' access to computers, students' facility with relevant software, and the type of writing and research instruction entering students need. However, the increasingly visible presence of computers in classrooms, their pedagogical roles, and the essential part they play in research as well as text production and delivery might mean that mixed media research assignments become more common in first-year writing/composition courses in the near future. Further research tracking this development would offer important follow-up to the data I collected on typical research assignments.

## Post-post Manning

My survey results demonstrate that, among respondents' schools, Manning's 1961 prediction does not hold up; in 2009, the traditional research paper no longer remains the typical assignment in a majority of first-year writing/composition courses at survey respondents' schools. Instead, the traditional assignment has become one assignment type among others offered to students taking first-year writing/composition courses. Entering college students, these days, could more often write researched arguments than traditional research papers in their first-year writing/composition courses, and they might just as likely write annotated bibliographies or proposals. However, my findings also indicate that first-year students at survey respondents' schools might be asked to compose traditional research papers more often than some types of alternative research projects such as: ethnographies, i-search papers, profiles, or brochures. So, the traditional research paper assignment has not disappeared from curricula at respondents' schools, although it appears a much less common assignment in 2009 than it was in the 1960s and in the 1980s.

The shift to alternative research assignments might resolve some of the pedagogical difficulties associated with the traditional assignment, specifically plagiarism and genrelessness; however, it seems to push concerns related to the function of the first-year writing/composition course into the foreground. The shift to alternative research assignments does not end debates about either the service role of the course, for instance, or the connection of the first-year writing/composition course to disciplinary research and writing. In fact, respondents' comments suggest that both are at issue on their campuses. As McDonald insists, changing an assignment, even revolutionizing the nature of research instruction, could not succeed in settling all of the concerns. If research and disciplinary writing are becoming more integrated components of first-year writing/composition courses, first-year writing programs have the occasion, perhaps the need, to create new models of service and interdisciplinary collaboration, models that could create institutional contexts for addressing the concerns McDonald identifies and for bridging the work of first-year writing/composition and that taking place in other writing and disciplinary courses.

## Notes

1. Acknowledgements: I developed my survey instrument, Exploratory Survey on the Status of the Research Paper Assignment in First-year Writing/Composition Courses, during the summer of 2008 with the support of a Research and Professional Development Grant from The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

This survey project grew out of my experience teaching first-year writing courses at Southern Connecticut State University, Louisiana State University, and The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. Both my struggle and my sense of accomplishment as a teacher working with students in those courses were directly related to research instruction. I am indebted to faculty and students who endured my efforts to experiment, to hone my research pedagogy, and to create meaningful, challenging assignments.

Paul Prior read an early draft of this article, and his comments, in particular his advice to condense my first write-up, directed my revision in important ways. I also benefitted from the advice of the two peer reviewers for *Composition Forum*; both identified areas that needed further work on my part. Their perceptive readings

led me to compose a revision more focused on current classroom pedagogy than history of the research paper assignment. Michelle Ballif, Managing Editor of the journal, offered perceptive guidance for organization and presentation; her comments about readers' needs helped me to produce a much tighter and understandable version of this article.

Theresa Cea Hanson and Megan Macomber, astute, patient readers and listeners, tolerated me throughout the drafting and revision processes. ([Return to text.](#))

2. This research received IRB approval from the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey in August 2008. ([Return to text.](#))
3. Scholarship on research paper assignments in first-year writing/composition courses has appeared in professional publications since the 1940s. I discuss some of this scholarship in the article. However, the work of other scholars merits mention. Scholars whose work makes significant contributions to debates about the research paper assignment include: Antico; Arntson; Berlin; Bishop; Bizzell; Block and Mattis; Brogan; Brown and Baldwin; McCormick Calkins; Capossela; Coon; Cooper; Crossley; Donovan and Carr; Doubleday; Estrin; Fisher; Foley; Gellis; Gibbs; Grasso; Guenther; Haas; Hudson; Kerner; Kishler; Kissane; Kleine; Kollmeier and Staudt; Kynard; Larmouth; Levin; Macrorie; Marshall; Nelson; Patton; Peter; Resnikoff; Rivlin; Romano; Rooney; Saalbach; Samraj; Simutis; Trzyna; Wells; and Wilferth. Overviews of panel discussions on the research paper from the 1961 and 1971 annual College Composition and Communication Conferences appear in issues of *College Composition and Communication* (12.4 and 22.3 respectively). Kathleen Blake Yancey addresses the topic of research in the teaching of composition in her 2009 National Council of Teachers of English report on writing in the 21st century. ([Return to text.](#))
4. Most (150, 90%) of the respondents' schools (T=166) require first-year writing/composition; in particular, 105 (97%; T=108) public schools require first-year writing/composition while 45 (78%; T=58) private schools do. 3 (3%) public schools and 13 (22%) private schools do not require first-year writing/composition. Some respondents comment that the first-year writing course is a first-year seminar. The total number of schools that describe the requirement in this way is 5 (3%). That number represents 1 (1%) public school and 4 (7%) private schools. As a result, 104 (96%) public schools require a first-year writing/composition course that is not a first-year seminar, and 41 (71%) private schools require a first-year writing/composition course that is not a first-year seminar.

26 (45%) of the private schools do not require a research paper assignment in first-year writing/composition. Of the 32 (55%) respondents from private schools reporting a research paper requirement, 3 comment that the assignment is optional.

Consequently, the total number of private schools requiring a research paper in first-year writing/composition is 29 (50%). By comparison, of the 108 respondents from public schools, 92 (85%) report that a research paper assignment is required. Private school percentages are 35% lower than public school percentages for this question. A larger percentage of private (9, or 16%) than public school (3, or 3%) respondents report that their schools recently dropped the required research paper assignment from first-year writing/composition courses. Those who respond in this way, explain that the research paper assignment does not adequately address learning goals for first-year writing/composition, the assignment was a "burden," the "constraints of a 4 credit course" preclude teaching students to write a research paper, the assignment is replaced with shorter "information literacy assignments," and research writing is taught in second or third-year courses or in disciplinary courses. ([Return to text.](#))

5. Of the 750 surveys sent out, 211 (28%) went to private colleges and universities, 539 (72%) went to public colleges and universities. I received usable responses back from 58 (28%) private schools and 108 (20%) public schools (T=166; 95% CI). ([Return to text.](#))
6. The CUNY system recently changed its first-year writing requirement to a two-semester first-year seminar, Freshman Inquiry Writing Seminar. For more on this change, see Moltz. ([Return to text.](#))

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## Appendix: Survey Instrument

Exploratory Survey on the Status of the Research Paper Assignment in First-year Writing/Composition Courses

Please answer the following questions. You may add any comments/clarifications/unique circumstances in the space for additional comments after each question. You may take as much space as you need.

Please note: because the survey is a Word file, the formatting of the document may change especially when you write comments; you do not need to worry about reformatting before sending the survey back.

### ***Information about your school. Please check all that apply:***

#### **Size of school:**

- Less than 5,000 undergraduates
- 5,000 – 10,000 undergraduates
- 10,000 – 15,000 undergraduates
- 15,000 – 20,000 undergraduates
- 20,000 – 50,000 undergraduates
- More than 50,000 undergraduates

#### **Size of 2007 or 2008 first-year student population at your school:**

- Less than 200 first-year students
- 200 – 500 first-year students
- 500 – 1,000 first-year students
- 1,000 – 1,500 first-year students
- 1,500 – 2,000 first-year students
- 2,000 – 5,000 first-year students
- More than 5,000 first-year students

#### **Location of school:**

- Northeast
- Southeast
- Midwest (northern)
- Midwest (southern)
- Northwest

- Southwest

**Type of school:**

- Public
- Private
- Exclusively undergraduate liberal arts college
- offering no Masters degrees
- offering some Masters degrees
- offering a wide range of Masters degrees
- offering some Masters and Ph.D. degrees
- offering a wide range of Masters and Ph.D. degrees
- Flagship/research university

***Writing background for the 2007 or 2008 first-year student population at your school:***

Percentage taking developmental/remedial writing/composition courses \_\_\_\_\_

Percentage placing out of first-year writing/composition courses \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Does your school have a first-year writing/composition course requirement?**

Y

N

Additional comments:

**2. If so, are teachers required to include a research paper assignment in their first-year writing/composition courses?**

Y

N

Additional comments:

**3. Is the research paper assignment optional?**

Y

N

Additional comments:

**4. If the research paper assignment is optional, approximately what percentage of full-time, part-time, and graduate-student teachers include the assignment in first year writing/composition courses?**

Full-time:

Part-time:

Graduate students:

Additional comments:

**5. Are students required to take a 1 or 2 semester writing/composition course at your school?**

1

2

Additional comments:

**6. Is the required/optional research paper assignment included in the curriculum for the first or second semester?**

First

Second

Additional comments:

**7. Please explain which teaching goals and learning outcomes (for the first-year writing/composition course) the research paper assignment aims to meet?**

Teaching Goals:

Learning Outcomes:

Additional comments:

**8. Please describe a typical research paper assignment for the first-year writing/composition course.**

Typical assignment:

Additional comments:

**9. Has the research paper assignment been dropped from the curriculum for first year writing/composition courses?**

Y

N

Additional comments:

**10. If the research paper assignment has been dropped, what reason(s) led to that decision?**

Reasons for dropping the research paper assignment:

Additional comments:

**11. Does your school require an upper level research course?**

As part of students' writing requirement?

In students' majors?

Additional comments:

**12. If the research paper assignment has not been dropped, do teachers of first-year writing/composition complain about the assignment?**

Y

N

Additional comments:

**13. Do first-year writing/composition students complain about the research paper assignment?**

Y

N

Additional comments:

When useful, attach supplemental documents if they are available, for instance: first-year writing course goals and outcomes, common course assignments, course descriptions, syllabi, etc. Please remove all identifying information from these documents before sending them.

"Ways of Research" from *Composition Forum* 22 (Summer 2010)

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