

Research Proposal (student's preliminary notes)

1. *What do I want to study?*

Issues around students' perspectives on writing collaboratively using social networking sites.

2. *Why is the topic important?*

Research in collaborative writing suggests the following:

Collaboration in Composition Studies

- a. The field of composition highly values collaboration throughout the writing process, including in the invention, composing, and revisions stages.
- b. This belief is widely embraced in composition classrooms worldwide.

Benefits of Collaborative Learning in Virtual Spaces:

- c. Recent research demonstrates that collaborative learning in virtual spaces, particularly using visual media, effectively highlights the ongoing nature of composition.
- d. Collaborative writing done exclusively online can be as effective, if not more so, than traditional face-to-face meetings.

Social Nature of Collaborative Writing:

- e. Collaborative writing privileges the social aspects of textual production and reception.
- f. These benefits extend beyond the traditional composition classroom into virtual and online environments.

Challenges with Virtual Spaces:

- g. Students often view popular social networking sites like Facebook as sacred spaces separate from academic contexts.
- h. Instructors in higher education need to acknowledge the growing usage of such sites, even if they were initially considered outside academic boundaries.

Recent research shows how virtual spaces, especially networking sites, may be as beneficial for collaborative learning as face-to-face meetings in higher education, so it is important to study the students' perceptions of using these virtual spaces for collaborative learning opportunities.

3. *Why is it important to me?*

I am interested in exploring what students think about the affordances of collaborative writing on social networking sites, such as Facebook, because I worked as a TA in a writing course, and I noticed that students enjoyed using social media for social activities. However, they didn't see much value in using Facebook to engage in collaborative class assignments, which contradicts the literature cited above.

4. *How is the topic significant within the subject areas covered in my class?*

In my classes, we learned about the benefits and challenges of students' collaboration for learning in higher education. We also reviewed relevant theories on the use of technology (

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7. *What exactly should I plan to do if I wanted to conduct a study on the topic?*

To investigate students' attitudes toward Facebook for collaborative writing activities, I will survey 10-15 students in a first-year undergraduate English writing course for one semester.

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Facebook use and categorization.

Comparison of written texts on Facebook to class-produced texts.

Experience with academic collaboration.

Pre- and post-assignment collaboration attitudes.

Comfort using Facebook for in-class assignments.

Quality comparison of work produced on Facebook vs. in-class.

After completing the survey, I will conduct a traditional composition lesson with collaboration in class. Following this, I will conduct a mid-semester survey to assess students' attitudes toward collaboration and experiences using Facebook.

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I will invite students to form their own groups based on whether they want to use Facebook in class to facilitate their collaboration or proceed according to traditional in-class methods.

For the groups that decide to use traditional methods, I will provide them with a similar survey to the one described for the mid-semester.

For the groups that decide to use Facebook to collaborate, I will provide them with a survey that asks some combination of the following questions on the following topics:

- a. Collaboration definition.
- b. Pre- and post-assignment attitudes.

- c. Quality comparison of Facebook-produced work.
- d. Effects of Facebook on the collaborative process.
- e. Changes in the definition of collaboration.
- f. Facebook usage (in class and outside).
- g. Willingness to use Facebook for collaboration in other classes.

I will compile the survey results to gauge student attitudes towards producing academic texts, collaboration, and Facebook usage to see if the class experience has changed