

# “First Draft Thinking”



## The Research Design/The Research Plan /The Research Outline

<p>Context</p>	<p><i>What are the tensions for this research?</i></p> <p>There are a couple of tensions I have discovered in the LCR 320 fully online course. It appears in this course students are unclear about how to navigate the course, they are unsure of the learning objectives and they don't understand how to achieve the outcomes of the course.</p> <p>In helping to facilitate an online course I have noticed that many students are unclear about the learning objectives. I find that students are confused about what they need to do in order to successfully accomplish the goals of this online course. I believe that if I can discover the reasons why students are having trouble with the course learning objectives, then we can improve the course, which might lead to students being more successful in accomplishing the course goals.</p> <p>I have been helping Dr. Betts to design and facilitate this course for the past couple of semesters. This course is very different from most courses that students encounter at the University. It has a graphical interface that guides students through the content. The learning objectives are posted in each module, however some students come to office hours confused about both the navigation and the objectives of the course. I want to explore how we can improve the course by guiding students through the content and the learning objectives. To do this I need to gather data from the students in regard to their experience in the online course.</p> <p>As one of the designers and facilitators of this course, I may be too close to see some very obvious solutions to the issue of navigation and explanation of the learning objectives. I would like to ask the online students about their experience in the course and how we could design and teach it more effectively.</p> <p>I have been exploring some strategies of communicating learning objectives to students and I would like to experiment with some of these methods, gaining student perspective along the way. We are also working with a preceptor in revising the graphic navigation. I would like to survey students about the effectiveness of the new design.</p>
<p>Research Purpose</p>	<p>I am trying to understand how students can become more successful in the LRC 320 online course about Teaching with New Technologies. I would like to figure out if course navigation is a key factor in student success of this online course. I want to also explore why students have a hard time understanding the learning objectives and how to go about accomplishing the goals of the course. My major goal of this research is to discover how students can successfully navigate the online course, understand the learning objectives and know how to successfully achieve the outcomes of the course.</p>

<p><b>Inquiry Question</b></p>	<p><b><i>What are my major research questions?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we assist online students to become more successful in an online course? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How can the design of the online course help guide students to the learning objectives?</li> <li>○ How can we clearly explain the learning objectives and help the students achieve the learning outcomes of the course?</li> <li>○ How can the online discussions assist students in achieving the learning objectives of the course?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Research Site</b></p>	<p><b><i>Where will the research be conducted and under what circumstances?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will be conducting this study within the spring semester of the LRC 320 online course.</li> <li>• I will be collecting data from students online, via email or through an online survey tool. I may conduct interviews with students in person or through an online venue (i.e. Google + or Skype).</li> <li>• The study will be conducted with the students enrolled in the spring semester of the LRC 320 online course.</li> <li>• Most of these students are junior or seniors in education or related fields of study. I will ask for volunteers to participate in this study.</li> <li>• I am the preceptor for this LRC 320 course. I am helping Dr. Betts with office hours, technology issues and in the discussions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Data Collection</b></p>	<p><b><i>What kinds of data will I collect/examine in order to answer my research questions?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will be using a mixed method approach.</li> <li>• I will first use a survey tool to ask the students about their experience in the LRC 320 course.</li> <li>• I will conduct a few recorded interviews with students.</li> <li>• I will keep a journal of questions brought up during exchanges with students.</li> <li>• I like the mix method approach for gathering both qualitative and quantitative data about their experience in the LRC 320 online course.</li> <li>• I believe by gathering both types of data will allow me to get a snapshot of whole picture of the student experience.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Data Analysis</b></p>	<p><b><i>What are my tentative plans for data analysis?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I plan on reviewing my journal entries looking for similar issues, patterns or trends and putting them into categories.</li> <li>• I will read through the survey results analyzing the responses into the categories created from the journal.</li> <li>• I will transcribe the interview and code the transcript looking for key words and concepts. These will be added to journal categories.</li> </ul>

<p>Timeline</p>	<p><b><i>When will I complete the different phases of the study?</i></b></p> <p>We are only about halfway through the semester. I have been conducting office hours with students from the past 6 weeks and taking note of the questions arising around navigation, learning objective and outcomes. I will continue these encounters with students throughout the remainder of the semester.</p> <p>Midway through the semester (around middle of March), I will conduct a survey for students to give me their impressions about the course. This will be an anonymous survey given through an online survey tool. It will take the students less than five minutes to take the survey.</p> <p>Before the middle of April, I will interview at least five students about their experience in the course.</p> <p>All data will be collected and analyzed before the end of the semester. The research will be complete by the end of the semester.</p>
<p>Locating the Research in the Literature/Tradition</p>	<p><b><i>What literature/authors are influencing my ideas? How can I situate my study within related professional literature?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Learning Theory (Malcolm Knowles)</li> <li>• Social Learning Theory (Albert Bandura)</li> <li>• Communication Theory (cueing techniques for interaction and transaction)</li> <li>• What is the background of theory, research, and practice related to my topic or focus? Why is it important to understand this background?</li> <li>• What is the context of previous work in the field that has been done on this topic?</li> <li>• To what other areas of study in the field does the topic relate?</li> </ul>
<p>Potential Importance and Significance of the Study</p>	<p><b><i>What is the potential impact of the study?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The potential impact of this study will be a better-designed course that will lead to a more positive online experience for the student.</li> <li>• As more and more courses are being developed for an online audience this type of research will assist both faculty and designers in creating a more effective online environment.</li> <li>• This study will be of interest to others who teach online courses.</li> <li>• I could share this research with the university community and all who teach in an online environment.</li> </ul>
<p>Epilogue</p>	<p><b><i>Reflection:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This type of research is exciting to me as I deal with these issues everyday. If I can have some research finding to show faculty as I assist them in online course design, then my job will be much easier.</li> </ul>