

Annual Summer Seminar for Writing Research

Data-driven Inquiry: Process, Methods, Results

July 27-August 8, 2014

Introduction: Dartmouth College’s Institute for Writing and Rhetoric, in collaboration with the U.S. Council of Writing Program Administrators, announces its annual two-week Research Summer Seminar, Sunday July 27-Friday August 8, 2014.

Purpose and Focus: The program is designed to support members of the field of higher education writing research who would like to engage in research but have not had the opportunity to develop their expertise in understanding, choosing, and using research methods specific to studying writing in tertiary education, effecting quantitative and qualitative analysis, carrying out critical analysis with (and of) statistics and statistical software, and preparing for publication of research. This seminar is also appropriate for teachers of writing and leaders of writing initiatives trained in different research traditions who are interested in exchanging ideas, in a collegial and productive setting, about research methods used in North America and in their own contexts. We appreciate the dialogue created by international and interdisciplinary participation.

Research is broadly—and provisionally—defined here as systematic or replicable inquiry in response to a research question that can generate interpretable data, inquiry that is grounded in previous research and designed to extend existing knowledge and, through scholarly publication or other public contribution, to be extended itself.

Session leaders will include Charles Bazerman, Cheryl Geisler, and Chris Anson, among others.

The program’s key on-site features will include:

7/28	7/29	7/30	7/31	8/1	8/4	8/5	8/6	8/7	8/8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview: major theories and research methods, formulation of feasible research questions, gaps in current writing research landscape, definition of research and its relationship to assessment. • Workshop: situating individual projects within these paradigms and drafting literature reviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview: data treatment and analysis, focused on coding options, systematic treatment approaches, key software options and uses. • Practice session: data analysis in small groups. • Workshop: developing preliminary coding schemes for participants’ data. • Discussion: participants’ data collection, questions they can ask of the data, what that shows about what else they need to know, and how to obtain it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview: understanding and using parametric and non-parametric statistics. • Workshop, statistical analysis: what do we really need to know? • Discussion: case study, critiquing existing empirical work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview: strategies for addressing challenges to research in specific institutional contexts; case study. • Workshop: individual plans for completing participant projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: issues in ethical research; case study. • Workshop: publication, conference presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of participants’ projects; feedback from well-known writing researchers. 				

Other details: The specific program will be tailored to the research projects defined by applicants. The work of the group will begin in the February-July 2014 period: forming a cohort, distributing readings, sharing information about projects, preliminary guidance from team leaders on data collection. This will be followed by a virtual seminar in advance of the summer seminar to

discuss methods for further data collection: what else researchers might need to know and how to obtain it.

Peer review and consultations with team members will be ongoing throughout the seminar, starting with an initial meeting and ending with presentation of projects during the final two days.

Participants will leave the summer seminar with a concrete plan for completing the project they bring to the program, as well as an ongoing support network, including the program cohort and the team members from many contexts who will form an ongoing international research community.

Who Should Attend: We welcome new and seasoned writing researchers and teachers from all types of institutions and positions, including universities, writing centers, and writing research laboratories, around the globe. Participants may be experienced researchers looking to expand their repertoire of methods, or new researchers. We encourage research teams to apply.

Costs:

Program fee (includes all materials, access to the library and Internet while at Dartmouth)	\$1,500
Housing* for the full seminar term (single rooms in dormitories)	\$780 approximate, which includes a \$100 credit towards meals in College facilities
Athletic passes to all facilities; on-campus parking	\$5 a day each (as needed)

We will offer a \$100 fee reduction for attendees at the 2014 EARLI SIG-Writing conference.

About Dartmouth: Dartmouth is in Hanover, NH, a beautiful New England town. Dartmouth offers an excellent summer location, with serious facilities, resources, and a work atmosphere, alongside recreational and cultural events for off-time: hiking, lakes, bicycling, concerts, films, speakers, and performances. There are many day care/summer camp opportunities for participants who might want to bring family. Dorms can accept non-seminar participants.

Access to Dartmouth is quite easy from Boston Logan Airport (Dartmouth Coach is direct to campus every 2 hours). There are also flights into Manchester NH or Lebanon NH and Burlington VT, and an Amtrak train, Greyhound bus, and Dartmouth Coach from NYC.

For More Information: Please write to Christiane Donahue (Composition.Research.Seminar@dartmouth.edu) with any questions. The application is at: <http://dartmouth.edu/writing-speech/research/summer-seminar-2014/summer-seminar-2014-application-information>

- Deadline for applications: December 16, 2013.
- Notification of acceptance: January 7, 2014.

* The housing/meal plan is optional. The housing cost is an estimate based on 2013. Dartmouth is reviewing its summer housing and has not yet released actual fee structures for 2014.

Previous participants' commentary on the Dartmouth Summer Seminar (from the US, Canada, Europe, Australia, and Asia):

“In addition to several ‘ah ha’ moments, I left the conference with a new approach to and understanding of research and research tools that can help me answer questions I've been trying to ask for quite a while.”

“Certainly one of the most incredible professional experiences I’ve had.”

“I was pushed to think in new ways about my particular project and about writing studies research in general. It was incredibly stimulating intellectually to go through that process with other researchers.”

“This was such a valuable opportunity to get to know [writing] researchers who were at various points in their career, from a variety of places and institutions, and with unique perspectives on writing studies. It simultaneously helped me to hone in on my own research and to see new possibilities for research.”

“The seminar filled big holes in my graduate education—holes that I didn’t know were there. I feel better equipped to design and carry out research projects, as well as better equipped to read and review scholarship in the field. I’ve always felt a step behind due to the lack of focus on research methods in my graduate program. Now I feel confident that I'll be able to make valuable contributions.”

“Everything seemed designed to provide us with two weeks to learn, explore, design, circle back, think, and share with like-minded (and, frankly, wonderful) colleagues. I also appreciated that we were pushed out of our comfort zones on our projects and on ways of doing research. I cannot imagine a richer environment for this stage in my career.”

“The content was very well-chosen, and the mentoring and modeling so generously offered by the program leaders was a gift, both for younger colleagues and mid-career professionals. The uncompromising dedication to this emerging field—writing studies—demonstrated by the organizers and contributing faculty was energizing and at times bracing but always welcome. I certainly benefited from the experience, and it will probably mark a turning point in my career.”

“Not since graduate school have most of us had anything quite like this, and few of us will likely enjoy such a sense of professional community again—at least not to such a concentrated degree.”

“I felt engaged intellectually and socially on common projects, even though our individual projects were different.”

“This is among the very best intellectual experiences I have had in my career. I feel like my career has received an electrifying jolt (in a very good way)!”

“I hoped to learn new methods and to think through ways those methods would apply to future projects, but really the experience was far richer than I could have anticipated.”