Establishing the scope and depth of your study

A). Things to consider

1. Will you need to do an exploratory study before you conduct your more formal research project?

Example: An English professor wants to determine what kinds of assignments help students correct common, over-simplistic beliefs about how a work’s meaning is produced (e.g. the author’s intent for a work determines its true significance). But first, she wants to do an exploratory study so that she knows what kinds of common assumptions both majors and non-majors bring to their literary study.

2. If you are conducting your research within a course, about how many students can you expect to be enrolled?

3. Do you want to know if students will develop or retain knowledge or understanding over time? If so, how much time? (A semester, four years, ten years?).

B). What comparisons might be meaningful?

For example:

- students’ skill before and after an assignment?
- students who complete a learning activity as opposed to another group?
- student responses over a period of weeks or months or years?

C). **Describe the scope and depth of your project in terms of the kinds of evidence you will want to collect:

For example:

- Evidence from students enrolled in English 320, fall semester 2013
- Evidence from students who have taken English 320 within the past three years
- Evidence from students enrolled in English 320, fall semesters 2013, 2014, 2015