FINAL

08 Putting Everything Together

Your first research proposal: from theory to real application

This unit turns theoretical knowledge into real practice. You will leave the course able to apply every step to a topic you choose yourself.

8.1 A practical example

Topic: **The Role of Peer Feedback in Developing EFL Students' Writing Skills.** Here is how the sections of the proposal can be developed:

Component	Example
Research Topic	Peer feedback in EFL writing.
Research Problem	Students may struggle to identify and correct weaknesses in their written work.
Research Aim	To investigate the role of peer feedback in developing students' writing skills.
Research Question	How does peer feedback contribute to EFL students' writing development?
Objective	To examine the contribution of peer feedback to writing development.
Hypothesis	Students who receive structured peer feedback may demonstrate improvement in writing performance.
Approach	Quantitative or mixed-methods, depending on the research questions.
Design	Quasi-experimental, if an intervention and comparison are planned.
Participants	A selected group of EFL students.
Instruments	Writing tests, assessment rubrics, and possibly questionnaires.

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8.2 Your turn: Research Proposal Planner

Choose a topic related to English Didactics and complete the worksheet below. Print it or type directly into the boxes.

1	**Proposed Research Title** *Clear, focused, specific.*	
2	**Research Background** *General context of your topic.*	
3	**Research Problem** *What issue needs investigation?*	
4	**Research Gap** *What is missing in existing research? Verify it.*	
5	**Research Questions** *Specific and answerable.*	
6	**Research Objectives** *Action verbs matched to your questions.*	
7	**Hypotheses (if applicable)** *Only if your design needs them.*	
8	**Research Approach and Design** *Quantitative, qualitative, or mixed? Which design?*	
9	**Population and Sample** *Who? How many? How selected?*	
10	**Data Collection Instruments** *Tests, questionnaires, interviews...*	
11	**Data Analysis** *How will you analyze the data?*	
12	**Significance of the Study** *Why does it matter?*	

Sections completed: ____ / 12

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8.3 Final self-assessment

Before considering your proposal ready for submission, ask yourself:

- ☐ Can I clearly explain what my research is about?
- ☐ Have I identified a genuine research problem?
- ☐ Can I justify the relevance of my topic?
- ☐ Are my research questions specific and answerable?
- ☐ Does my methodology match my research objectives?
- ☐ Can I realistically conduct this research?
- ☐ Have I consulted relevant academic literature?

> **WELL DONE**
>
> If you can answer these questions confidently, you have made an important step towards developing your research proposal.

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BONUS

Research Proposal Toolkit

Four bonus resources to keep on your desk

01 Research Proposal Structure Template

Section	Prompt: write 2–4 sentences
Title	Phenomenon + population + context.
Introduction	Move from the broad educational area to your focus.
Problem Statement	Context → issue → evidence → need for the study.
Research Questions	2–4 specific, answerable questions.
Objectives	One objective per question, starting with an action verb.
Hypotheses	Only if your design is experimental or correlational.
Significance	Theoretical, practical, pedagogical, institutional.
Literature Review	Compare and connect studies; end with the gap.
Theoretical Framework	Theories guiding your interpretation.
Methodology	Approach, design, sample, instruments, procedure, analysis, ethics.
Expected Outcomes	Possible contributions, never guaranteed results.
Timeline	Stages with realistic durations.
References	Consistent style (e.g. APA 7th).

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02 Research Proposal Checklist

Topic & problem

- ☐ Topic is narrowed to a specific focus
- ☐ Problem statement is supported by evidence
- ☐ Research gap is verified through the literature

Questions & objectives

- ☐ Questions are specific and answerable
- ☐ Each objective matches a question
- ☐ Hypotheses are included only when appropriate

Literature & theory

- ☐ Sources are credible and relevant
- ☐ Studies are compared, not just summarized
- ☐ Theoretical framework is stated

Methodology & ethics

- ☐ Method matches the research questions
- ☐ Sample and instruments are justified
- ☐ Validity, reliability, or trustworthiness addressed
- ☐ Consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation addressed

Writing & referencing

- ☐ Language is formal, clear, and objective
- ☐ Citations and reference list match
- ☐ Proposal follows departmental guidelines

03 Academic Research Search Guide

Databases: Google Scholar · ERIC · ScienceDirect · JSTOR · ResearchGate · university repositories

Step	Example
List your main concepts	Digital feedback · EFL writing · students' perceptions
Add synonyms with OR	("digital feedback" OR "automated feedback")
Combine concepts with AND	EFL AND writing AND ("digital feedback" OR "automated feedback")
Exclude with NOT	"digital feedback" NOT primary
Check, then snowball	Read the reference lists of the best articles to find more.

04 Useful Academic Expressions

Purpose	Sentence starters
Introducing context	Writing is widely regarded as… · In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to…

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Purpose	Sentence starters
Identifying the problem	However, … remains challenging for many EFL learners. · Despite…, learners continue to…
Pointing to a gap	Limited research has examined… · Little is known about… in the Algerian context.
Stating the aim	This study aims to… · The present research seeks to explore…
Describing methodology	A purposive sample of … will be… · Data will be collected through…
Hedging claims	may · appears to · tends to · is likely to · suggests that
Linking ideas	Moreover · In contrast · Consequently · Therefore

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