According to Joyce Kinkead, undergraduate English majors should have opportunities to conduct authentic empirical research. She recently published an article describing a research methods course that she developed for the English Department that does just that. “The Empirical Strikes Back: A RAD Research Methods Class for Undergraduate English Students” appeared in the College English Association journal.

In Joyce’s course, students gain skills in conducting replicable, aggregable, and data-supported (RAD) research by first completing a whole-class project to practice the process and then conducting individual IRB-compliant projects that result in a research reporter, poster, and lightning talk. Student research can add to the scholarly knowledge base, positioning students to be “makers of knowledge.” As Joyce puts it, beginning and completing a research project from conception to presentation is a tall order. She adds, “I wrote this article so that other campuses have a model of the possibilities of initiating students into this transformative learning.”

English 3470, the research methods course described in the article, is participating in a National Science Foundation (NSF) pilot study to evaluate course-based undergraduate research experiences (E-CURE).