

ENG3771, Unit 2: Service Learning Project and Workplace Collaboration



Introduction

In small teams of students, you will complete a service learning-based project that manages some form of complexity that you identify at the New York City College of Technology. While creating your project deliverables, you will model workplace cooperation, collaboration, and record keeping.

What exactly do I mean by “service learning?” According to “The National and Community Service Act of 1990 and US Code 12511:

The term “service learning” . . . means a method:

- (A) under which Corps members learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs;
- (B) that provides structured time for a Corps member to think, talk, or write about what the Corps member did and saw during an actual service activity;
- (C) that provides Corps members with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real life situations in their own communities; and
- (D) that helps to foster the development of a sense of caring for others, good citizenship, and civic responsibility.

Your goal for this project is to respond to a need of the City Tech community, develop your abilities to meet that need, and knowledgeably explain the process and rhetorical choices that you made to achieve your project’s aims.

As a team, you will identify a problem or need of the City Tech community that can be resolved with technical communication (e.g., poster, website, brochure, video, podcast, instruction manual, etc.). You will research any prior attempts at resolving the problem, how it is currently being managed, and how might the community want the problem resolved. Then, you will write a proposal that outlines your proposed technical communication-based solution as supported by your research. Next, you will follow through on your proposal, create a draft deliverable, and perform usability testing of the deliverable with its intended audience of users. Then, you will revise your deliverable into a final form based on your usability testing and deliver an extensive presentation on your research, process, and deliverable. Finally, each team member will write a project narrative memo that I will use in assigning each student’s grade.

This project is a **lot of work**, but you also have a **lot of time** to complete it in before the end of the semester. The keys to success are cooperation, collaboration, planning, and delegation.

Assignment Deliverables

All team members must keep track of each part of the assignment and upload a copy to T-Square on the Unit 4 Assignment. Simply, upload files when they are done or come due and choose to “Save Draft.” When your project is completely done, double-check all of your attached files and then click “Submit.” You should work on most of these files in their draft form on Google Drive. Once your work is solidified, you can move it into Microsoft Word or PowerPoint and save your work to a cloud-based shared folder, such as on DropBox. It is important and necessary that all members have immediate and always access to files during the composition process and nearing the submission deadlines on the proceeding schedule. Additionally, it is each team’s responsibility to draft, review, and revise works that require a professional polish (think about audience—does your meeting minutes need as much scrutiny as your proposal or final deliverable?).

Meeting Minutes: This will be an on-going Google Document that you create together. Add a page break, title the page with the date, the recorder’s name, and the team members present (always give first and last names for each team member). Write bulleted points for the major topics of discussion and work accomplished for *every* meeting in or outside of class time. Use these minutes to write a weekly progress report memo. Only one team member needs to submit each week’s progress report memo. Always include from (report writer), to (instructor and other team members—again, always use full names), subject (Progress Report), and date (the date of the Monday when each report is due).

Pitch: This will be your first component to the project. Together, brainstorm different problems that need to be addressed around campus. Choose a problem that can be fixed or managed with a technical communication solution. **It must be a solution that you can implement in the time available or a campaign promoting a solution that you would be unable to implement in the time available.** Prepare a 5-minute presentation to deliver in front of the class that explains the problem and your proposed solution. Only one team member is required to speak, but all team members must join the presenter in front of the class. The deliverables for this component include a script or outline and your PowerPoint file. One team member can submit viewable links as a comment to the appropriate blog post.

Proposal: Following Anderson’s example of a proposal memo, you will collaboratively create a proposal for your project. Identify the current situation and problem, detail your research into its past and present on campus and off (Are others dealing with a similar problem? If so, what did they do?), include background data obtained from interviews and questionnaires with potential users of your solution, your technical communication-based solution (e.g., poster,

website, brochure, video, podcast, instruction manual, etc.), your proposed timeline, your resources and personal experiences (why are you four-five the right team for the job), etc. A minimal proposal will be at least eight pages long, but it is very likely that your proposal will extend beyond that threshold. Your research must include observations, interviews with students, faculty, and staff, research in the archives, college reports, and academic journals. The Ursula C. Schwerin Library Archives are a good place to begin (<http://library.citytech.cuny.edu/services/archive/index.php>). It should include images as part of your evidence of a problem and an illustration of your proposed solution (with proper parenthetical citation). For your research, include parenthetical citations and a concluding Works Cited list in MLA format. Remember, all projects need a strong foundation to build upon. If you create a great proposal with a good self-motivated schedule, you are more likely to keep on-track and create useful deliverables.

Project Deliverable: Following the revision process of proposal, drafting, usability testing, and revising, you will create a draft deliverable and a final deliverable. The project deliverable must be a form of technical communication, which includes artifacts such as a poster, website, brochure, video, podcast, instruction manual, etc. Based on your research and your collective imaginations, you will propose your project deliverable in detail in the proposal document. You will then follow your plan and timeline to create a draft of this deliverable. Once completed, you will perform usability testing on a representative sample of users beyond team members (more than ten but not more than 50, unless you are very ambitious!). The results of this usability testing will be included in a usability testing summary memo. Use this data to revise the final form of your deliverable. Due to the value of the project and the ample time devoted to it, the successful final deliverable will be of high quality and feel professional. If you are creating an electronic deliverable, you may turn in everything electronically. However, if you are creating a deliverable meant to be physical (e.g., a poster or brochures), you will need to turn in physical draft and final deliverables in addition to your electronic versions.

Team Presentation: With the final deliverable completed, your team as a whole will give a 20-minute presentation to the class detailing the major components of your project process: problem and research, proposed solution, draft deliverable, usability testing results, and final deliverable. This will be followed by a 5-minute q&a session. I will be looking for the other teams to ask probing and insightful questions. Your deliverables for this component will include a script for all parts and indicating who will be speaking at any given time and a supporting PowerPoint. Practice your presentation beforehand and record the practice presentation for submission. Come dressed in business attire on the day of your presentation.

Individual Narrative of the Project: While the preceding components are written collaboratively and include all team members' names, the final component

of the project is a completed individually. It is 750-word minimum memo that describes the project process, the rhetorical choices you made as a team, the way your project’s components used overlapping WOVEN (written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal) modes to maximize their usefulness, and a summary of each team member’s contributions (including your own) from your perspective. Each student should email her or his project narrative memo to Professor Ellis as a Word docx file attachment before class on the first day of team presentations.

Project Report Memo Blog Post: Each team will create a project-report-style blog post that summarizes their project and includes each major document embedded after an appropriate heading or subheading. Your blog post is another professional document that requires additional writing and formatting to be a useable document. Do not embed your documents and leave it at that.

While you can use any cloud-based storage solution for collaborating on your project, you should import your documents into Google Drive for embedding everything on your blog post. If you do not use Google Drive to compose your documents, you might need to do additional usability testing and reformatting to make sure your documents look as professional as they should. In addition to embedding your files, you should also include a link to your team’s shared folder (permissions: view only).

These files should be included with your team’s blog post:

- Pitch Script
- Pitch PowerPoint File
- Proposal
- Weekly Progress Reports
- Draft Deliverable [docx/pptx/jpg/zip/pdf/etc.]
- Final Deliverable [docx/pptx/jpg/zip/pdf/etc.]
- Minutes for Each Team Meeting
- Final Presentation Script
- Final Presentation PowerPoint File

Each student should email her or his final project narrative memo to Professor Ellis. Use an email subject of “ENG3771 Narrative” and name your file in this manner:

- lastname.firstname.narrative.docx (e.g., burdell.george.narrative.docx)

Tentative Schedule

8	M	10/20	TC Chapter 21: Managing Client and Service-Learning Projects	Divide into teams.	Beginning of class writing.
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			Introduce Unit 2 Service-Learning Research Project.		
	W	10/22	<i>TC</i> Chapter 12: Ending a Communication NB: Midterm grades available.	Setup Google Drive shared folder for each team. Begin taking meeting minutes.	Beginning of class writing.
9	M	10/27	<i>TC</i> Chapter 19: Creating Communications with a Team	Discussion.	Beginning of class writing. Previous week's progress report due before class.
	W	10/29	<i>TC</i> Chapter 6: Conducting Reader-Centered Research: Gathering, Analyzing, and Thinking Critically About Information	Class pitches.	Beginning of class writing. Project pitches supporting files due before class.
10	M	11/3	<i>TC</i> Chapter 7: Using Five Reader-Centered Research Methods.	Discussion. Team studio time.	Beginning of class writing. Previous week's progress report due before class.
	W	11/5	<i>TC</i> Chapter 24: Writing Reader-Centered Proposals	Discussion. Team studio time.	Beginning of class writing.
11	M	11/10	<i>TC</i> Chapter 27: Writing Reader-Centered Progress Reports	Discussion. Team studio time.	Beginning of class writing. Previous week's progress report due before class.
	W	11/12	<i>TC</i> Chapter 25: Writing Reader-Centered Empirical Research Reports	Discussion. Team studio time.	Beginning of class writing.
12	M	11/17	<i>TC</i> Chapter 9: Using Nine Reader-Centered Patterns for Organizing Paragraphs, Sections, and Chapters	Discussion. Team studio time.	Beginning of class writing. Previous week's progress report due before class.

					Research proposal due before class.
	W	11/19	<i>TC</i> Chapter 10: Developing an Effective, Professional Style	Discussion. Team studio time.	Beginning of class writing.
13	M	11/24	<i>TC</i> Chapter 13: Writing Reader-Centered Front and Back Matter	Discussion. Team studio time.	Beginning of class writing. Previous week's progress report due before class.
	W	11/26	<i>TC</i> Chapter 16: Designing Reader-Centered Pages and Documents	Discussion. Team studio time.	Beginning of class writing.
14	M	12/1	<i>TC</i> Chapter 14: Creating Reader-Centered Graphics	Discussion. Team studio time.	Beginning of class writing. Previous week's progress report due before class.
	W	12/3	<i>TC</i> Chapter 15: Creating Eleven Types of Reader-Centered Graphics	Discussion. Team studio time.	Beginning of class writing.
15	M	12/8	<i>TC</i> Chapter 22: Creating Reader-Centered Websites	Discussion. Team studio time.	Beginning of class writing. Previous week's progress report due before class.
	W	12/10	<i>TC</i> Chapter 26: Writing Reader-Centered Feasibility Reports	Discussion. Team studio time.	Beginning of class writing.
16	M	12/15		Unit 2 wrap up and	Beginning of class writing.
	W	12/17		Team presentations.	Submit Unit 2 deliverables as a blog post on OpenLab (Only one post needed per team, but all team members should be listed in post).
17	M	12/22		Team presentations.	

Holistic Grading

I grade your work holistically. First, this means that your work must be complete, on time, and done using the writing process. If these components are not met, you will likely lose points. Second, I evaluate your work using the attached grading rubric. I deduct points from a maximum score of 100 based on the weaknesses that I might find in your work. I will include constructive criticism and advice with your grade. This feedback will be useful for your final portfolio. Third, your grade will likely be higher if you can develop more revisions of each part, because each revision is like a mathematical iteration bringing you closer to being a very effective communicator. However, this process only works when your revisions are substantial—going back to the foundations of your writing, composing, and ideas. Simply copyediting or proofreading in the revision process will help with the Conventions section of the rubric but not likely the other parts of the rubric. Carefully consider how you do use the revision process.

Grading Rubric

Scale	Basic	Beginning	Developing	Competent	Mature	Exemplary
Rhetorical Awareness Response to the situation/assignment, considering elements such as purpose, audience, register, and context	Ignores two or more aspects of the situation and thus does not fulfill the task	Ignores at least one aspect of the situation and thus compromises effectiveness	Attempts to respond to all aspects of the situation, but the attempt is insufficient or inappropriate	Addresses the situation in a complete but perfunctory or predictable way	Addresses the situation completely, with unexpected insight	Addresses the situation in a complete, sophisticated manner that could advance professional discourse on the topic
Stance and Support Argument, evidence, and analysis	Involves an unspecified or confusing argument; lacks appropriate evidence	Makes an overly general argument; has weak or contradictory evidence	Lacks a unified argument; lacks significance (“so what?”); lacks sufficient analysis	Offers a unified, significant, and common position with predictable evidence and analysis	Offers a unified, distinct position with compelling evidence and analysis	Offers an inventive, expert-like position with precise and convincing evidence and analysis
Organization Structure and coherence, including elements such as introductions and conclusions as well as logical connections within and among paragraphs (or other meaningful chunks)	Lacks unity in constituent parts (such as paragraphs); fails to create coherence among constituent parts	Uses insufficient unifying statements (e.g., thesis statements, topic sentences, headings, or forecasting statements); uses few effective connections (e.g., transitions, match cuts, and hyperlinks)	Uses some effective unifying claims, but a few are unclear; makes connections weakly or inconsistently, as when claims appear as random lists or when paragraphs’ topics lack explicit ties to the thesis	States unifying claims with supporting points that relate clearly to the overall argument and employs an effective but mechanical scheme	Asserts and sustains a claim that develops progressively and adapts typical organizational schemes for the context, achieving substantive coherence	Asserts a sophisticated claim by incorporating diverse perspectives that are organized to achieve maximum coherence and momentum

Conventions Expectations for grammar, mechanics, style, citation, and genre	Involves errors that risk making the overall message distorted or incomprehensible	Involves a major pattern of errors	Involves some distracting errors	Meets expectations, with minor errors	Exceeds expectations in a virtually flawless manner	Manipulates expectations in ways that advance the argument
Design for Medium Features that use affordances to enhance factors such as comprehensibility and usability	Lacks the features necessary for the genre; neglects significant affordances, such as linking on the web; uses features that conflict with or ignore the argument	Omits some important features; involves distracting inconsistencies in features (e.g., type and headings); uses features that don't support argument	Uses features that support with argument, but some match imprecisely with content; involves minor omissions or inconsistencies	Supports the argument with features that are generally suited to genre and content	Promotes engagement and supports the argument with features that efficiently use affordances	Persuades with careful, seamless integration of features and content and with innovative use of affordances

Table 16. Outcomes for English 1101 and English 1102 specified by the Board of Regents and by Georgia Tech's Writing and Communication Program (NB: In each cell, one or more items separated by semicolons could apply)