

LMC 3403, Unit 1 Major Assignment: Reader-Centered and Process-Driven Foundations



Introduction

In Unit 1: Foundations of Technical Communication, you will create a set of reader-centric instructions for building a Lego model of your own design using process-driven principles of technical communication. For this project, you will use a variety of communication modes including haptics or the perception of touch, proprioception, and manipulation of objects. While this project introduces you to the revision process at the heart of most if not all technical communication, it gives you a set of composition principles that you can adapt to your own needs and purposes in the workplace.

The deliverables of this project include:

- A proposal memo for creating a set of instructions for your Lego model design
- A draft set of instructions for building your Lego model design
- A memo reporting the findings of your instruction set usability testing
- A revised set of instructions for building your Lego model design
- A memo reflecting on how your instructions are reader-centric, how you created your instructions using a process, and how your instructions manage complexity.

Your audience for this project should be your manager, who has tasked you with creating a marketing tool (the Lego set) for your company.

To receive credit for this project, you must complete and submit all assigned deliverables.

See the schedule below for all due dates for drafts and final deliverables.

Step 1, Create your Lego model

Using approximately 50 of your Lego bricks, build a model of a technology that in some way connects to your field of study or major interests. Take a photo of your model (make sure that your image is well lit, easy to see, and in focus), name it `gtid#.unit1.model.jpg` and submit it to T-Square under Assignments.

Step 2, Write a proposal memo for creating a set of instructions

Following the proposal memo format from the previous project, write a proposal for creating a set of instructions for building your Lego model that would be included with the model (printed sheet of instructions, printed poster, a YouTube video, a self-built website, something insanely innovative, etc.). Your proposal should not over deliver, because you will have to create the set of instructions within the time allowed for this project. Your proposal should include a description of your approach to the instructions, a description of one usability test with a representative set of customers/clients, and an explanation of your revision following testing.

Name your proposal `gtid#.unit1.proposal.docx` and submit it to T-Square under Assignments.

Step 3, Follow Your Proposal: Build Instructions, Test, Revise

Using hand drawing, photography, videography, 3D modeling (LDRAW: <http://www.ldraw.org>, LIC: <http://code.google.com/p/lic/>, Lego Digital Designer: <http://ldd.lego.com/en-us/download/>), or something unprecedented and innovative, create a set of instructions that you believe anticipates the needs of your reader/user to easily and efficiently build your model.

Name your instructions as `gtid#.unit1.instructions-draft.[appropriate extension]` or copy a link to its location online. Submit your draft instructions to T-Square under Assignments.

Bring printouts of your instructions or a way of showing it to your test audience on the two days allocated for testing and interviews. You will trade instructions/Legos with one (or two) other persons during class. After building one another's models, you will conduct a short interview and note the time taken to build the model.

Write a brief memo summarizing your usability testing. This should include data collected from your interview and the time taken by each test user to build the model. Describe what you will do to revise your instruction set. Name this memo `gtid#.unit1.usability-memo.docx` and upload to T-Square under Assignments.

Begin your instruction set revisions for your final deliverable submission. Your final revisions should add the professional polish that your instruction set deserves to represent your best work and the work indicative of your client's brand.

Step 4, Reflect on the project

Finally, write a one page memo that serves as a reflection on the project, the process that you used, and any issues that you overcome during the process. Also, discuss how you are using multimodal synergy in your final, professional Lego instructions. Name this file `gtid#.unit1.reflection.docx`.

Step 5, Submit your project deliverables

Before class the due date, submit all components and deliverables for this project. Submit all drafts and parts already submitted again to the final project assignment on T-Square. Save all of your work—including anything online (such as on YouTube)—and submit it using these naming conventions:

- gtid#.unit1.model.jpg
- gtid#.unit1.proposal.docx
- gtid#.unit1.instructions-draft.[appropriate extension] (these could be websites, if so, simply zip the site and include all supporting files or include a link to the site in the inline writing area of the assignment)
- gtid#.unit1.instructions-final.[appropriate extension or link, see note above]
- gtid#.unit1.usability-memo.docx
- gtid#.unit1.reflection.docx

Schedule

| Week | Day | Date | Reading/Announcements | Work | Due |
|------|-----|------|---|--|--|
| 2 | M | 1/13 | <i>Technical Communication (TC)</i> Chapter 1: Intro Introduce Unit 1 Project: Learning Technical Communication Basic Skills Building Brick-by-Brick with Lego. | Analysis. Discussion: Why should we follow a user-centric/reader- centric focus? | |
| | W | 1/15 | <i>TC</i> Chapter 3: Defining Your Communication's Goals | Analysis. Build model from instructions included in your set. Bring your Lego sets to class! | After class, submit picture of completed model to T-Square. |
| | F | 1/17 | Library Tour: Meet in the rotunda entrance of the library. | | By Sunday at 6:00pm, submit a picture of your model or MOC ("my own creation") to T- Square. |
| 3 | M | 1/20 | Official Holiday, No Class | | |
| | W | 1/22 | <i>TC</i> Chapter 4: Planning for Usefulness <i>TC</i> Chapter 5: Planning Your Persuasive Strategies | Analysis. Proposal draft workshop. | |
| | F | 1/24 | <i>TC</i> Chapter 28: Writing Reader- | Analysis. | Submit your |

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| | | | Centered Instructions | Peer review proposal memos. | proposal memo to T-Square and email a copy to your team members. |
| 4 | M | 1/27 | <i>TC</i> Chapter 17: Revising Your Drafts <i>TC</i> Chapter 18: Testing Drafts for Usefulness and Persuasiveness Visit: usability.gov | Analysis. Test your instructions with teammates. Conduct interviews. Revise instructions as needed. | Submit your draft instructions to T-Square. Bring instructions deliverable to class in their intended format (print, web, video, etc.) |
| | W | 1/29 | <i>TC</i> Chapter 23: Writing Reader-Centered Letters, Memos, E-mails, and Digital Exchanges | Analysis. Testing and interviewing continues. | |
| | F | 1/31 | <i>TC</i> Chapter 8: Drafting Reader-Centered Paragraphs, Sections, and Chapters | Analysis. Discuss and begin project summary memo. | Submit your usability testing memo to T-Square. |
| 5 | M | 2/3 | Introduce unit 2 Major Project: Job Application Portfolio <i>TC</i> Chapter 2: Obtaining a Job | Analysis. Discuss job application portfolio and job advertisements. | Submit Unit 1 Deliverables to T-Square. All previously submitted files must be resubmitted to the final Unit 1 Assignment on T-Square. |

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. **Remember to focus on strategic issues AND tactical issues.**

Grading Rubric

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|-------|-------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| Scale | Basic | Beginning | Developing | Competent | Mature | Exemplary |
|-------|-------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------|-----------|

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|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Rhetorical Awareness Response to the situation/assignment, considering elements such as purpose, audience, register, and context</p> | <p> Ignores two or more aspects of the situation and thus does not fulfill the task</p> | <p> Ignores at least one aspect of the situation and thus compromises effectiveness</p> | <p> Attempts to respond to all aspects of the situation, but the attempt is insufficient or inappropriate</p> | <p> Addresses the situation in a complete but perfunctory or predictable way</p> | <p> Addresses the situation completely, with unexpected insight</p> | <p> Addresses the situation in a complete, sophisticated manner that could advance professional discourse on the topic</p> |
| <p>Stance and Support Argument, evidence, and analysis</p> | <p> Involves an unspecified or confusing argument; lacks appropriate evidence</p> | <p> Makes an overly general argument; has weak or contradictory evidence</p> | <p> Lacks a unified argument; lacks significance (“so what?”); lacks sufficient analysis</p> | <p> Offers a unified, significant, and common position with predictable evidence and analysis</p> | <p> Offers a unified, distinct position with compelling evidence and analysis</p> | <p> Offers an inventive, expert-like position with precise and convincing evidence and analysis</p> |
| <p>Organization Structure and coherence, including elements such as introductions and conclusions as well as logical connections within and among paragraphs (or other meaningful chunks)</p> | <p> Lacks unity in constituent parts (such as paragraphs); fails to create coherence among constituent parts</p> | <p> 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)</p> | <p> 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</p> | <p> States unifying claims with supporting points that relate clearly to the overall argument and employs an effective but mechanical scheme</p> | <p> Asserts and sustains a claim that develops progressively and adapts typical organizational schemes for the context, achieving substantive coherence</p> | <p> Asserts a sophisticated claim by incorporating diverse perspectives that are organized to achieve maximum coherence and momentum</p> |
| <p>Conventions Expectations for grammar, mechanics, style, citation, and genre</p> | <p> Involves errors that risk making the overall message distorted or incomprehensible</p> | <p> Involves a major pattern of errors</p> | <p> Involves some distracting errors</p> | <p> Meets expectations, with minor errors</p> | <p> Exceeds expectations in a virtually flawless manner</p> | <p> Manipulates expectations in ways that advance the argument</p> |
| <p>Design for Medium Features that use affordances to enhance factors such as comprehensibility and usability</p> | <p> 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</p> | <p> Omits some important features; involves distracting inconsistencies in features (e.g., type and headings); uses features that don’t support argument</p> | <p> Uses features that support with argument, but some match imprecisely with content; involves minor omissions or inconsistencies</p> | <p> Supports the argument with features that are generally suited to genre and content</p> | <p> Promotes engagement and supports the argument with features that efficiently use affordances</p> | <p> Persuades with careful, seamless integration of features and content and with innovative use of affordances</p> |