ENL 266: Comprehensive Final Project

This assignment provides an opportunity for you to integrate the information we have read and discussed into a single cohesive project. This project includes audience analysis, research, information design, description, instructions, proposal writing, report writing, and an oral presentation. In teams, you will identify a problem in your community that can be resolved with some kind of documentation. This project has 4 deliverables.

- Proposal that describes your plans for the project
- Documentation that addresses a need in your community
- Oral presentation

Specific instructions for each of these assignments will be covered below and in class.

The Proposal

As Johnson-Sheehan (2012) stated, "proposals are documents that present ideas or plans for consideration" (p. 206). They also respond to a problem or need in the community. For instance, you might propose that the College of Engineering distribute a "survival guide" to new students as a way to retain students. In this case, the problem is a need to retain students. Your solution is to provide an informative guide to help new students navigate the demands of getting a degree in engineering.

Write a memo, proposing a project. As your audience, I am specifically interested in the following:

- **Statement of problem.** Describe the problem or information need. What information need are you addressing? Why is it a problem? What information already exists? Why is this information inadequate for your audience and purpose? What is your objective?

- **Proposed solution.** Describe how your project will solve the problem. Describe the type of document you have decided to create and the topics you will include. Why does the format make sense for your audience? Why do the topics make sense?

- **Methods.** Outline the methods you will use to implement your plan, give a timetable for completion, and describe the research that needs to be done.

- **Conclusion.** What are the costs and benefits of the deliverable?

In other words, what is your project, why is it important, and what will you do to get the project done. Remember to be thorough and specific in your proposal. Your proposal should be 500–700 words.

Documentation

As a team, you need to decide on a subject, audience, and the type of document you will create. Because this is a class project, it has to be in the realm of professional communication and it has to address a communication need. Here are two examples of the kind of projects you might consider:

- "How to Navigate the Internet" —write a document for adults with no experience using the Internet who attend an adult community learning center. Consider what adults need to know to effectively and safely work in an online environment.

- "How to Use XYZ Lab at UMass Dartmouth"—write a user manual that will help new students use a campus resource.

You might also consider the "Collaborative Classroom Projects" at the end of each textbook chapter (see pages 91–92, Collaborative Project 2 and Research Project 4 for two good examples). Your project should include graphics and text. Page length: 1,000–1,200 words.

NOTE: The most successful projects are those that are conceptualized for a specific audience (and one with which you are familiar) and for a specific purpose. I encourage you to think about the resources in your academic and professional lives that could benefit from written documentation.

Presentation

For your team presentation, prepare an electronic slide presentation, using PowerPoint or similar software program. Your total presentation including Q & A should not exceed 8 minutes. Your audience is the class. Everyone on your team needs to participate in the presentation.

Evaluation Criteria

As with the other assignments in this course, your work will be evaluated on content, organization, style, mechanics, and design and will be assessed on how well you demonstrate an understanding of these concepts:

- Audience analysis and strategic planning (Chapters 2 and 12)
- Collaboration: Chapter 3
- Technical descriptions: Chapter 6
- Instructions and documentation: Chapter 7
- Proposals: Chapter 8
- Graphics: Chapter 9
- Organization: Chapter 16 and Style: Chapter 17
- Design of documents: Chapter 18
- Oral presentations: Chapter 21

Note: As a team project, you must actively participate in all components of the project to receive a passing grade. If you don't actively participate, you won't receive a passing grade. At the end of the project, you will evaluate each team member's contribution. In addition, I will assess your collaborative work. Based on those evaluations, I will adjust individual grades.