

April 5, 2007  
Minutes—ENGL 7100

**ATTENDANCE:** All except Louis, Lee, and Tab

**AGENDA:**

- Kelly's presentation on "Professional Writing for International Audiences"
- Sign-up for one-on-one meetings with Dr. N, 9-12 April 2007
- Final exam
- Upcoming class meetings
- Use of graphics on final project
- Interview techniques

**Kelley Riffe's Presentation:  
"Professional Writing for International Audiences: Grammar and Word Usage"**

Kelley provided the group with tips designed to create documents that will be easy to read for international audiences. Among the tips she offered are the following:

- Keep your syntax simple. This will make translations much easier.
- Be specific about dates, numbers, and currencies. Different countries use different guidelines for writing these. Use YYYY-MM-DD format for dates as it is the international standard.
- Be considerate of cultural differences. A brief and concise letter may be interpreted as rude in a different context. Consider the audience the writing is intended for, but do not rely on stereotypes or fall into a trap of acting like someone you are not.

**Progress Report Meetings April 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>**

All class members present signed up for an appointment with Dr. N to discuss the progress of the final project. All class members who were not present were assigned an open meeting date and time. If you were not present, please check with Dr. N on what date and time you were assigned. You should be prepared to discuss your research findings and, if your data collection has proven unsatisfactory, you should be prepared to work out a Plan B for your final report. Bring a copy of your Progress Report Memo, or draft Memo, as well as any other writing you have completed for the project to your meeting.

**Final Exam**

Dr. N will be posting an outline of the Final Exam online within the next week. The material for the exam goes back to the beginning of the term. The focus of the exam is to apply your knowledge of this material (do not focus on the theory).

The exam will consist of samples of writing that must be analyzed for strengths and weaknesses in terms on content, formatting, layout, and editing. Everyone is invited to submit sample questions for the exam. Dr. N will publish the details regarding this on the course website in the near future. You can draw excerpts from the minutes, proposals, presentations, or your own writing. Submitting these samples should help you study individually, as well as possibly foster a group review of the material.

### **Upcoming Class Meetings**

Class will not be meeting next Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. Everyone has signed up for personal meetings with Dr. N. to discuss their progress on the final project instead.

For the next class on April 19<sup>th</sup>, Dr. N. distributed two handouts on communicating and collaborating in teams: *Making Virtual Teams Work* and *Building Your Own Capacities for Collaboration*. The class will also be discussing Nominal Group Technique from the handout from class on March 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Graphics**

Dr. N. highlighted important points to keep in mind when working on the final project. Using a former student's proposal as an example, he reminded everyone that:

- Graphics are not a requirement for the project, but you might choose to include them because they help to clarify, highlight, and explain the information in your report. As Beth pointed out, people reading proposals are usually going through entire stacks of material, and the visuals help to break the monotony of the text and sell your main points.
- Think of graphics as a means of helping you explain complex information to an audience. Graphics are also useful when your reviewers do not share your level of expertise.
- Do not place graphics in a report merely as filler. If they do not help to highlight, clarify, or persuade, you should leave them out.
- Graphics don't need to be fancy. Kelley said that overly fancy design elements can sometimes be too distracting. You want to highlight your main points, not bury them.
- Graphics are not just images, bar graphs, and tables. Text is a graphic in itself, and you should be aware of how you can use it to highlight information (headings, appropriate use of bullets, etc.).

If you need help with creating graphics, contact CIS at (912) 921.5518 for help. Mike also volunteered to help anyone interested in learning how to use Excel.

### **Conducting Interviews**

A few things to keep in mind when you are conducting interviews for your project:

- Be sure you talk to the 'right' person who has the information that you need.
- Be courteous and professional. The people that provide data are usually the people you will be contacting for funding and other kinds of help later on.
- Make an appointment for an interview, and make sure that both you and the interviewee are informed and prepared about the purpose of the meeting.
- Send the questions to the interviewee ahead of time. This will help both of you stay on task.
- Make sure you establish how long the interview will take, particularly if you are conducting a phone interview. If necessary, try to arrange a follow-up interview.
- Identify yourself and show your interest in the topic.
- During the interview, listen effectively.
- Leave your preconceptions behind. Be prepared for responses you didn't expect.
- Do not be afraid to ask for clarification.
- Summarize what you believe that you heard frequently.
- Never divulge information from other sources.
- Let them know that you may be calling them back to clarify anything that was stated.