**Project Based Learning (PBL) Packet**

Fall 2015

ETLA 100: Dismantling Racism



**I. What is PBL and why are we doing it?**

Secondary education emphasizes the mastery of facts and concepts. The types of problems (on tests, in papers, etc.) encountered in high school courses are often well-defined—the tasks are clear; the information is readily available; the answers are relatively straightforward; and it’s generally pretty easy to figure out what you are supposed to do. But “real-world” problems hardly ever work that way! In your personal and professional lives, you will encounter problems and tasks that you may not completely understand—problems that are complex, with many relevant factors and many possible solutions. You’ll have to work hard to recognize and correct your own ignorance. (Recognizing and correcting your own ignorance may, in fact, be the hardest part of real-world problem solving!) You’ll also have to work with people of different backgrounds who have different strengths and weaknesses.

PBL is an open-ended pedagogical method, encouraging exploration, creativity, and the development of complex problem-solving skills in a group setting. You will be presented with a multifaceted problem, and it will be up to you (and your group) to figure out how to solve it.

PBL encourages:

* Exploring a problem, rather than answering a narrow question.
* Using “I don’t know” as a starting point rather than a roadblock. (If you don’t know, how can you find out?)
* Collaborative expertise. (Your skills and talents may complement those of others with whom you’ll work.)
* Practice working in a group. (Like it or not, everyone has to work with others in the professional world!)

While your group’s final results will be important, it is also vital that each individual be held accountable for his/ her own performance. Your group’s first task will be assigning roles. There should be a separate role for each student in the group, and the roles should rotate so that each person gets experience in different roles. Some suggested roles are included in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Task Master | Keeps everybody on topic and talking about issues that are helpful to the group. Completes group work report… |
| Recorder | Keeps notes on the discussion, identifies goals and learning issues. |
| Reporter | Summarizes and writes up information; communicates results… |
| Skeptic/ Accuracy Coach (aka Fact Nerd) | Intentionally challenges assumptions of the group, poses alternative opinions, challenges facts, checks facts… |
| Philologist (aka Source Nerd) | Addresses issues related to research sources, such as source quality, authorship, etc., produces bibliography… |
| **Everyone** | **Pursues objectives, does research, brings ideas to the group, tracks down answers, completes individual tasks, etc.** |

**II. What is the problem/project for this course?**

**While it is tempting to think that racism is “getting better” or that it is far removed from our historical, geographical, and social circumstances, recent national events—e.g., the Charleston shootings, the deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, and others—as well as local reactions to those events suggest otherwise. Racism remains a problem in our society and in our particular college community. Your group will design and produce a major project that in some way *dismantles racism* on Emory & Henry’s campus and/or in the surrounding community**.

Questions to consider as you think about your project:

1. Racism is a complex problem that cannot be solved in a three-month college course. What specific aspect of racism will your group address? Can that issue be addressed within the timeframe of the course?
2. What information do you need to better understand your problem? Do you, for example, need admissions and financial aid statistics? Do you need to know more about the history and demographics of Emory & Henry College or southwest Virginia more broadly? How will you get that information?
3. What tangible results will you produce? Are you going to build a website? Hold a rally? What resources will you need to produce the results you envision? What specific actions will you need to take?
4. How will you determine whether or not your project has been successful? How can you measure (whether quantitatively or qualitatively) your success/ failure?

**III. Procedure**

Beginning the third full week of class, we will devote one class period per week to group work. Your group will submit a progress report (distributed in class) after each day of group work. You will also complete an individual work log (distributed in class), which you will submit to me once before the midterm and then again on the last day of class.

Tasks for day one of group work:

1. Assign roles and establish ground rules. What are each member’s obligations? Under what scenario may a member be dismissed from the group?
2. Brainstorm. Research and consider the problem you want to address. What major question will you answer? What subsidiary questions are raised? You do not have to settle on one specific problem; rather, try to identify five or six questions/ problems that interest your group.
3. Establish objectives for your second meeting. Agree on specific tasks to be completed before your second meeting.
4. Complete group progress report. Update individual work log.

Tasks for day two of group work:

1. Assign roles. Where possible, the members of the group should rotate roles.
2. Continue brainstorming and researching. Narrow down the problem(s) that you want to address.
3. Determine what information you might need to effectively address the problems you’ve outlined. Which problems are solvable within the time constraints of the course?
4. Establishes objectives for your third meeting. Agree on specific tasks to be completed.
5. Complete group progress report. Update individual work log.

Tasks for day three of group work:

1. Assign roles
2. Define your problem. What important issue/problem/question will your group project confront? Summarize the problem in a few sentences on your progress report.
3. Plan your project. What will you DO to address the problem you’ve chosen? Develop a detailed plan, establishing a timeline, individual and group responsibilities, and goals. Include the timeline, list of responsibilities, and goals in your progress report.
4. What resources (or information) will you need to complete your project? How will you procure them? **Construct a preliminary bibliography.**
5. Complete the group progress report. Update your individual work log.
6. Share your plan with the class.

Tasks for remaining group work days.

1. Assign roles
2. Complete project objectives according to agreed upon timeline
3. Complete group progress report. Update individual report.

**IV. Grading**

There are two components the grade for your group project: an individual grade (40%) and a group grade (60%).

*Individual Grade:*

Your individual grade will be based on three things:

1. My (and the SI’s) observations of you.
2. Your evaluation of yourself on the individual work log.
3. Feedback from your group members about your work.

*Group Grade:*

Your group grade will be based on the quality of your final product.

1. Clarity of the primary problem(s) or task(s) as recorded on your group progress reports.
2. Judicious use of scholarly sources.
3. Quality of the product. (Is it polished, persuasive, and professional?)
4. Achievement of goals outlined on your progress report for day three.
5. Quality of project presentation. (Each group will present their work to the class on the day of the Final Exam)