

Project Description, Group Division and Research Strategies

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1. Project Description

1.1 Multicultural Society in the Netherlands

This project is collaboration between UCL and Sheffield, both partners within Virtual Dutch. An important aim of Virtual Dutch is to bring students who study at different institutions together in a virtual environment so that they can share a teaching and learning experience. This project starts 9 February and will finish with our videoconference on 5 March 2009.

1.2 What is the project about?

The project will centre around the multicultural society in the Netherlands, a topic that has dominated Dutch politics, media and arts for nearly a decade now. As a starting point we will take a short film, a video, or an interview. Within your group your brief is to mediate the content and the context of your videoclip to a non-Dutch audience by writing a joint document, a wiki. Together we will write a reference tool for multiculturalism in the

Netherlands. Think Wikipedia, written by all of you, organised by means of tags and available to the entire group. This means that you will benefit from the work of others, and together we will build up a corpus of knowledge that we could make available to the outside world via Virtual Dutch if we so wish. Things to focus on:

- what your clip is about
- who is/are featured
- what their role is in the debate
- how the information/message is presented
- what the context is of the clip
- what general terminology is required to understand the multicultural debate
- what theoretical issues are at stake
- anything else you consider relevant and interesting

1.3 But there is more ...

- In addition to the content this is a skills driven project. This means that you will gain experience in:
- gathering information from various sources and assessing the content for its reliability and the political leaning or ideology it may contain;
- collaboration: working with others can be tricky when you meet face to face, but it is even harder when you don't see your group members at all. Yet communicating your views carefully and facilitating collaboration by encouraging and responding appropriately is a great life skill. This project aims to give you experience in 'lubricating' the group process;
- modern communication tools: you will be writing your own blog in which you give your opinion on the content and the process of the project and you will be writing a joint document, a wiki using tagging;
- taking part in a plenary discussing via a videoconference;
- reading Dutch sources and making them available to an English speaking audience.

1.4 And most importantly ...

This project is unlike normal courses where you would expect tutors to take the lead. This time you are in the driving seat and Christine and I are merely passengers. The aim is to write a resource that will allow an English speaking audience to understand about the multicultural debate in the Netherlands. Allow that objective to lead you in whatever direction you think relevant or necessary: include history, talk about politics, include films and television series, anything you feel will shed light on the facts and/or the discussion. With this project we aim to emulate a 'real life' situation where you will be expected to choose a direction, take the lead, show initiative and take decisions. It is therefore

quite a break with what you have been used to so far, but it will bring you new experiences and it will look good on your CV.

1.5 Timeline

Introduction of the project: participants are given access to uSpace (w/c 9 February)

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Writing of the joint wiki and the personal blog (3 weeks)

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Preparation a topic for discussion during the videoconference

-

Videoconference Thursday 5 March 2-4

-

Project evaluation

2. Assessment

Your mark for the project will consist of two elements.

The way you have contributed the project and facilitated the collaboration	50%
The content of your personal blog and your group wiki	50%

As you can see, the content and the process are equally weighted, both what you say and how you say it is important. In Sheffield, the project accounts for 20% of your total mark for GER232/333/110. At UCL, it replaces the third reading week, vocab and listening assignment for DUTC2001.

2.1 So, what am I expected to do?

- Write a wiki (a joint document) in which you discuss the video clip assigned to your group including all information you consider relevant to make the topic lucid for non initiated readers;
- Keep a personal blog (3 entries minimum) in which you give your view on the multicultural debate. You can comment on the progress of the project, the collaboration etc;
- Prepare a topic for discussion during the video conference and decide who will present the group's findings during the videoconference.

2.2 Implied expectations

These above are the tangible expectations. The equally important implied expectations are:

- further the collaboration between the members of your group;be punctual in your contribution;
- take the initiative, also when it comes to using new applications like the blog and the wiki
- check the status and progress of the project on a daily basis
- be tolerant and positive (*yes we know that collaborating can be frustrating but it is still a necessary life skill*).

3. uSpace

We will be using a new collaborative platform hosted by Sheffield. We are part of a pilot: we are the first group of students to test this new medium. Our effort and contributions will therefore be followed by outside parties and there be prepared for the occasional technical hitches along the way. Your view on the use of Uspace will generate important information. Before we start the project, you will need to get used to using this environment. Please invest some time in finding you way around and read the provided documentation carefully.

4. What group am I in?

Please find below the division into groups.

All groups contain students form UCL and Sheffield. [NB. Student names removed]

Project Description, Group Division and Research Strategies

1. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
2. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
3. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
4. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
5. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx

Group 2 (Submission)

1. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
2. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
3. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
4. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx

Group 3 (Rappers)

1. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
2. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
3. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
4. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx

Group 4 (Hans Teeuwen)

1. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
2. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
3. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
4. xxxxxxx xxxxxxx

Group 5 (Pim Fortuyn en Ayaan Hirsi Ali)

1. xxxxxx xxxxxx
2. xxxxxx xxxxxx
3. xxxxxx xxxxxx
4. xxxxxx xxxxxx
5. xxxxxx xxxxxx

Group 6 (Marokkaanse jongeren)

1. xxxxxx xxxxxx
2. xxxxxx xxxxxx
3. xxxxxx xxxxxx
4. xxxxxx xxxxxx
5. xxxxxx xxxxxx

5. Research Strategies

5.1 Inquiry Based Project

You are about to do an so-called enquiry based project. That means that you get given a topic and you have to do your own research, including finding reliable sources to base your information on. It also means that you and your group determine the direction in which you wish to take your research. Using a wiki will prove a useful tool to record your findings as a team.

5.2 Explore your topic

Feel free to take your exploration in whatever direction you like as long as your bear in mind that:

- You are writing your wiki for a non-Dutch speaking audience with little or no knowledge of multiculturalism in the Netherlands. This means that you will have to present your information in English and you cannot assume prior knowledge on the part of your readers.
- In your wiki you aim for to provide objective information. However, that does not mean that you cannot outline different positions within the debate. It just means that you do not state your personal views explicitly. The place to record your personal views and comments is in your blog post.
- Apart from the factual information (who are they? - what do they say? - what is the context?) you are expected to develop a theoretical thread to your wiki. For instance, you could explore concepts such as multiculturalism, recognition and distribution, populism, Islam, tolerance etc.
- You will have to use reliable sources. Be aware of the bias of your sources and always check who authored the information. See reliability check.

5.3 Before you start

Before you start we suggest you check the [Virtual Dutch Study Packs](#). Here you will find two study packs on multicultural Netherlands that will give you a brief overview of the historic context and the government policies towards integration.

5.4 Your Resources

You will have to consult a variety of resources, most of them will be available on the internet. A good start is to check [Intute](#). This is a subject gateway for reliable web pages relevant for the Arts and Humanities.

When you use google, remember to consult Google Scholar which searched in peer-reviewed resources. It is not a full text database. Full text may be available if the article has been placed on the open web but you are more likely to be taken to a publishers' web site and given the option to pay for full text. In that case, check Star to see whether the University Library has a subscription to the journal; or login to MUSE and check the list of eJournals from the Library tab.#

5.5 Reliability check

Before you use information you have found on a website, make sure to do the reliability check. Clearly looking at the reliability of all your sources is important but be particularly vigilant when it comes to electronic resources.

Source: Sheffield University Information skills tutorial

Investing in your web literacy is time very well spent. Here is a short video to help you decide how reliable your internet sources are:

I also like this one, which is more of a tutorial [The Internet Detective](#).

5.6 Group work

Working in a group is an important skill: in your professional life you are likely to encounter collaboration situations regularly. Collaboration will increasingly become non face-to-face. It is therefore essential that you develop the attitude and 'tricks' to make your collaboration the most fruitful. You will have to be able to inspire, negotiate, be empathetic as well as flexible enough to reach compromises.

This is a list communication skills may need: you will have to

- advocate your point of view without harming your collaborators' feelings
- spot when a conversation gets emotional and then make it safe again to continue meaningful dialogue
- listen and get into the shoes of your collaborator
- define a mutual intent that will inspire action
- apologise if necessary
- get things done so you have something to show for your collaboration

5.7 Uspace etiquette

In practice this means that you will have to stick to the following online etiquette:

1. Pull your weight. In the online environment you cannot just look, you will have to contribute from day one. The sooner you will get your first words on paper, the better because your project will start taking shape. . Make sure that you start your research immediately and that you show through your work in the wiki or on the discussion forum that you are committed and involved.
2. Contribute regularly. Because you are working with others, you cannot leave your contribution till the last week: you'll have to contribute steadily over the four week period in order to help your group forward.
3. Be persistent. Remember that we're all working in a fairly new environment. If you run into any difficulties, don't wait. Post a query on the home page straight away or send an email. Most problems are easily solved, but you have to share your problem before we can help.

4. Share ideas, questions and sources. For many of us, taking online courses is a new experience. There are no dumb questions, and even if you think your solution is obvious, please share it by posting it on the Discussion .
5. Think before you push the publish button. Stop and consider how the person on the other end will read the words? While you can't anticipate all reactions, do check what you've written before you post it.
6. Remember that the others cannot see the grin on your face when you make a sarcastic comment; we can't see the concern on your face if you only say a couple of words; and we can't read your mind and fill in the gaps if you abbreviate your comments. So help us "see" you by explaining your ideas fully.
7. Ask for feedback if you're not sure how your ideas and comments will be taken. Remember there are people on the other side. If you disagree with what someone has said, practice all your communication skills as you express that disagreement.
8. Flying off the handle is clearly unacceptable under all circumstances. No matter how much you disagree.
9. Plagiarism, cheating and other violations of ethical student behaviour are always serious actions, also in an electronic learning community. Just don't do it.

Note, you can limit your Google Scholar search to the University of Sheffield to gain access to our library subscriptions:

Click on Scholar Preferences

Type Sheffield in the Library Links section and click Find Library

Check the box next to University of Sheffield Library (University of Sheffield)

Click Save preferences