

This is supplementary material for the Julianne Newmark and Tiffany Bourelle webtext “Fostering Community through Metacognitive Reflection in Online Technical Communication Courses,” published in *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 26(2), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/26.2/praxis/newmark-bourelle/index.html>

## English 219 – Instructions Assignment

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### Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to give you experience writing instructions in multimodal formats.

### Description

You will create a set of formal instructions with multiple steps and sub-steps. The instructions should help your reader(s) perform a specific task. Your goal is to create the instructions clearly and unambiguously so that the reader can interpret them in only one way. Content and layout should be appropriate for your audience and purpose, and should conform to principles of good design.

Your instructions will be accompanied by reflections posted in your portfolio on the course outcomes. Within these reflections, please address rhetorical decisions you made when creating the instructions in terms of audience consideration, choice of medium, etc.

### Topics

For the instructions portion of the assignment, you should choose a task to document that is familiar to you and interesting and helpful to your reader.

**Please avoid the following topics:** software applications, origami, recipes, or any procedure involving weapons or illegal substances. The best set of instructions that a student ever submitted was “A Multi-Approach Handbook to Dreadlocks.” It was great because a) this is a topic that not many people understand or know about, and b) it wasn’t just the same old re-hashing of basic information that anyone can find on the internet such as “How to Change a Tire,” or in that same vein, “How to Change Your Own Oil,” or “How to Perform CPR.” All of those are very useful things to know—but surely you can draw on your own experience and expertise to share information about something you know how to do. Stuck for ideas? Check out the Web site [www.instructables.com](http://www.instructables.com) to help you think of things you know that others may be interested in learning!

### Format

Modern instructions come in a variety of formats, not just the written instructions that come with a product when you buy it. Now you can find instructions in the form of video tutorials, websites, audio directions, and more. For this project, you will design your instructions in a **multimodal format**. This means that you should think creatively about the medium you want to use to design your set of instructions. Consider who your intended audience is—what kind of medium would best be used to reach this audience?

**You have two choices: a) a video, or b) a sound project.** Please consult the tutorials to help you develop your project. Keep in mind that “multimodal” means multiple modes (such as text, visual elements, sound, etc.) Therefore, your project must include more than one mode. I do not want text-based instructions, nor do I want sound projects that are simply a recording of your voice reading

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instructions. While PowerPoint can be used to create videos, I do not want plain PowerPoints—it must play as a video and include sound.

### **Criteria**

You will produce two parts for this assignment: the instructions set (in the format you choose), and your reflection discussing the rhetorical choices you made while designing the document.

### **Special Features of this Assignment**

Chapter 7 of *Technical Communication Today* provides detailed explanations of writing instructions. While you have some flexibility of what to write about and how to present it, your instructions must reflect the guidelines expressed in the chapter. Specifically, your instructions must include the following:

- a specific and precise title
- introduction with background information
- list of materials, parts, tools, and conditions required
- sequentially ordered steps
- graphics/multimodal elements
- safety information
- conclusion that signals the completion of the task

Note: For graphics, if you use art from another source, you must provide documentation to properly attribute where it came from. I have required that you make your project multimodal to emphasize the importance of this aspect of instructions writing.

### **Assignment Submission**

When you turn in your assignment, you will give me your portfolio URL. Within your portfolio, you should include the project as well as the reflection. Your assignment will need to be submitted in the appropriate medium (you can submit a URL that takes me to your project, if needed).

### **Grading**

Your instructions assignment is worth 100 points (10 percent of your final grade). The actual instructions are worth 90 points. Your reflection is worth 10 points. I will grade your projects using the following criteria:

#### **Audience & Purpose — 10 percent**

#### **Organization and Clarity of Steps — 15 percent**

#### **Inclusion of required information and content—20 percent**

--a specific and precise title

--introduction with background information

--list of materials, parts, tools, and conditions required

--sequentially ordered steps

--graphics

--safety information

--conclusion that signals the completion of the task

#### **Quality of technical writing, editing, and conventions – 15 percent**

#### **Design/Formatting – 10 percent**

#### **Multimodality – 20 percent**

#### **Reflections – 10 percent**