



THE WRITING CENTER

Unistrukture, 1st floor

232-6567

<http://www.bryant.edu/ace>

Call ahead for an appointment with a student Writing Consultant or a professional Writing Specialist. Drop-ins also welcome and accommodated whenever possible.

Writing in Groups

It is always a good idea to stop by the Writing Center or visit our website to obtain handouts on different grammar and punctuation topics that will be useful for group writing projects. ACE and the Writing Center also offer a variety of workshops that can inform your group process and help your group with writing. Finally, your group or one or more representatives can always make an appointment with a Writing Specialist or a Writing Consultant to go over your paper at any stage of its development. The Writing Center also offers labs for teams working on business plans.

1) Establishing deadlines: Assigning early, yet realistic, deadlines for every task and stage of the project is important to the team's success. By meeting at regular intervals throughout the semester, the team members will feel compelled to keep up with their work since they constantly have to report on their progress. Deadlines are particularly critical for collaborative written projects since writing is a process that begins with the prewriting and drafting stages and ends with the revising and editing stages. Assigning deadlines and regular meeting times prevents anyone from waiting until the last minute to begin their work. When any member misses a deadline, the group needs to address the problem immediately. If the problem persists, then your instructor needs to be notified.

2) Outlining: After the workload has been evenly distributed, it would be very beneficial to create a skeletal outline of your project. The outline will allow all the team members to actually see how all the different parts or subtopics relate to the whole. This becomes particularly important when all the team members begin working on their individual ideas or subtopics. This outline can be revised and expanded throughout the course of the project to help all the team members integrate their sections more smoothly into one unified piece of writing. A well-developed outline can serve as a goal chart by forecasting what the final product will look like.

3) Drafting and revising: There are a few different strategies for dividing the drafting and the revising work in a collaborative written project depending upon the scope of the project, the size of the team, and the time involved. Many times, each team member drafts and revises his / her own section of the project. All sections are then compiled into one final draft. This strategy can work if a significant amount of time is reserved at the end of the project for combining these different sections into one coherent piece of writing. Sometimes the team is divided into two groups: drafters and revisers. Team members work in pairs on the same subtopic or idea. They both write the rough draft independently and pass their separate drafts along to the revisers, who are also working in pairs. The revisers then work collaboratively to write a single second draft that includes the best features of the individual rough drafts. This strategy involves less time at the end for integrating the individual sections. At other times, team members are responsible for

drafting their own section(s) and having some other team member help with the revision process. All team members, then, draft their own piece of writing and review someone else's writing. Writing Center staff are great resources at this stage in the process, as they act as impartial readers of your work.

4) Forming the parts into a whole and editing the final draft: This last stage of the team project is one of the most important because this is when the team weaves all the individual parts into one, cohesive whole. With most group projects, the final project that is submitted to the instructor is simple a compilation of individual projects. A few meetings need to be devoted exclusively to producing a unified and coherent final project, particularly for written assignments. Every member needs to pay particular attention to maintaining a consistent tone and style throughout the piece in addition to providing smooth transitions from one section to another. Reading a draft aloud to the team is one way of trying to identify the parts or sections that need to be revised.

Remember, you need to always edit the final draft you are going to submit to your instructor. The editing process can involve input from all the team members. During this editing workshop, everyone reviews a copy of the final draft to improve word choice, grammar, usage, or punctuation and to proofread for typos and other surface errors. The library offers rooms where the team can project the draft onto a screen so that everyone is looking at the same document and can edit it together right there and then. A Writing Consultant or Writing Specialist can help the group at this stage as well.