COMM+D

The Center for Global Communication and Design

ARE YOU...

- Working on a writing or visual design project for a class?
- Designing slides for a class presentation?
- Polishing your resume for the career fair?
- Developing an undergraduate research proposal?
- Composing a cover letter for an internship application?
- Working on an application for graduate school, medical school, or law school?

Whatever the communication project, we can help.

The Center for Global Communication+Design (COMM+D) is a free support service for all members of the Rensselaer community, including Staff, Faculty, Graduate and Undergraduate students. The Center provides one-on-one consultations in preparing written, oral, and visual design communication projects. We encourage you to come in at ANY point in the composing process, especially early on, even when you're planning or brainstorming.

We can work with projects from ANY discipline (even technical projects). We don't have to understand all the content; we can still help you think about the organization, purpose, style, sentence structures, and illustrations. If the content is not technical, we'll help you make sure the content makes sense!

We don't fix errors for you, but we teach you about any patterns of error or confusions we find in reading your work, and we'll tell you which parts of the document work well for us, as readers. We can also give you feedback on DESIGN elements in your work: illustrations, video and animation storyboards, interface/website designs, and data visualization projects.

OUR STAFF

Our staff is made up of undergraduate writing mentors and graduate TAs. The undergraduate mentors are students from a variety of majors who have taken a course to learn how to read and respond to many kinds of writing and to give feedback on oral presentations. The TAs are excellent readers and writers who have experience reading writing from all disciplines.

Go to the Comm+D website at www.commd.rpi.edu to schedule an appointment.

FAQ

What happens in a conference?
In a standard conference, you and the mentor or teaching assistant will discuss the assignment, including any expectations, the intended audience, formatting, etc. If you have a written draft, you and the mentor will read through the piece, out loud or silently, depending on your preference. For a design project, you and the mentor will look over the piece together, following a similar process with a focus on visual communication. COMM+D welcomes projects at any stage, and mentors are prepared to work with you on brainstorming, outlines, or sketches as well as more complete drafts. You will work together on issues you feel are most important: readability, clarity, structure, organization, support of ideas, etc. This is the basic process, but remember, each conference is different, just as each writer and assignment is different.

Does the Center provide assistance to multilingual students?
Yes. Our mentors and teaching assistants are trained to work with multilingual students and to help explain typical difficulties with English writing or speaking. They are not language teachers, but are happy to help with oral presentations, grammar, vocabulary, native English idioms, etc.

How long does a conference last?
Conferences are scheduled for 30- or 60-minute appointments. However, the conference lasts about 25- to 50-minutes, respectively. This allows the mentors time to complete necessary reflective paperwork and prepare for the next conference. If you plan to split one project over more than one visit, you may want to request the same mentor through our scheduler, so they are familiar with the work.

Is there a page limit?
No, there is no page limit. We help students working on projects ranging from 1-2 page lab reports to lengthy graduate-level dissertations. Conferences are limited in time though, so if the whole assignment cannot be covered in one session, we advise you to schedule a second or third appointment on another day, leaving time in between conferences to do some revising on your own.

Can the Center help me with a speech or oral presentation?
Yes, our mentors and teaching assistants have training in PowerPoint presentations and can offer feedback on content and organization. You also can choose to work exclusively on the visual portion of the presentation.

Will my professor be notified that I came to the Center?
If a visit to the Comm+D is required for your class or your professor has offered extra credit for attending a conference in the Center, we will be happy to notify your professor. Otherwise, your visit to the Center will be kept confidential. The records we keep are for statistical purposes only.

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