# ENGL 1101 – Final Reflection Paper

Welcome to my ENGL 1101 Portfolio! If you are reading this, it is either because you are Prof. George P. Thomas trying to complete his giant pile of workload, or because you are interested in knowing more about me, why I took the course ENGL 1101, what did I do while being a part of the course, and what exactly did I get from this course, or perhaps, both.

Let’s start from the beginning. It was August 2018 when I stepped into United States and into Georgia Tech campus to start with my tertiary education. With my hopes all soaring across the sky and my enthusiasm overflowing my mind, I was all ready to take on the challenge and build something that might potentially change the world. But wait! There was something missing.

I could certainly think of building something, since I had several plans for some personal projects to work on – check! I could start working on building that *something*, since I had all the enthusiasm I needed to kickstart even the NASA space shuttle, let alone my personal projects – check! I could get qualitative feedback from the end-users of what I make, since joining Georgia Tech meant joining a highly diverse community with people hailing in from over 50 nations – check! I could also complete my project and come up with the next *internet*, since the campus of Georgia Tech provided you access to all of its awesome resources without any restrictions meaning that I had everything that I needed to know right at my disposal – wohoo, double-check!

But could I introduce the technological breakthrough that I came up with to the entire world out there curiously waiting to hear what I developed? Well, I was not quite sure about that. This was something I had had issues with since I was in middle school.

Being the valedictorian of your class in India meant special access to many exciting opportunities like representing your school on state (and sometimes, even national) level, addressing the entire school during one of the major events, like the Bi-Annual Functions, being on your school’s team for everything you held expertise in, and many more even more exciting opportunities.

However, I was not the best in my class when it came to oral communication. Everyone among my teachers were so confident on me excelling everything I did that I started getting haunted by the fear of making a mistake. Although some people may consider this a way to ensure that you did not actually make any mistakes, I started fumbling and speaking weirdly in middle of speeches or presentations just because of this fear. With time, I succeeded in suppressing this fear enough that I could comfortably give short speeches, but presentations – they were the ones that I couldn’t do.

This fear was one of the primary things that I wanted to tackle before getting my *Einstein’s brain* at work. Soon after coming to Georgia Tech campus, I got to know about ENGL 1101 course, and I selected Prof. Thomas’ class to be the one I wanted to be enrolled in, primarily because it had assignments spread all over the semester that aimed at improving my oral communication skills, while also helping you get a strong command over the WOVEN method of communication – exactly what I was looking for before I could get on any platform with my ideas.

Motivated by the idea that **ENGL 1101 shall allow me to get better in my oral communication skills along with the WOVEN method of communication**, I set off on my journey along with 29 other students in my class. My first assignment (also known as, *Artifact 0*) was the multimodal diagnostic video, wherein we were asked to introduce ourselves and speak about what we wanted to learn from the course in a span of 90 seconds. At first look, it seemed like an assignment seeking to give the faculty an idea of the common mindset the enrolled students, but it was actually a challenge for the students to test their then WOVEN communication skills. 85 retakes, six hours of work, and a ton of experience in oral and visual communication later, I finally had my Artifact 0 ready. Reflecting back upon it now, it makes complete sense as to why was the assignment critical for the progress of course. Not only did it encourage the students to think upon why they enrolled themselves in the course, it also helped them work a bit on two of the WOVEN method of communication – Oral and Visual. I tested my oral communication skills by participating in a residence hall council election shortly after, and although they were not as good as I wanted them to be by the end of the semester, I could already see a difference when I successfully made a two-minutes speech without fumbling over any word.

Another assignment that we worked on included representing time in a way that could help the audience comprehend time a bit more easily, or in a way they might not have comprehended it before. While some students decided to write short stories or draw posters to describe time, I went ahead with the idea of using technology to represent the time for students. I developed a light web applet to get the user to enter in the information about how much time do they spend on different tasks throughout the day and their preferences on how much did they like the tasks they got themselves involved in. This data allowed me to calculate the perception of time by human brain on short-term and long-term levels. In other words, my web applet could predict how a person might lay down his schedule if he were asked to do it for the next week in contrast to how he might do the same if he were asked to do it for the first week of the previous month. Although this artifact (in first sight) looked like getting to be a Computer Science project, I was actually learning the electronic mode of communication while working on this artifact.

Next assignment in the queue included us forming groups and working on producing a podcast on a topic that discussed how some recent scientific developments had affected how we perceived time. Our group decided to go ahead with the topic of ‘Effects of Caffeine and Alcohol on Human Perception of Time’. This artifact required me to know how you can use background music to better appeal to the human senses in a way that the human brain lays more emphasis on words said with a particular kind of background music. While learning about this, I also got to know how different tones of human voice could be the result of information being perceived in a bit different way. After being equipped with this knowledge of the oral form of communication, we set out on working on the production of an amazing podcast that not only bagged us an A (overall) but also provided me an opportunity to get even more acquainted with what I wanted to learn from this course.

Our final assignment of the course required us to give group presentations on some scientific topic related to time. The topic that my group chose was ‘The Standard Model: Why Can’t Time Flow Backwards?’ I knew this was my chance to test how my skills had improved throughout the course, and I decided to explain the most complex concept of our already-super-complicated topic. All of us worked day and night to gather all the information that could help us introduce such a complicated topic in simple ways, and we later came up with a pretty sophisticated approach to dealing with what we had. I worked on script of the presentation and also ensured that everyone knew what they were supposed to. After days of work later, we finally gave our presentation to the entire class and Prof. Thomas, and everyone understood such a complicated concept in just one round of a 15-minutes presentation. The best part for me was that I cruised through the entire presentation without making any mistakes or falling victim to my old predator – the fear of making mistakes. I had finally improved in my WOVEN communication methods and was confident enough that I could make comfortably give presentation on anything I wanted to, without having to be afraid of the old foe.

Reflecting back upon the course now, it feels that ENGL 1101 was not only working on improving my WOVEN communication skills but was also helping me develop other important skills, like leadership and project collaboration, that might come in use in real-world scenarios. While some students might look at this as an unwanted addition to the rigorous courses offered by Georgia Tech, I argue that ENGL 1101 is a course that introduces you to the real-world challenges and encourages you to face them with everything you have got. Not only does it require you to employ what you already know, it requires you to learn new skills, and sometimes, improve on existing skills in a way that you can weave them together and create even better impact with the WOVEN method of communication.