



RefWorks:

Learning in Context

 EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
start something big

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Service Learning

A method of teaching in which the students perform a service for the community that is relevant to the subject being taught thereby gaining applicable, real-world experience.

RefWorks

An online research management, writing and collaboration tool designed to help researchers easily gather, manage, store and share all types of information, as well as generate citations and bibliographies.

The Client

The Staff of the JFK Library on campus agreed to work with the Introduction to Technical Communications class as part of a service learning project. They wanted the class to develop some introductory materials to encourage more students to use RefWorks. The program, which the library provides for the students, was being underutilized and since the license didn't cost less for the lack of users, and wouldn't cost more if that usership increased, the client wanted to increase the value of what they were paying for.

The Project

Design an introductory guide for students using RefWorks and deliver a short presentation to a class regarding some of its most useful features. The final deliverables were to include:

- †an introductory guide to RefWorks
- †a quick-reference guide
- †a presentation for the clients use
- †a presentation evaluation form for students to fill out after viewing the presentation

The Process

The class was broken into groups of three and four, each responsible for delivering a fully finished project. First, we met with the client. They told us about RefWorks and why they felt it was important to make it more accessible to first-time users. Then, we researched the software, identifying commonly used tools and possible frustrations. We then submitted a proposal which included an outline of what we intended to deliver and a timeline for the project. We developed the requested materials and the presentation, and we presented everything to the client and an English 101 class.

The Gain

Service learning is meant to maximize the effect of a class project. It is a highly effective teaching tool that also solve a problem in the community. I gained experience:

- †writing proposals
- †communicating with clients
- †developing directions
- †creating and delivering presentations

The staff of the JFK Library gained:

- †introductory guides to RefWorks
- †quick-reference guides
- †presentations for their use
- †presentation evaluation forms filled out by their target audience