

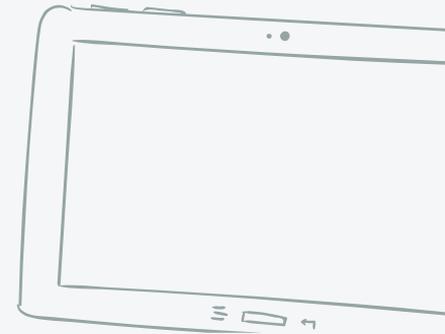
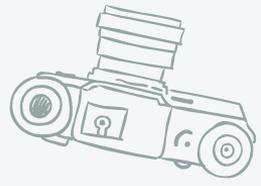
# Community Engagement in Technical Communication Pedagogy



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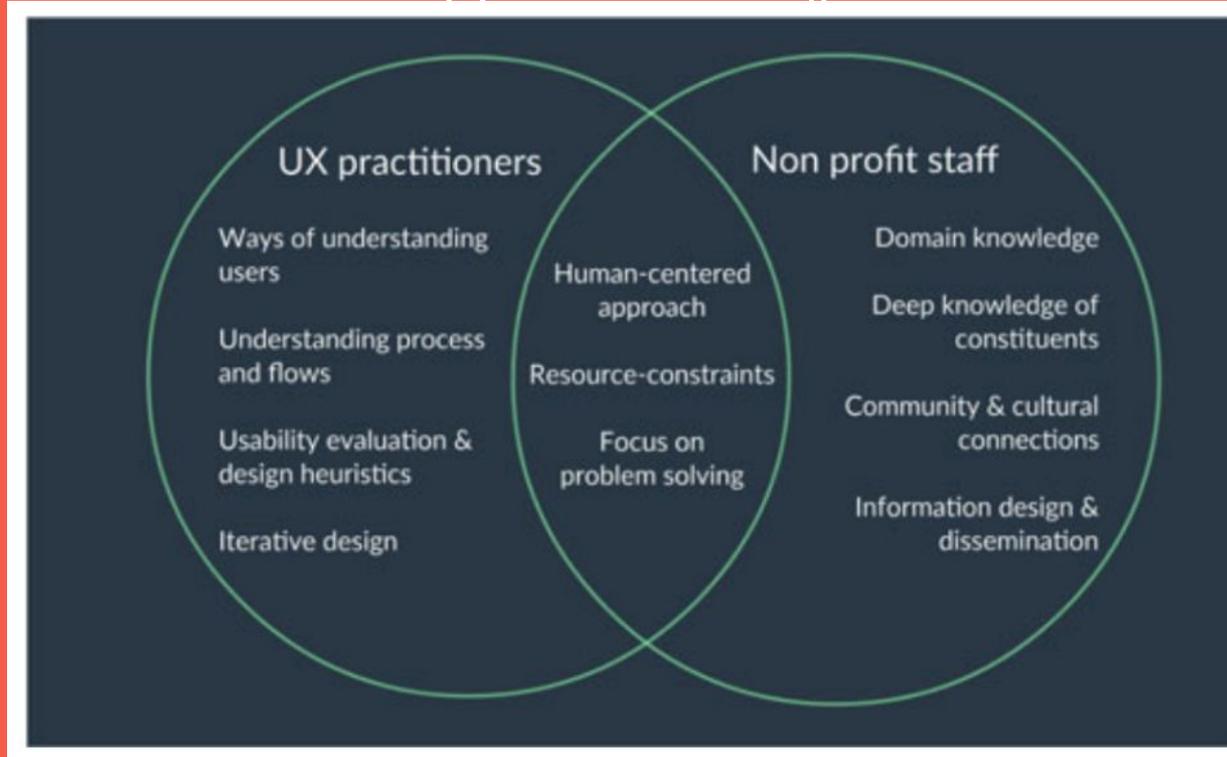


*According to Tatiana Batova (2020), community engagement in TPC “shows students the real-life impacts of their writing, teaches them how to navigate complex problems and engage in course materials more deeply, and encourages them to take more responsibility for their own success”*

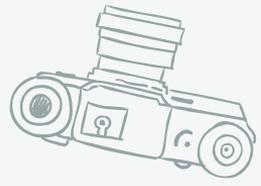
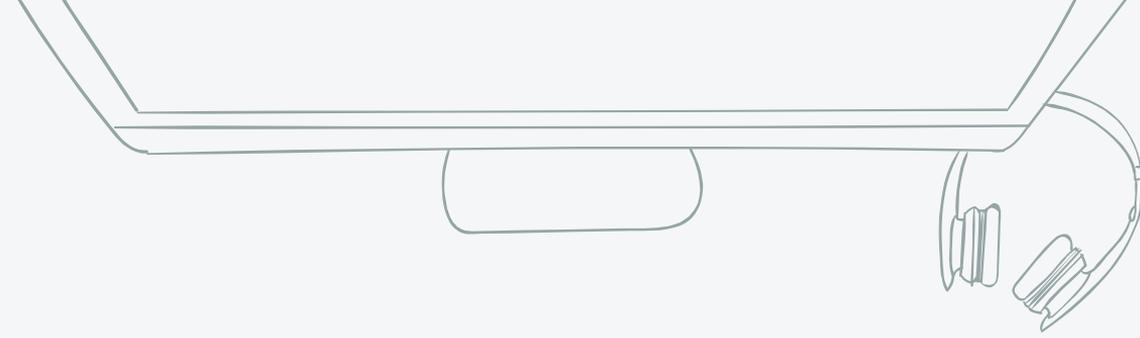




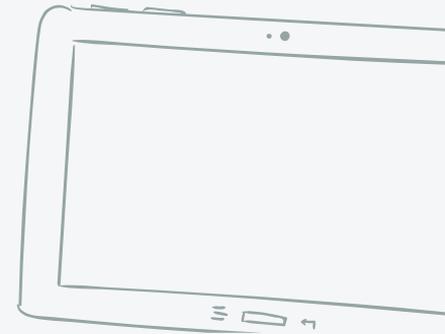
*“Technical communication has a long history of engaging in projects with communities and organizations” (Emma Rose et al., 2017)*

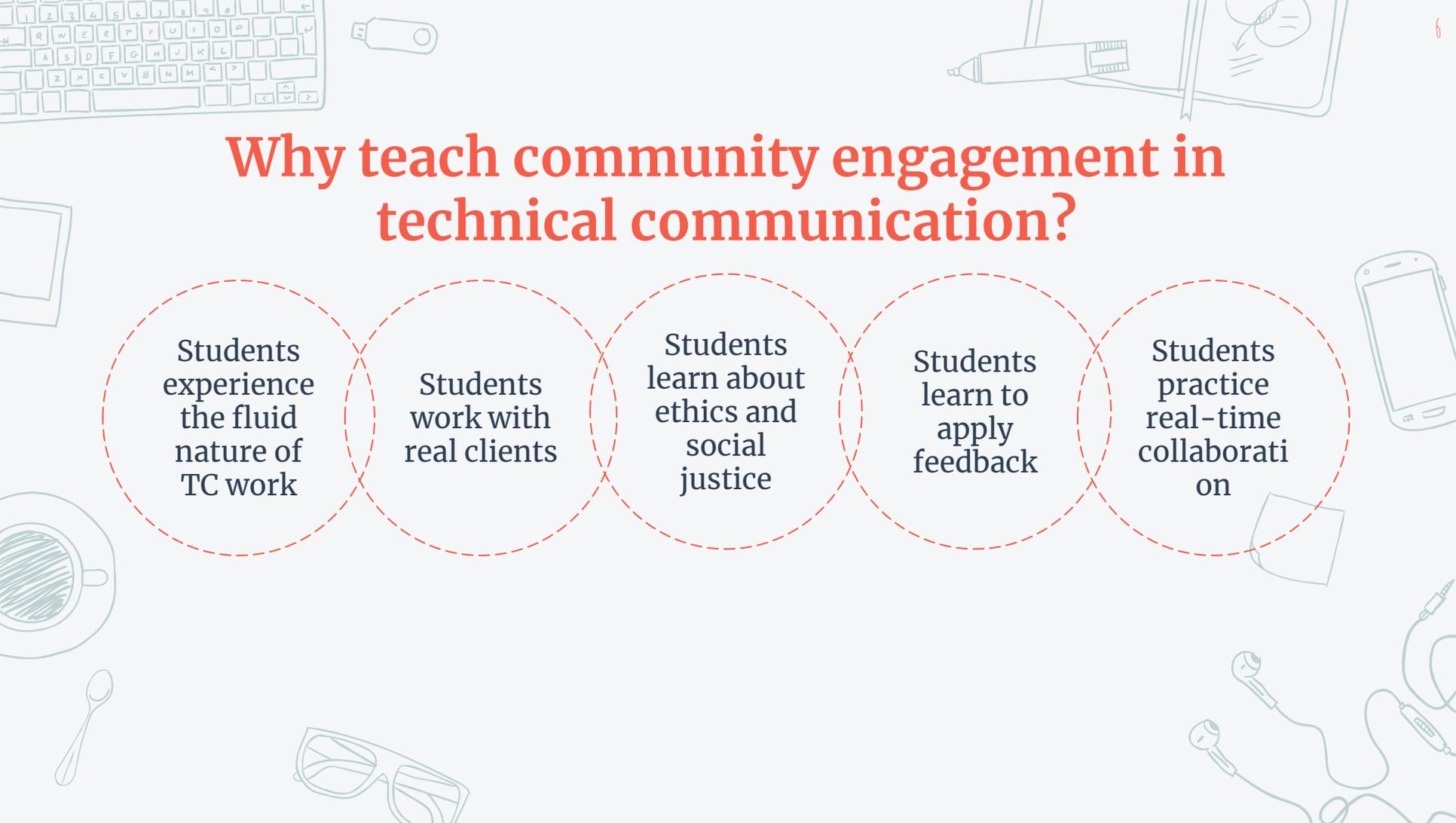


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*“Community-based technical communication, then, provides a foundation for expanding TPC audiences. Not merely users but active cocreators, citizens of all kinds require technical communication that demands more expansive, inclusive approaches to communication practices and to the theories that undergird knowledge making” (Natasha Jones, Kristen Moore, Rebecca Walton, 2016)*





# Why teach community engagement in technical communication?

Students experience the fluid nature of TC work

Students work with real clients

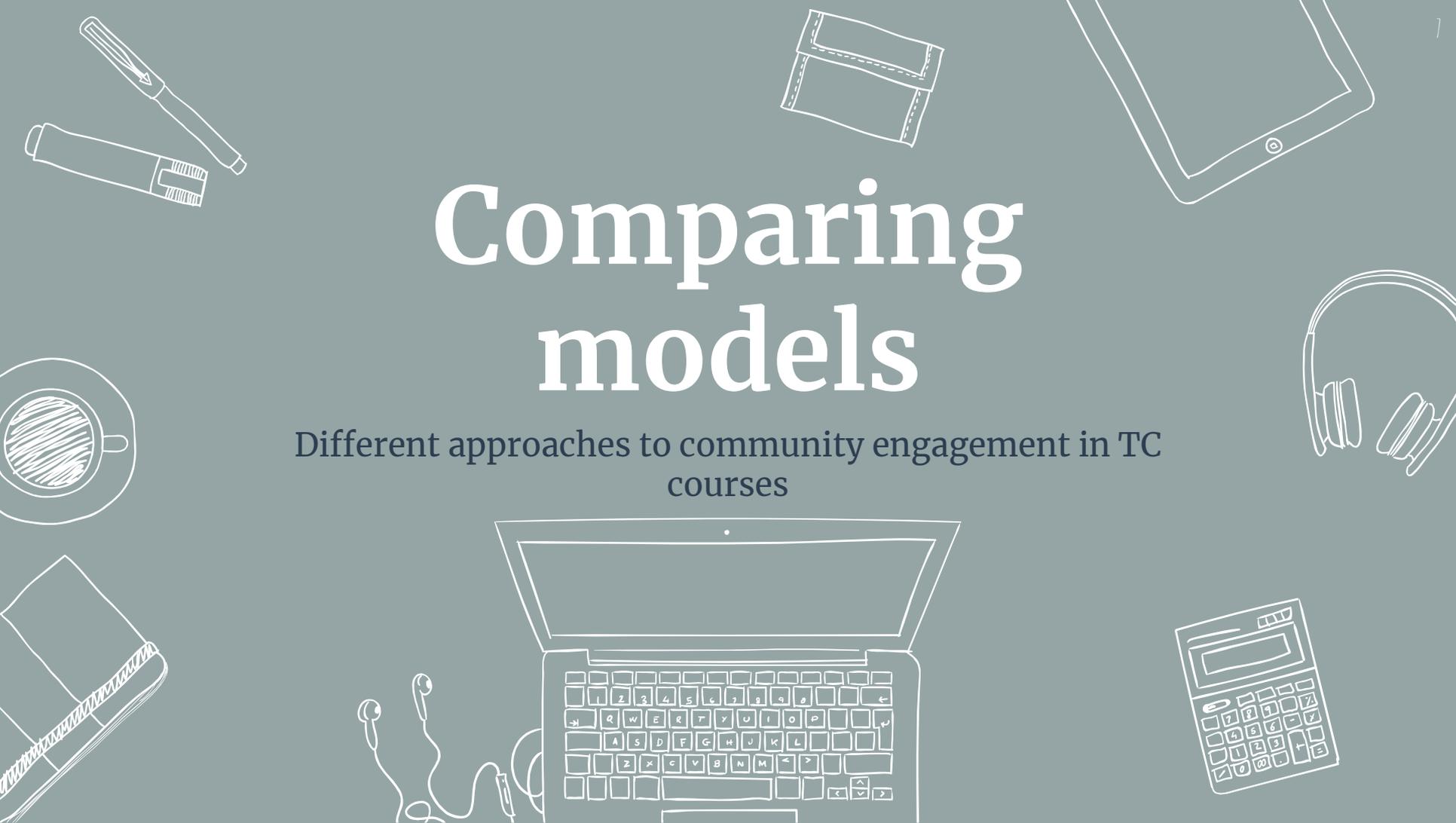
Students learn about ethics and social justice

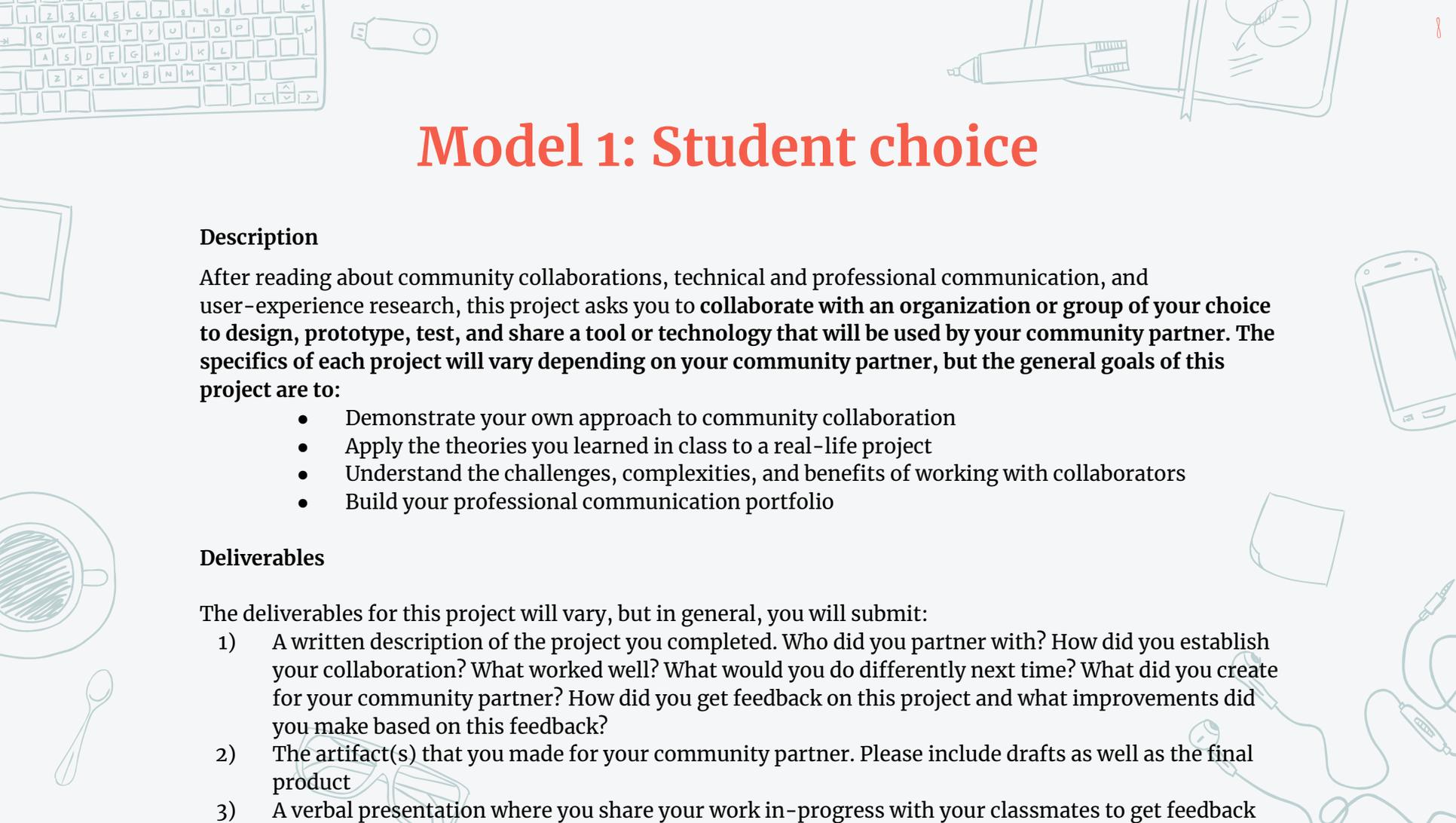
Students learn to apply feedback

Students practice real-time collaboration

# Comparing models

Different approaches to community engagement in TC courses





# Model 1: Student choice

## Description

After reading about community collaborations, technical and professional communication, and user-experience research, this project asks you to **collaborate with an organization or group of your choice to design, prototype, test, and share a tool or technology that will be used by your community partner. The specifics of each project will vary depending on your community partner, but the general goals of this project are to:**

- Demonstrate your own approach to community collaboration
- Apply the theories you learned in class to a real-life project
- Understand the challenges, complexities, and benefits of working with collaborators
- Build your professional communication portfolio

## Deliverables

The deliverables for this project will vary, but in general, you will submit:

- 1) A written description of the project you completed. Who did you partner with? How did you establish your collaboration? What worked well? What would you do differently next time? What did you create for your community partner? How did you get feedback on this project and what improvements did you make based on this feedback?
- 2) The artifact(s) that you made for your community partner. Please include drafts as well as the final product
- 3) A verbal presentation where you share your work in-progress with your classmates to get feedback

# Community Collaboration Project

Submit draft to Canvas by 10/30/20

Final draft due on 11/6/20

## Background

This semester, we have been learning about different approaches to community engagement. Some of the concepts we covered include: avoiding damage-based research (Tuck), practicing listening and storytelling (Torrez), and using emergent strategy (brown) to build community connections. We have also been learning about local organizations doing activist work in Gainesville, including the [Rural Women's Health Project](#) (RWHP), the only health justice organization in North Central Florida. For this project, you will apply what you learned about community engagement as you design materials for the Rural Women's Health Project.

You can choose what types of materials to work on after learning and researching the work of RWHP. Robin Lewy, Director of Programming at RWHP, has identified several areas that you can work in, including:

- 1) Designing social media materials for [Family Separation Research](#)
- 2) Helping to redesign the [Let's Talk about it](#) magazine
- 3) Working on social media materials for [COVID Consejos](#)

## Steps

In order to successfully complete this project, you should take the following steps:

- 1) **Research** the Rural Women's Health Project to learn about their initiatives as well as to learn about the design elements that they incorporate in their materials. For example, you should note that the RWHP does not use stock photos, but instead incorporates images from the community into the materials they design for the same community.
- 2) **Attend** a guest lecture by Robin Lewy on **October 15 from 6:16-7:30pm via Zoom**. This will allow you to get to know more about the organization and ask questions that will be critical to the success of your project.
- 3) **Research** further information about the issue(s) that you'll be designing for (family separation, let's talk about it, Covid consejos, etc.)
- 4) **Prototype** samples of the work you are creating. Meet with your instructor to get feedback on these prototypes
- 5) **Revise** and finalize your designs with additional feedback

## Model 2: Instructor choice

# Model 1: Student choice

Color Scheme



Fonts

Headings and Subheadings: Oswald  
Body text: Roboto



**Social Media Templates:  
Implementing Single-Sourcing  
and Avoiding Damaged-Based  
Content for  
The Education Foundation of  
Alachua County**



Created by: Jordan Miles  
The University of Florida  
Professional Communication  
Spring 2020

# Model 2: Instructor choice

Mi hermano no quería usar una mascarilla en público hasta que le expliqué lo importante que es protegerse y proteger a los demás.



Ahora siempre uso una mascarilla en público para evitar la propagación de COVID-19.

My brother used to not want to wear a mask in public, until I explained how important it is to protect yourself and others.



Now I always wear a mask in public, to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through droplets.

Frè m 'pa t' vle mete yon mask. Mwen te di l 'yon mask pwoteje tèt li ak lòt moun.



Kounye a, mwen toujou mete yon mask yo sispann COVID-19.

## Student Choice

Students are responsible for making community connections (positive and negative)

Students could choose to work with organizations related to their own interests and career goals

Students facilitated communication with their community partner on their own

## Instructor Choice

Students got to all learn together about a local organization

Instructor built relationship with an organization that could extend beyond a single semester

More quality control and opportunities for feedback

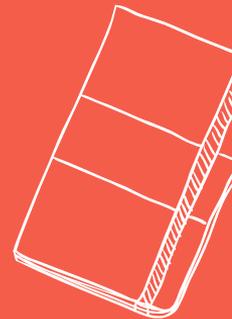
Students facilitated communication with their community partner on their own

student effort=student benefit

Students learned to apply feedback

Students left with "real world" experience

# LESSONS LEARNED



1.

# Need for framing

There are many approaches to community engagement. Students need some theoretical background to help them orient to this work.

Suggestion:

Eve Tuck “A Letter to Communities”

2.

# Technical training

Students can do more harm than good if they go into a collaboration without the needed technical training. It's important to spend some time in class learning or sharing specific tools that students can use.

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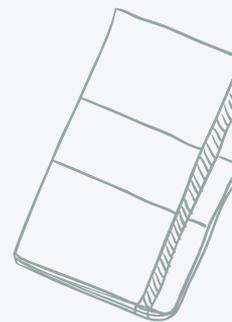
# Flexible scheduling

Academia and industry/community organizations have very different timelines. It's important to be flexible with the timeline to fit the organization's needs.

4.

# Feedback is key

It's important for students to receive feedback from many parties: 1) the organization, 2) the instructor, 3) other students in class.





“Our community engagement projects functioned to make this class essentially a practicum course, and these materials can feature in all of our professional portfolios. Our final projects, a website, were intended to be built as personal websites to serve as collections of our work for professional experiences.”



“Having a community project with a local organization was a great way to tie the lessons learned into the real world.”



“In the future, bigger assignments should be broken up into smaller parts so that students know that they are in the right direction.”



“I learned of the value of improving the community through community partnership. Through this class, I made an effective CV that I will be able to use for job applications.”



# THANKS!

## Any questions?

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# References

Batova, T. (2020). An Approach for Incorporating Community-Engaged Learning in Intensive Online Classes: Sustainability and Lean User Experience. *Technical Communication Quarterly*.

Jones, N. N., Moore, K. R., & Walton, R. (2016). Disrupting the past to disrupt the future: An antenarrative of technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 25(4), 211-229.

Rose, E. J., Racadio, R., Wong, K., Nguyen, S., Kim, J., & Zahler, A. (2017). Community-based user experience: Evaluating the usability of health insurance information with immigrant patients. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 60(2), 214-231.

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