

Cara Pring

Project report
STS390, “Media, war and peace”

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Science, Technology & Society
University of Wollongong

The report has two parts.

1. A response pack for an actual organisation. This is not an official document and does not necessarily represent the views of the organisation.

Cara Pring's response pack for Campbelltown City Council is a separate file.

2. A dialogue between two students discussing the project. This dialogue is fictional. Pseudonyms were used so that the marker, Brian Martin, would not know the identity of student authors.

Cara Pring's dialogue starts on the next page.

STS390 Dialogue**2799686**

Dialogue between a previous STS390 student (myself) and a current STS390 student starting their project. Pseudonyms have been used.

Katie: Hey Catherine, thanks so much for meeting today to help me out a bit with this project!! I have so much on at the moment and this one is doing my head in.

Cat: No worries Katie, I can remember what it was like when I was trying to get my head around it, with all the different elements of theory, case study and organisation. But don't worry, once you figure out what you are going to do it starts to make a lot more sense.

Katie: I have no idea what I'm going to do! How did you figure out what you wanted to do? I was thinking of doing the same thing I did for my first short...

Cat: Well actually I deliberately wanted to choose something that hadn't really been covered in class, just to learn about something different and be a bit original. But I thought the best thing to do was figure out what organisation I wanted to use, and then pick a theory and case study that suited them.

Katie: What organisation did you end up choosing?

Cat: Hmm...well I wanted to steer clear of any organisations that I knew had been used in the past or that anyone in our class were using at the time. Common ones seemed to be universities, federal government departments, peace organisations and multinational businesses. That covered a fair chunk of possibilities! No one had mentioned local government and from what I could see no one had done it in the past. Since I worked for Campbelltown Council I thought it could be really interesting to do one for them.

Katie: Isn't that kinda cheating?

Cat: Not really because I was still going to do a theory and concept that had nothing to do with the work that I did for them, it really just meant I had good access to internal information and possible interviewees – but I still had to do all the work!

Katie: So then how did you choose your theory and case study?

Cat: Well as I said I wanted to do something original, so I went through the list of theories in the subject outline and crossed out all the popular ones that had been well-covered, and also any that didn't seem to fit well with a local council – like genocide for example. I also wanted to pick a theory that had a decent amount of relevant sources. After reading through what was left, terrorism stood out as something that satisfied all my requirements so I started doing some preliminary research about it, and trying to think of possible case studies I could use.

Katie: So you did terrorism then? Maybe I should do that too!

Cat: Actually, I didn't end up doing terrorism, because as I was reading all about it on Wikipedia, I came across the concept of civil disorder, which it listed as a type of terrorism. I thought to myself that it might be an even better fit with my organisation and was also even more original, so I started researching it instead! I quickly found out that riots were the most common type of civil disorder, and this was even better because I knew that the Macquarie Fields riots had happened only a few years ago and thought these would be a perfect case study to use since they happened in the Campbelltown LGA!

Katie: Civil disorder? I haven't really even heard of that before. Was there even any literature about it? It would have been a lot harder than terrorism!

Cat: Not really, because sometimes it's better not to be overwhelmed by too much literature which may have been the case for terrorism. I did have a quick look for relevant articles and research before I made a final decision, and I was satisfied that there was enough to work with.

Katie: And what about the Macquarie Fields riots? There probably wouldn't have been that much about them, compared to a terrorist attack.

Cat: No probably not, but I was actually rather surprised to find there was quite a few really good articles about them, and these included information that helped with the concept of civil disorder as well. It was really interesting actually, because even though I lived only about ten minutes from where the riots had happened, I realised that I didn't really know a lot about them, the underlying reasons behind them, or systems and policies that were implemented to try and prevent them in the future. I was looking forward to finding out how much the council had been

involved and how much they were doing to try and prevent them in the future. I double-checked it was all good with Brian and once I got his go-ahead I got stuck into it!

Katie: I wish I was at that stage now! So once you figured out what you were doing, how did you get your information? Did you just use the databases on the library website?

Cara: Well actually I did use the databases, but instead of searching each individual database, I did a Google Scholar search! The results only give you abstracts, but they often include the relevant databases – like JSTOR – that you can find the full text article in, and THEN I went to the relevant database through the library site to find the article! I also did a normal google search and went through the usual Wikipedia information to get ideas and find links to other relevant sources. Then I did a news search to find some good newspaper articles from 2005 about the riots.

Katie: Well that sounds all fairly straightforward...and I'm guessing it wasn't too hard for you to find out about your organisation!

Cara: Actually this was a bit more of an effort than I had thought it would be! At council there is an Emergency Response Manager, who I naturally thought might be the right person to speak to. To begin with, I emailed him with a cursory explanation of what I was doing and a request to meet with him if he thought he might be able to help me. It turned out that he wasn't the right person to speak to, and instead he recommended I talk to the Directors of Community Services and City Works. The Council Directors are the level of management directly below the General Manager, so they weren't the kind of people I felt comfortable approaching about a uni assignment, so instead I called Lindy's administrative assistant. She then put me through to Bruce McClausland, the manager for.... who I arranged to go and see. Bruce was very helpful about Council's involvement with the riots, what we were doing to try and prevent them in the future, and also some suggestions about how the council would react if there was another riot in the future. He also explained about the Macquarie Fields Community Reference Group which was formed after the riots. I was then able to get the minutes from these meetings from our content management system! I also rang and spoke to our HR Training Team Leader about what was usually included in training PowerPoint slideshows, because this was the format I was using for my assignment. He gave me some great

pointers, and even let me look at a couple of his training PowerPoint presentations for some ideas!

Katie: Wow, sounds like you had a lot of help from people at council. I guess what they say is true about you council workers – too much spare time on your hands!

Cat: Well I don't know about that, but Jason was really helpful because he even took a look at my presentation once I had finished it. All the training I had done at council must have affected me because the only change he suggested was to put in an outline of the whole thing at the start!

Katie: So you didn't have any regrets about what you chose?

Cat: Not really, although I did find it was hard to separate 'civil disorder' with 'riots' sometimes – I had to be careful not to generalise the theory about riots to the overall theory of civil disorder. At times I did think I might have been better off just doing riots as the theory. Also a lot of the civil disorder theory related to race riots in America, which wasn't always strictly relevant to the Campbelltown case. Although there were some good references in some of these about the involvement of Mayors and some other references to civic government involvement.

Katie: And did you end up learning all about the riots? Was there anything surprising about them?

Cat: Well it was definitely really interesting to see how much socioeconomic conditions contribute to civil disorder. It would have been really good if I could have gone into the Macquarie Fields community and do some interviews with the public there to listen to their side of things, and see what they thought council could do to help prevent any disturbances in the future. Unfortunately there were just too many ethical problems and also time constraints so I didn't get a chance.

Katie: Yeah, that would have been really interesting! Maybe I should do the Cronulla riots and go and interview all the boys at the beach! Haha. What about PowerPoint – would you recommend doing that format?

Cat: Hmm, well I thought it would be an easy way to go, but actually I found it really difficult to cut down the information into the superficial overview that was need for a slideshow. It was the right way for me to go because it was the right format for council, but in terms of the assignment, it might be easier to cover it more comprehensively in a different format.

Katie: OK well I probably won't do a slideshow then. Well I'm still not sure what I'm going to do, but you have made it all sound achievable so I might go think about it some more now. Thanks heaps for all your tips and feedback!!

Cat: No worries! I'm just glad it's you now and not me! See you later.