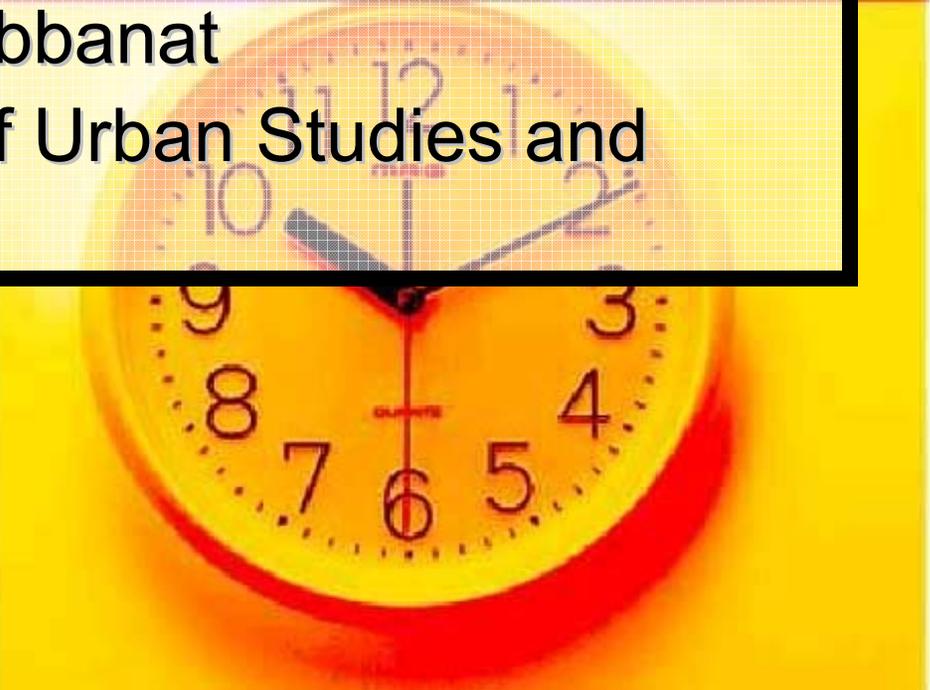


Preparing Briefings/Memos



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Dissecting Assignments

- **Who are you?** You have been appointed by Thomas Menino, the Mayor of Boston, to the Task Force on the Future of Public Housing

Dissecting Assignments

■ Who is your audience?

- Mayor
- Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy



Dissecting Memo Assignments

- **What do you write?**
- informational memo
- 1,500 words
- discusses any two of these three ongoing concerns
- a few sentences about the third issue if it links to other issues
- don't try to address all three issues in such a compact document.



Dissecting Memo Assignments

- **Here's one strategy – Dissect the Assignment:**
- Pick your first question –
 - work on one at a time – you can make connections between them later.
- Turn first sub-question into a background sentence that begins “As you pointed out.....”
- Spend no more than a paragraph (5 sentences) on background.



Dissecting Memo Assignments

- Focus on the last sub-question it is:
 - focused
 - overarching
 - could turn into the larger point
- Sift through the sub-questions to decide which of these sub-questions is:
 - A key point
 - Most important
 - Tangential
- Find evidence and examples to support the points that you will make.



Dissecting Memo Assignments

- Create an overarching statement
- Knit the two questions together – broad is okay
- Make the background work for both questions.
- Narrow your statement



Dissecting Memo Assignments

- Create a conclusion for the entire paper.
- Don't forget about next steps at the end of your memo, if appropriate.



Dissecting Memo Assignments

- **2. Redevelopment: Physical Design vs. Social Policy**
- Each of the three redevelopment efforts discussed in class entailed spending tens of millions of dollars on efforts to redesign the physical environment. What aspects of this design intervention were most important? Were there important missed design opportunities? Should more of the money have been spent on some other non-design aspects of the redevelopment, such as social services? Are physical designs and social policies *alternative* ways to take action to improve public housing, or are they connected in some important ways? If you were in charge of developing a proposal for a public housing redevelopment now, what priorities would you set for allocating funds to these different forms of intervention?



Dissecting Memo Assignments

- **Background:** Each of the three redevelopment efforts in Boston (Franklin Field, Commonwealth and West Broadway) spent tens of millions of dollars on redesigning the physical environment. Explain.....



Dissecting Memo Assignments

Large Overarching Questions:

Are physical designs and social policies *alternative* ways to take action to improve public housing, or are they connected in some important ways?

- Physical designs and social policies are/are not *alternative* ways to take action to improve public housing and are/are not connected.
 - What aspects of this design intervention were most important?
 - Were there important missed design opportunities?
 - Should more of the money have been spent on some other non-design aspects of the redevelopment, such as social services?





Dissecting Memo Assignments

Large Overarching Questions:

If you were in charge of developing a proposal for a public housing redevelopment now, what priorities would you set for allocating funds to these different forms of intervention?

- There are at least X priorities that need to be set for allocating funds.
 - Were there important missed design opportunities?
 - Should more of the money have been spent on some other non-design aspects of the redevelopment, such as social services



Dissecting Briefing Assignments

- **What Role is the Group Playing?**
The Staff the Task Force on the Future of Public Housing.
- Each group includes:
 - Boston Housing Authority,
 - Boston Redevelopment Authority
 - Department of Neighborhood Development
 - Social service staff from other agencies.



Dissecting Briefing Assignments

- **Who is the Audience?**
- Two local philanthropists ,
- Editor of *The Boston Globe* newspaper,
- two respected real estate developers,
- a university professor
- the retired head of a local civil rights organization
- heads of three nonprofit community-based development organizations
- Head, Boston Housing Authority and
- Mayor



Dissecting Briefing Assignments

Some expectations:

- Interrupts
- Challenges to your claims
- Some might also argue (a bit) with each other.
- **In addition, you should prepare a briefing summary—a report in miniature—of no more than 500 words, to summarize your analysis and recommendations.**

Dissecting Briefing Assignments

Get the Basics Down:

- What software is group using? Power Point? Web based?
- Who is the final editor in group?
- Who is the moderator in group?
- What format will use? Linear or Hub/spoke
- Who is writing the 500 word briefing document?



Dissecting Briefing Assignments

Find out who is in your group:

- Who has public housing experience? What kind?
- Who is an architect/designer?
- Who is a techie? This person should check to make sure presentation works in Gateway classroom ½ hour before presentations
- Who knows how to pull up/use maps?
- Who knows public policy? What kind?
- Who has worked for a Mayor?
- Who has time to visit the site(s) with a digital camera – (this may not be necessary but some groups did this last year)?



Dissecting Briefing Assignments

Divide up the Assignment:

- Everyone needs a speaking part
- Everyone needs a task(s)
- Divide up questions – what goes where?
- Volunteer for what you are good at.



Dissect Briefing Assignment

- **Set the Schedule for Individual and Group Pieces:**

- 1. Saturday am: Finish Drafting your individual section(s)
- 2. Sunday am: Draft your slides on Sunday am
- 3. Sunday pm: Meet with group and merge slides (assume something will go wrong)
- 4. Monday: Practice with Group (assume someone will not be ready)
- 5. Tuesday: Practice with Group (assume someone will be late)
- 6. Wednesday: Arrive ½ hour early to test your presentation in the Gateway Classroom (Remember: Larry Vale's presentation didn't fully work last week)



Dissecting Briefing Assignments

- **Dissect the Assignment**
- Given uncertainties about the future of funding for public housing redevelopment as well as ongoing misperceptions about the current state of public housing in the city, the Mayor wants to know:
 - **What housing authority planners should do next?**
 - **What issues matter most when trying to assess “success”**
 - **Analyze several past efforts**



Dissecting Briefing Assignments

- **The Mayor has asked each group to prepare a 20-minute briefing that analyzes the lessons of a single redevelopment case** (see below) for:
- (a) The role of physical design in redevelopment success; and
- (b) The optimal role for planners in public housing redevelopment.
- What is the best mix of physical and non-physical planning interventions to ensure effective redevelopment?
- What kinds of planning policies can best promote this mix?

