

Chapter 1

Technical Writing

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What is Technical Writing?: An Audience - Centered means of Communication that Provides a reader with Clear and easy access to information so they Understand both the Document's and the author's Purpose and respond accordingly

-Rhetorical Situation: The rhetorical Situation describes the relationships between and among the audience, Writer, Content, and Context of Communication. Ex. What does your audience already know? What do they Want out of your document? Where, When, and how are they going to use the document you Create?

Ethos, Logos, Pathos are Classical (Aristotelian) rhetoric

Logos: Using facts, reason, and Logic to Communicate.

Ethos: relying on your Credibility as a Writer to Communicate.

Pathos: Attempting to appeal to emotions (joy, fear, hope, Pride, etc)

-About Technical Writing: It is also a fully Professional field of its own with degree programs, Certifications, and even theory. the five journals that are devoted to publishing articles related to Technical Writing

Technical Communication Quarterly; Journal of Technical Writing and Communication; Journal of Business and Technical Communication; English for Specific Purposes; and Issues in Writing.

-Workplace Writing: No matter what sort of Work you do, you are likely to do some Writing - and much of it may be technical in nature. Having technical Writing Skills is a Critical Communication tool that will Save time and money.

-The meaning of Technical: Knowledge that is not Widespread, that is more the territory of experts and Specialists. Whenever you try to write about your field, you are engaging in Technical Communication.

-Importance of the Audience: You are most often Challenged to write about technical Subjects in a way that a beginner Could understand. this ability to "translate" technical info to a non-Specialists is a key Skill to any technical Communication.

-Technical Writing and Academic Writing: The Concentration on definite purpose, Strict format, and use of appropriate language in technical writing define the differences between technical writing and academic writing.

Cultural Diversity and Technical Communication: When analyzing the rhetorical Situation, it is a good idea to Consider the Cultural Context(s) that may be in play. The terms Collectivist and individualistic are sometimes used to discuss Cultural differences or High-Context and Low-Context.

- High Context Cultures: Very Closely tied together that behavioral norms are implicit, or not talked about directly. described to be more rational, Collectivist, intuitive, and Contemplative.

- Low Context Cultures: More action-oriented, practical, direct, and precise.

These descriptions can be useful, but they can also be problematic due to their tendency to generalize.

Differences in Communication Styles is another big factor between different Cultures. Some being, Narrative Communication, group discussion, Advice from Elders in decision making, Non-Verbal Communication is a big on.

Non-Verbal Communication is broken up into types such as:

- Oculistics (eye behavior); haptics (touch behavior)

- Proxemics (distance from others); Vocalics (Voice Characteristics)

- Chronemics (use of time Communication); Kinesics (arms, legs, Posture)

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Types of Audiences: During the planning stages of your document, you should analyze the audience to identify the types of readers.

Common Types of Audiences are:

- Experts: People who know the business or organization inside and out. (the creators, specialists)

- Technicians: People who build, operate, maintain, and repair the items that the experts design and theorize about. (the hands-on users, operators)

- Executives: People who make business, economic, administrative, legal, governmental, or political decisions about the products. (CEOs, Committees, Hiring managers)

- Gate Keepers: People who oversee the writer and the document. They decide if the document is compliant with rules, regulations, legal obligations, and/or the needs of the writer's employer. (the writer's supervisor, lawyers, instructors)

- Non Specialists: People with the least technical knowledge of the topic. They want to use the product in their life. (The Lay People.)

Mixed or Multiple Audiences: The primary audience is the main reader of the document. The secondary audience is made up of others who may need or be interested in a document, but who is not the main (primary) reader. When writing with multiple audiences, first identify the primary reader and then identify the secondary reader. If unsure then write it so all can understand the content.

Audience Analysis: Depending on the audience you may want to do some research in order to write the document correctly.

- Background / Knowledge, experience, and training: One of the most important concerns is just how much knowledge, experience, or training you can expect the reader to have.

- Needs and Interests: To plan your document, you need to know what your audience is going to expect from that document.

- Culture and Values: The difference between Culture and Values can be difficult to define, but both influence how an audience approaches new ideas. Culture - Shared beliefs, attitudes, behaviors. Values - deeply held principles that guide thoughts & actions

- 5 things about Culture:

- It is learned
- It is shared
- It is dynamic
- It is systematic
- It is symbolic