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ENGL 23401: Tech. Report Writing

Quiz #4: Distinguish an Operational Definition from a Set of Instructions

1. Which of the two passages in figure 4.13 is the definition and which is the set of instructions? How can you tell?
   1. The first passage is the definition and the second is the instructions. I know this because the wording of the first is descriptive and describe what the purpose is, note the sentence “A series of skillfully cut biscuit joints will result…” The second uses an ordinal list of sentences each beginning with a verb. Additionally, the second passage includes required items and uses the word “you” quite a bit.
2. If you tried to make a biscuit join using only the extended definition, how successful do you think your joint would be? Explain why you think this.
   1. I don’t think I would be very successful. I am given very little in the way of required tools for making biscuit joints. I am also not told about how to measure or make the cuts. I might be able make assumptions, but it is not my job to make assumptions it is the writer’s job to be descriptive and match the audience’s capabilities.
3. Write down a list of the notable characteristics that distinguish an operational definition from a set of instructions.
   1. The definition is descriptive, the instructions are prescriptive. The definition describes the way the biscuit looks, how tables are manufactured using them, and how they are inserted into the table. The instructions tell you what to do, they aren’t descriptive.
   2. List of defining characteristics of operational definitions
      1. Descriptive, how the parts work together to accomplish something, etc.
      2. Describes what it is not to emphasize what it is.
      3. Offers background on the concept