

Technical Writing and Seminar

Benefits of Adopting staged writing process

- It helps the writer overcome the blank page syndrome and therefore get started.
- It serves the writer as a guide to writing since it suggests possible steps to follow in the writing process.
- It makes the writer aware of contextual considerations such as audience and purpose.
- It promotes awareness of the writing process.
- It accounts for individual variation, that is, it encompasses different learning styles and preferences.

Pre-Writing Stage

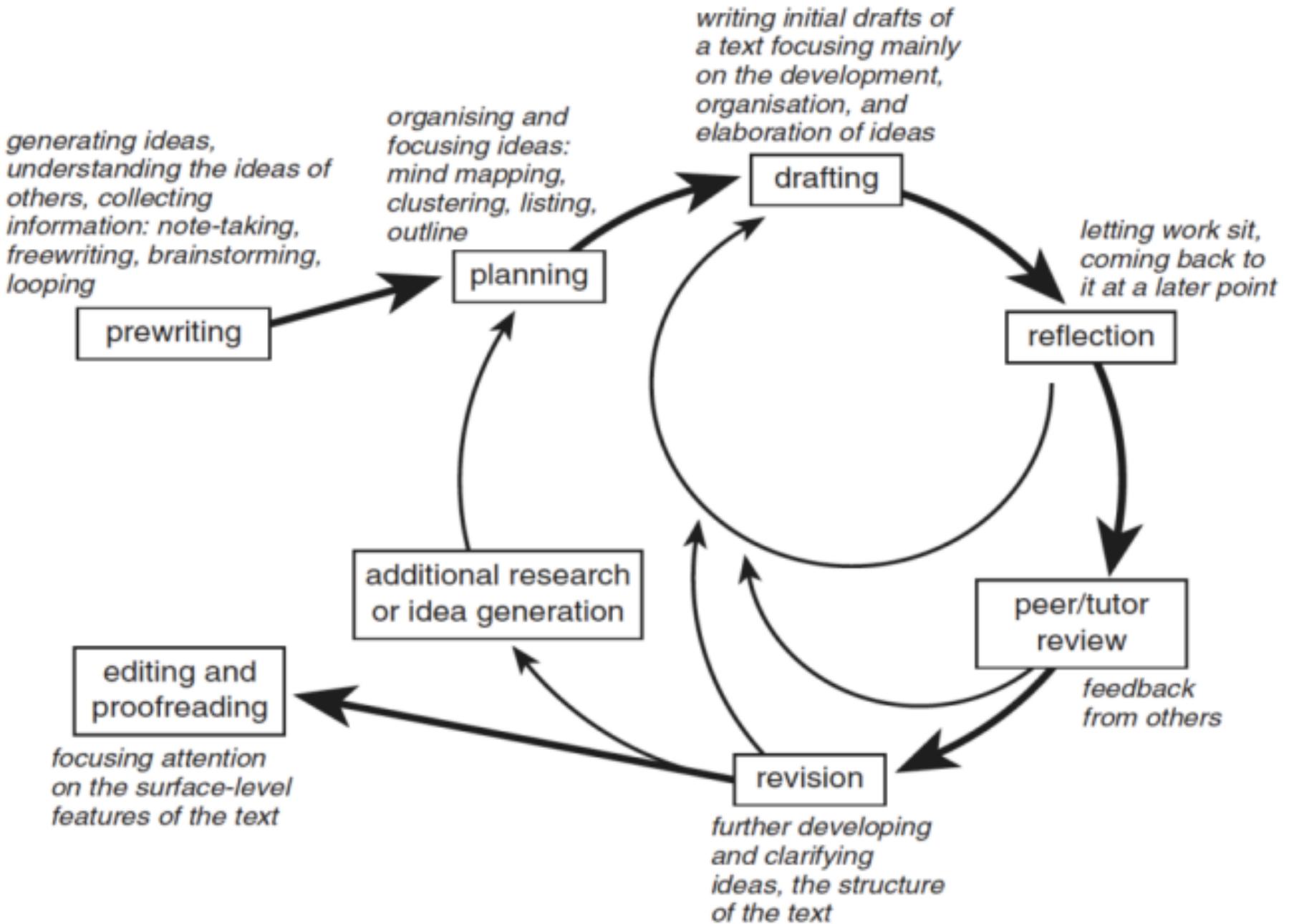
- Main Questions to address:
 - WHO am I writing to and WHY?
Consider audience and purpose.
 - HOW should I transmit the information?
Consider tone and style.
 - WHAT ideas should I include in my document?
Gather information (by generating ideas, analyzing information sources, etc.).
 - HOW should I organize and structure this information to best suit the audience's needs and to accomplish my purpose?
Outline (organize information).

Pre-Writing Steps

- Analyzing audience
- Analyzing purpose
- Considering style and tone
- Generating ideas
- Outlining

Writing Stage

- Drafting
- Structuring the paragraph
- Developing the paragraph patterns
- Providing intra paragraph coherence
- Structuring the essay
- Providing inter-paragraph coherence
- Incorporating visual aids



Post-writing Stage

- Revising content and organization
- Checking for grammatical accuracy
- Editing for style
- Proofreading and peer review

Writing Process

Stage 1 – Planning: spend 40% of your time planning your document (task analysis, thinking, discussing, free-writing, researching, brainstorming, concept mapping, focusing ideas, outlining, etc.)

Stage 2 – Drafting: spend 20% of your time writing a rough draft (quickly getting all your ideas down in print, in more or less complete sentences and paragraphs, in more or less the right order, without agonizing over style or grammar choices)

Stage 3 – Revising: spend 40% of your time revising, editing, and proofreading (polishing your draft, making sure the content is complete and well supported, ideas flow logically, formatting meets expectations, expression is grammatically correct and has the appropriate tone and vocabulary).

Reader Centric Writing

- How will your report about department vary if your target audience is:
 - Teacher of the department
 - Higher authorities
 - A new student seeking admission to the department

Professional Tone

- “Tone” refers to the attitude that a document conveys towards the topic and/or the reader.
- You have likely read something that sounded angry, or optimistic, or humorous, or cynical, or enthusiastic.
- These words characterize the tone.
- Technical communication tends to avoid displaying an obvious emotion, and instead strives for a neutral tone.

Professional Tone...

- Tone is created through word choice (diction), word order (syntax), sentence construction, and viewpoint.
- Academic writing creates a formal tone through its use of specialized terminology, sophisticated vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and third person voice.
- This style suits the genre because it is directed at experts and scholars in the field, and seeks to convey complex information densely and objectively, with an emphasis on reason, logic, and evidence.

Professional Tone...

- A piece of business writing on the other hand has a tone that may be slightly less formal but not colloquial.
- The language is direct and plain, and the sentences are shorter and more straightforward.
- It may make use of the second person (“you”).
- This style suits business writing because it is directed at colleagues, management, or clients who are seeking information clearly and quickly and who may need to take action on it.

Writing Constructively

- Striking the appropriate tone involves understanding your purpose, context, and audience.
- It also involves an understanding that workplaces are often hierarchical, and that cooperation and teamwork are required.
- Therefore, it is important to consider how you want your reader to feel, and what may make your reader feel that way.
- Your goal is to write constructively, which means to use positive phrasing to convey your message to your reader

Differences between destructive/negative and constructive/positive

Negative	Constructive
misunderstood	understood
outraged	conciliatory
disgusted	pleased
guilty	capable
belittled	empowered
patronized	respected
defensive	proud
chastised	valued
humiliated	honoured
excluded	a sense of belonging
resentment	contentment

Writing Constructively...

- Considering how your reader may feel after reading your document is an important part of revision.
- Did your tone come across like you hoped it would?
- Could it be misconstrued?
- Peer reviewing can be helpful.

Common components of a technical report

- Title Page:
 - Title
 - Authors
 - Author Affiliation
 - Date published
 - Other

Abstract

- It is a concise report on the important contents of the document
- Usually one or two pages long
- Purpose is to provide a quick review of the important contents of the document so that others can determine if they should invest time reading the rest of the document

Table of Contents

- Listing of the main headings of the document
- Includes:
 - Abstract,
 - nomenclature,
 - chapters,
 - chapter sections,
 - references, and
 - appendices

Chapters/Sections

- Make up the body of the document
- Include the detailed information the author wants to convey

References

- Lists the books, magazines, conversations, websites, and other sources of information you used in writing the document
- Bibliography?

Appendices

- Contain information which is important, though in most cases secondary to the purpose of the document.
- E.g.
 - tabulations of scientific data
 - Detailed calculations
 - Sample output of a computer program etc.