

Teaching technical writing fundamentals

Lesson learned



Presenters

ALEXANDRA
NIKANDROVA

Technical writer
at Red Hat



ŠÁRKA JANA
JANDERKOVÁ

Technical writer
at Red Hat

*“Technical writers can
improve anything made
from words.”*

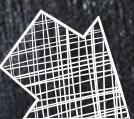
—WRITE THE DOCS





Technical writing

@ FI MUNI 2023



Lectures:

1. Introduction to TW
2. Style (accessibility, minimalism, structure)
3. Soft skills (communication, editing)
4. Hard skills (content strategy, modularity)
5. Tools (AsciiDoc, Git)
6. Usability (products, heuristics)

<https://research.redhat.com/courses/muni-techwriting-spring2023/>

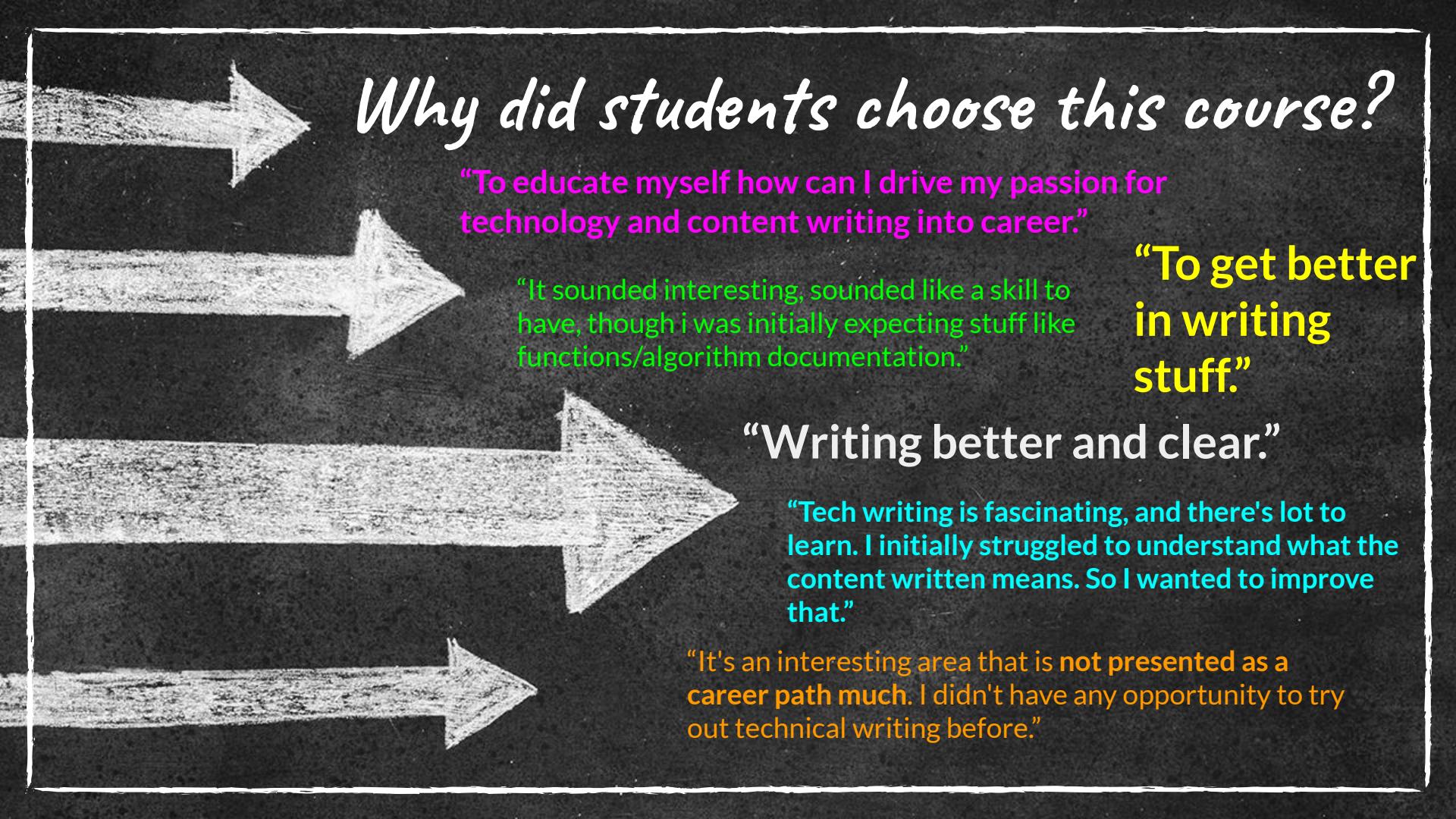
<https://github.com/rh-writers/technical-writing-course-brno>



What is open-source teaching



- Create teaching materials collaboratively
- Share teaching materials and resources online for anyone
- Ensure an interdisciplinary learning path
- Use open-source tools and technology
- Invite students to create real-time value as they learn



Why did students choose this course?

“To educate myself how can I drive my passion for technology and content writing into career.”

“It sounded interesting, sounded like a skill to have, though i was initially expecting stuff like functions/algorithm documentation.”

“To get better in writing stuff.”

“Writing better and clear.”

“Tech writing is fascinating, and there's lot to learn. I initially struggled to understand what the content written means. So I wanted to improve that.”

“It's an interesting area that is **not** presented as a career path much. I didn't have any opportunity to try out technical writing before.”

Timeline



Preparation

Initial kick off
6+ months

Assembling

Name of the
course, topics
3 months

Execution

Half semester
6 weeks

Experience



01

Multiple teachers

02

Content management

03

Time management

Challenges - preparation

- Allocating enough time for generating structure, themes, and content
- Ensuring consistency and clarity of content through editorial reviews

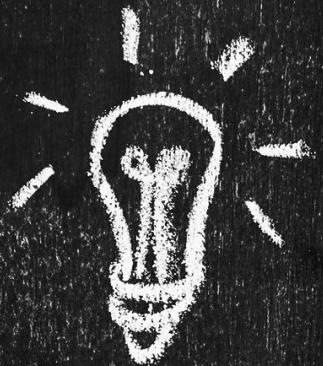
Challenges - in class

- Balancing content and class activities effectively
- Maximizing learning outcomes while keeping lectures engaging and interactive
- Managing time effectively
- Managing multiple teachers during the course and each lesson

Challenges - homework

- Aligning homework assignments with lectures and managing their scope
- Grading homework fairly with constructive feedback to motivate students
- Dealing with students who do not meet minimum passing criteria

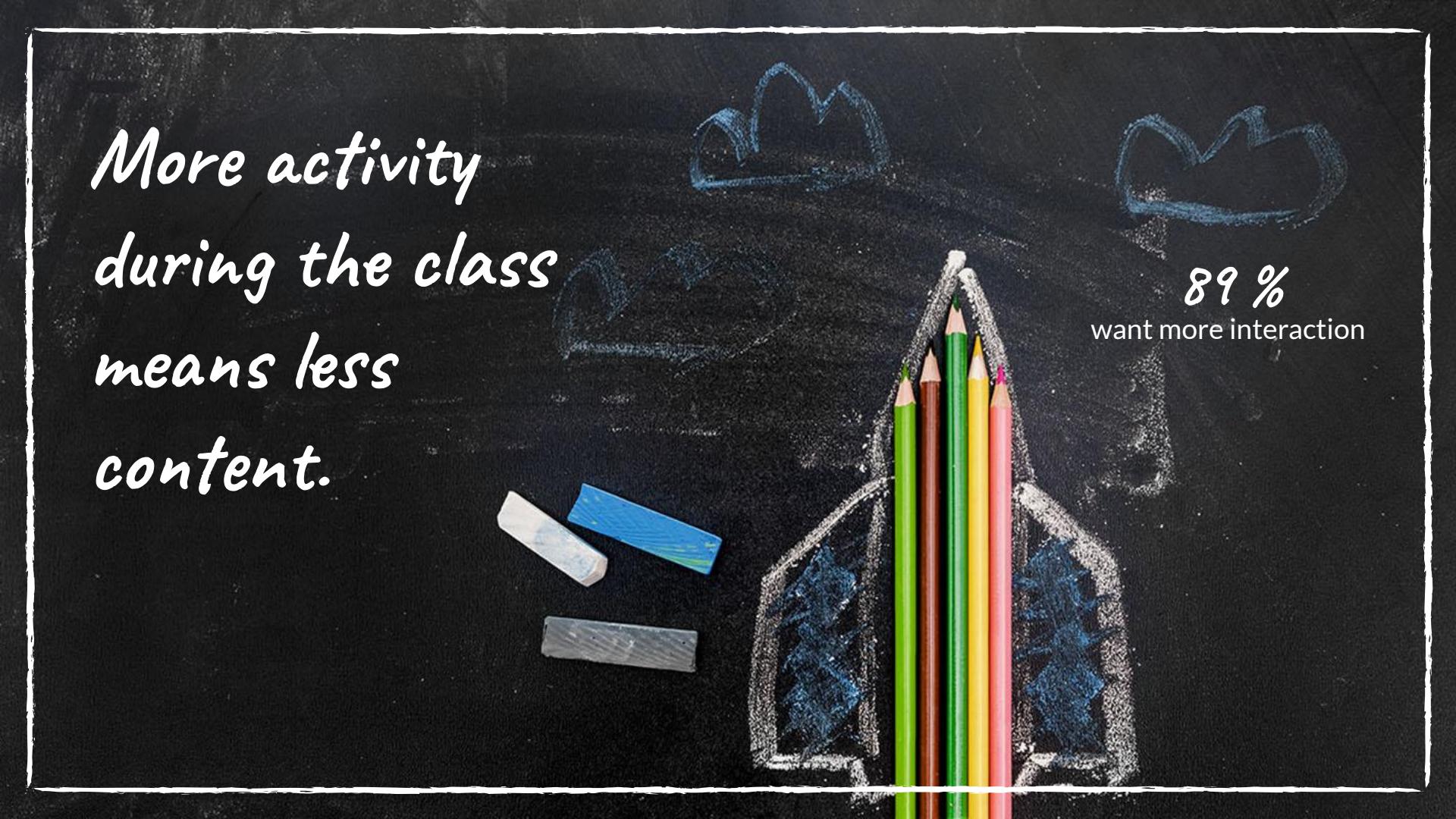
"Actual lesson learned



If the students tell you they
know Git - it does not mean
they know how to use Git.



More activity
during the class
means less
content.



89 %
want more interaction

*Give more hands-on
experience to students.*



Even if you are
running out of
time, never skip
conclusion.



Do not add small visuals!

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Jupiter Neptune		Venus Neptune		Jupiter Mars		
	Mercury Mars		Saturn Mercury			

Are your instructions clear?

Make them even clearer!

$$100 : 1 = 100$$



*HOMEWORK = REAL LIFE
EXPERIENCE*

*If you don't use the
information in the homework
assignment - do not spend
much time on it.*



Homework assignments



ALIGNED WITH THE LESSON

50% strongly agree

50% agree



CHALLENGING

22% strongly agree

67% agree

11% disagree



TIME CONSUMING

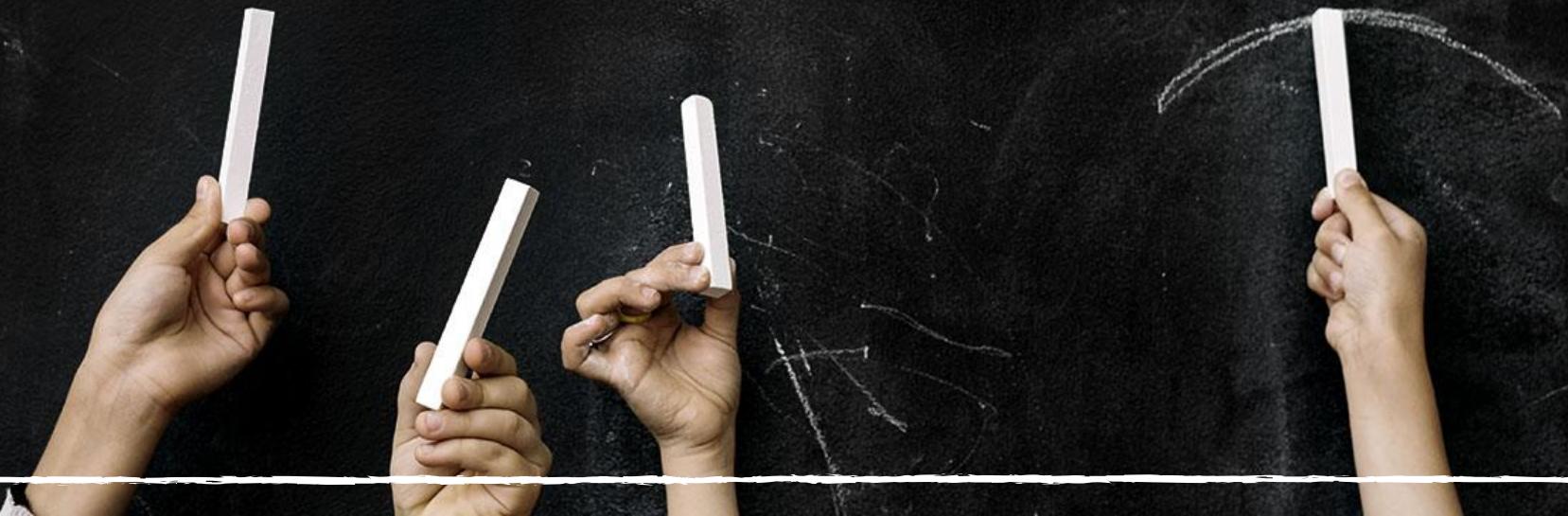
11% strongly agree

56% agree

22% disagree

11% strongly disagree

*When conducting a review,
keep in mind that they are
students, not your colleagues.*





*Stick to one class
format for all classes.*

*Can we make them
spark again?*



Was the course engaging?

55 %

strongly agree

45 %

agree

Was the course interesting?

33 %

strongly agree

67 %

agree

Would you recommend the course to other students?

100%

*In a world where you
can be everything,
just be kind.*



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Thanks!

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