**Plagiarism and Pfeiffer
Chapter One
The Writing Process:
Achieving Speed and Quality**

Fall 2007

August 29, 2007

Dr. Terry S. Creasy

1-070829-02TSC

"Write and rewrite until right!"

2-070829-02TSC

Reality: entry-level engineering jobs might require a "writing sample"

- **Entry-Level Engineering Professionals & Recent College Graduates in ... send resume and one technical writing sample ...**
- **Please send resume and writing sample to: ...**
- **SAFETY ENGINEER JOB SUMMARY: ... Applicants at all grade levels may be required to provide a writing sample. ...**

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Technical Writing

- Sentences that are grammatically correct, properly spelled, and correctly punctuated are <u>necessary but not sufficient</u> for good technical writing.

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Style

- The missing element is style.

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- "A sentence should contain no unnecessary word, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and <u>a machine no unnecessary parts</u>." *Strunk and White, <u>The Elements of Style</u>, p.17*

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What is this Author Trying to Say?

- Our intention is to implement the verification of the reliability of the system in the near future.
- 17 words.
- This sentence contains "ion-ments" "of phrases" and a nebulous number.

Editing Turns Tedious 30 Page Reports Into Crisp 15 Page Reports

- We will verify system reliability in September 2006.
- 8 words

The Old MEEN 360: An Intensive Writing Course

- Version 1
- 12 solo writing assignments
- ~6 solo formal report
- ~6 solo business letter
- ~102 pages/person
- No writing instruction

- Version 2
- 1 solo formal report
- 1 solo business letter
- 7 team business letters
- 3 team formal reports
- ~50 pages/person
- No writing instruction

MEEN 360: Writing Intensive

- Version 1
- Writing instruction
- 3 CPR essays
- 1 group & 1 solo formal report
- 1 group & 1 solo business letter
- 1 group & 1 solo memo
- ~40 pages/person

- Version 3
- Writing instruction
- 1 team formal report
- 1 team business letter
- 1 team memo
- 1 individual formal report
- ~20 pages/person

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Plagiarism

- **Resource:**
  - **University of Indiana Writing Tutorial Services Web Page**

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Plagiarism

- **Why worse now? My <u>hypothesis</u>…**
  - The personal computer, the internet, and databases provide source text with handy cut-and-paste commands at your fingertips.

- **The old method: 3x5 cards. Students knew when they were plagiarizing because it was hard work—but easier than writing.**
- **Hypothesis: photocopying increased plagiarism; however, writers were limited by their budget for photocopies.**

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Four Steps for Avoiding Plagiarism*

- 1) "Put in quotations everything that comes directly from the text especially when taking notes."
- 2) "Paraphrase, but be sure you are not just rearranging or replacing a few words. Instead, read over what you want to paraphrase carefully; cover up the text with your hand, or close the text so you can't see any of it (and so aren't tempted to use the text as a "guide"). Write out the idea in your own words without peeking."
- *University of Indiana Writing Tutorial Services Web Page

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Four Steps for Avoiding Plagiarism*

- 3) "Check your paraphrase against the original text to be sure you have not accidentally used the same phrases or words, and that the information is accurate."
- 4) "…Although you use your own words to paraphrase, you must still acknowledge the source of the information."
- *University of Indiana Writing Tutorial Services Web Page

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Creasy's Fifth Step for Avoiding Plagiarism in the Internet Age

- 1) Type two quotation marks "".
- 2) Copy the text and paste it between the quotation marks.
- 3) *Immediately* add the footnote or endnote.

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From this moment forward…

- … you know that copy/paste is wrong unless you cite your source and paste the material between quotation marks.
- …you know that you will lose all credit on an assignment containing plagiarized material.
- …

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"Never cite sight unseen."

- Recent dissertation…"2000 years ago, the Romans, the Chinese, and the Aztecs used biomaterials… [1]."

- I checked Reference 1. It did not mention the Romans, the Chinese, or the Aztecs.

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Length, Difficulty, and Quality …

- Easy—30 page document
- Difficult—15 page document
- Impossible?—5 page document
- when each delivers the same information.
- Teachers who assign 'only 5 pages' are making *difficult* assignments.

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Length, Difficulty, and Quality ...

- **"If you want a two-hour sermon I am ready now. If you want a one-hour sermon, I need a week to prepare. If you want a 15 minute sermon, I will need two weeks."** *Anecdotal, attributed to a Member of the Clergy.*

Length, Difficulty, and Quality ...

- **"I am sorry that I sent you this long letter. I did not have time to prepare a short one."**
- *Origin uncertain, attributed to several historical figures.*

Pfeiffer Chapter One
The Writing Process:
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- Review PfeifferPageOne.PDF

Chapter One

- ~~Definition of~~ Technical Writing Defined
- Nine Steps to Better Writing
- Writing in Groups

Technical Writing Defined

- On-the-job communication
- Practical Purpose
  - Serves purpose—not for enjoyment, but should not be horrid
- You must share your knowledge
- Write for your reader

Nine Steps to Better Writing

- Step 1: Write a Brief Purpose Statement
- Step 2: Consider the Obstacles Your Readers Face
- Step 3: Determine Readers' Technical Levels ~~of Readers~~

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Nine Steps to Better Writing

- Step 4: Determine Readers' Decision-Making Levels ~~of Readers~~
- Step 5: Find Out What Decision-Makers Want
- Step 6: Collect and Document Information Carefully

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Nine Steps to Better Writing

- Step 7: Write an Outline
- Step 8: Write Your First Draft Quickly
- Step 9: Revise in Stages

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Step 1: Write a Brief Purpose Statement

- A one- or two-sentence purpose statement helps get you started.
- **Why** are you writing this document?
- **What** response should your readers have?
- No summary, results, or conclusions.

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Step 1: Write a Brief Purpose Statement

- Example 1: This report presents <u>the findings of</u> our fieldwork at Trinity Dam, along with our recommendation that the spillway be replaced.
- Better:
- Why—To present findings from fieldwork at Trinity Dam
- What—To recommend replacing the spillway.

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Step 2: Consider the Obstacles Your Readers Face

- They Are ~~Always~~ Interrupted
  - Kurt Vonnegut wrote short chapters with short paragraphs to help readers finish an idea before any interruption.
- They Are Impatient —"*Get to the point!*"
- They Have a ~~Different~~ Background ~~Than You Do~~ Different from Yours

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Step 3: Determine Readers' Technical Levels

- Managers – need brief summaries, background information, and technical definitions
- Experts – need supporting technical detail; helpful tables and figures; and appendixes
- Operators – clear organization, well-written procedures, clarity
- General Readers – defined technical terms, frequent exhibits, clearly state how document affects them

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LECTURE ENDED

- Lecture ended here.
- Please read the following slides before our next lecture.

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Step 4: Determine Readers' Decision-Making Levels

- Decision Makers – managers or a committee
- Advisers – decision makers listen to them
- Receivers – accept information and act on it

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Step 5: Find Out What Decision-Makers Want

- **What do you know about the decision-maker(s)?**
  - **What main question does this person need answered?**
  - **What main action do you want this person to take? – What main action does this person want to take?**
- **Talk with Colleagues**
- **Keep it Short and Simple (KISS)**

Step 6: Collect and Document Information Carefully

- **Plagiarism**
- **3 x 5 card method presented – you can carry them to the library**
- **Perhaps an Excel method could follow this structure.**
- **"Cards": source, quotation, paraphrase, summary**

Source "Card" Use Endnotes or Excel?

GALILEO
Academic Search Premier

Henry, E., and C. McGrath. 2000.
Coast to coast on four fill-ups. Kiplinger's Personal
Finance Magazine, 54.8 (August), 160+.

Quotation "Card"
This is cut and paste—Excel
or Word?

QUOTATION CARD   Henry + McGrath

Although the car [Insight] will never lead the pack at
Indy, you won't fear for your life getting on the freeway....
But note this: The Insight's 365-pound payload capacity
means a couple of hefty passengers can overload [sic]
the car. Honda says that wouldn't damage the vehicle
but would impede performance and mileage.

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Paraphrase "Card"
Place in Excel or Word?

PARAPHRASE CARD   Henry + McGrath

The Insight won't win any races, but it will get you safely
on the freeway. Its load weight (365 pounds) is poor,
however. Honda says that it wouldn't damage the car
to overload it, but that performance and mileage would
suffer.

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Summary "Card"
Place in Excel or Word?

SUMMARY CARD   Henry + McGrath

The Insight has modest power but can't carry much
weight.

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Step 7: Write an Outline

- "Plans are nothing; planning is everything." -- *Dwight D. Eisenhower, Amer. President, General for U.S. forces during WWII.*
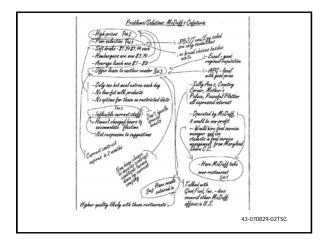
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An outline …

- …helps you organize your thoughts. Add and delete ideas—bullet statements—rapidly and easily.
- … helps you visualize the document. Do you have enough information to start writing?
- …aids prewriting-review. *Get your supervisor to sign off your outline!*

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How to Outline

- **Paper* is best for first outline.**
- **Record all ideas rapidly.**

- ***Tablet PC?**

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Draft 'Formal' Outline

- **Learn and use Word's outline tools**
- **Depth Does the outline show a whole document?**
- **Balance Any point with subdivisions must have two or more.**
- **Parallel form Put grouped subdivisions and bullet statements in the same grammatical form.**

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Example Outlines

- **Word Default Headings – Use manual indent**

Heading Level 1

Heading Level 2

Heading Level 3

Heading Level 4

Heading Level 5

Heading Level 6

Abstract	Abstract
Introduction	Introduction
Theory	Theory
Tensile Test	*Tensile Test*
Young's Modulus	Young's Modulus
Tensile Strength	Tensile Strength
Reduction in Area	Reduction in Area
Hardness Test	*Rockwell Hardness Test*
Rockwell Hardness	Indentor
Indentor	Scales
Scales	**Materials**
Materials	

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Step 8: Write Your First Draft Quickly

- **Do not write without an outline.**
- **The toughest thing to learn—be Stephen J. Cannell and write fast with errors.**
- **Write now, edit later.**

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Step 8: Write Your First Draft Quickly

- **Schedule Dedicated ~~Blocks of~~ Drafting Time—no email, phones, and etc.**
- **~~Don't~~ Do Not Stop to Edit—write the right ideas with errors!**
- **Begin with the Easiest Section—you have an outline, write anywhere within it.**
- **Write Summaries Last**

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Step 9: Revise in Stages

- **Review the draft several times; correct~~ing a~~ different ~~set of~~ problems on each run-through.**

- **Fix ~~Attend to matters of~~ content, style, grammar, and mechanics.**

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Step 9: Revise in Stages

- **Adjust and Reorganize Content**
  - expand sections that need more development
  - shorten over-long sections
  - move ~~change the location of some~~ passages, if they belong somewhere else

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Step 9: Revise in Stages

- **Edit for Style**
  - Shorten sentences.
  - Clarify – add transitional words and reword passages to show the logical idea flow
  - Change passive-voice sentences to active-voice _sensibly_.
  - Define technical terms.
  - Add headings, lists. and graphics.
  - Replace longer words with synonyms that are shorter or easier to understand

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Step 9: Revise in Stages

- **Edit for Grammar – use Pfeiffer's appendix.**
- **Edit for Mechanics – parallelism, wrong correctly spelled words, margins, page b reaks, and etc.**

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Writing in Groups

- 1. Get to know your group.
- 2. Set clear goals and ground rules—everyone gets a job and everyone checks for quality.
- 3. Use brainstorming techniques.
- 4. Agree on a revision process.
- 5. Use computers to communicate.

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Note on Brainstorming

- Introduced in 1950s.
- Discredited in early 1960s.
- Still used – no one read the follow-on research.
- Better method is silent idea sketching for fixed time followed by sharing and discussing all ideas.

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Avoid

- Drawing straws and sticking one person with the job.
- Letting one team member assemble and submit the document before all see it.

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Lalk's Law

• **Prepare a talk, then write the document.**

Algorithm for Preparing Any Document

• **1) Are there exhibits: tables, graphs, and photographs?**
• **YES—prepare all exhibits to presentation quality and put them in the right order for the document. In other words, make a presentation!**
• **If you can see the exhibits while you write, writing is easier.**

Algorithm for Preparing Any Document

• **Exhibits may follow the whole text in this order: all tables, all figures.**
• **Exhibits may be integrated. Integrated exhibits appear in the order mentioned in the text--exhibits must appear AFTER the paragraph that introduces them. Therefore, tables and figures are intermixed.**

Algorithm for Preparing Any Document

- 2) Select document level: email (with attached exhibits), memorandum, business letter, short report, formal report.
- 3) Review a model format or follow your client's format.

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Algorithm for Preparing Any Document

- 4) Outline the document—use headings where necessary. Use bullet statements to note where you will put information and where each graphic should appear. If you are integrating the graphics, put them in the file now.
- 5) Write the first draft—rapidly! Replace each bullet statement with sentences and paragraphs.

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Algorithm for Preparing Any Document

- 6) Edit at Level 1. Use the editor's marks—if working on paper—or Word's search tool.
- 7) Edit at Level 2. Remove excess words. Make sentences active.
- 8) Edit at Level 3. Check the page breaks, widows/orphans, etc.

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Assignments

- **Before class on Friday, 31 August**
  - Read Pfeiffer, Chapter Two and Chapter Three. Review formats one through five, 12, and 17.
- **Before class on Monday, 3 September**
  - Read Pfeiffer, Chapter 4 on graphics pp 109-127.
- **Next Wednesday**
  - Brogan on ion-ments, the * of, and other wordy constructions.

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Homework 1:
Deadline 11:59 p.m. on
Monday 3 September 2007

- **Visit backdraft.org.**
- **Download "Ending_The_Writing_Crisis.PDF"**
- **Read that report.**
- **Write an essay. Discuss the steps necessary to end the writing crisis.**
- **Use WORD with 1 inch margins, 12 pt. type, double spaced.**
- **Fill one 8.5 x 11 inch page with your essay.**
- **Upload your DOC file to turnitin.com via webct.**

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1 The Writing Process: Achieving Speed and Quality

*A*ll writers want to write quickly and well. If there were magic pills to create good writing on demand, they would outsell aspirin. Although we have no prose-producing pills, we do have simple techniques for dramatically increasing the speed and quality of on-the-job writing. This chapter presents techniques to improve the writing process.

The "writing process" can be defined as the steps you follow to complete a successful writing project. Process is indeed the key to good writing because it separates activity into manageable stages, each of which includes specific goals. To introduce you to the writing process, this chapter has three main sections:

- **Definition of Technical Writing**—giving basic information about purpose, writers, and readers in technical writing
- **Nine Steps to Better Writing**—explaining the main steps that help you plan, draft, and revise
- **Writing in Groups**—providing five guidelines for collaborative writing projects

This chapter gives most attention to the planning process. In fact, seven of the "Nine Steps to Better Writing" take place before you even begin a first draft. To assist you in the crucial planning process, at the end of the book you will find a Planning Form to use in preparing your strategy for completing each document.

DEFINITION OF TECHNICAL WRITING

At some point in our lives, we all do three main types of writing: academic, personal, and technical (see Figure 1–1). Yet for most mortals, only technical writing remains the type that will determine our professional success.

The term *technical writing* includes all written communication done on the job. It originally referred only to writing done in fields of technology,

1

<u>COMMENT</u> Compare this document with Pfeiffer's page one. I applied the technical writing principles from MEEN 360 W to his work and corrected several errors. I do acknowledge that Pfeiffer is writing for a general audience. That is, his book is not technical writing. I removed unnecessary words[1], "of" phrases[2], and made one sentence active[3].

"All writers want to write quickly and well. If there were magic pills to create good writing on demand, they would outsell aspirin. Although we have no prose-producing pills, we do have simple techniques for dramatically increasing your on-the-job writing speed and quality[4]. This chapter presents techniques to improve your writing process.

The 'writing process' is[5] the steps you follow to complete a writing project. This process is the key to good writing because it splits your work[6] into manageable stages[7]. Each stage[8] includes specific goals. To introduce you to this writing process, this chapter has three main sections:[9]

- **Technical Writing Defined** – giving basic information about purpose, writers, and readers in technical writing.
- **Nine Steps to Better Writing** – explaining the main steps that help you plan, draft, and revise.
- **Writing in Groups** – providing five guidelines for collaborative writing projects.

This chapter gives most attention to planning[10]. In fact, seven of the "Nine Steps to Better Writing" occur[11] before you[12] begin a first draft. A Planning Form[13] appears at this book's end; use this form when you prepare a strategy for completing each document.

Technical Writing Defined

At some point[14] we all do three writing types:[15] academic, personal, and technical. Table 1-1 lists the writing types, their purpose, their audience, and some example documents. [16]Only technical writing[17] determines our professional success."

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[1] Wherever appropriate.
[2] I left 'seven of nine.'
[3] I moved the actor to the sentence's beginning and let it act.
[4] Removed "of."
[5] "Is" replaced 'can be defined as.'
[6] I just liked 'splits your work' better than 'separates activity.'
[7] I stopped Pfeiffer's sentence here. It went on long enough.
[8] I removed "of which" and repeated 'stage' to make a strong comment in a short sentence.
[9] This colon is the 'strong form.' This is the best way to use the colon.
[10] "The planning process" became 'planning.'
[11] Occur replaced 'take place.'
[12] "Even" was unnecessary.
[13] The Planning Form is a special actor. It appears somewhere.
[14] "In our lives" unnecessary.
[15] Removed 'of' and used strong colon.
[16] "Yet for most mortals" gimme a break.
[17] Removed 'remains the type that will,' added an s, and created a strong sentence.