Educational Administration: Theory and Practice
2020, 26(1), 353-355
ISSN:2148-2403
https://kuey.net/

Research Paper

Bridging Communication Gaps: Technical Writing in English for Engineering Students in Gujarat

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Citation: Dr Vaseemahmed Qureshi, (2020) Bridging Communication Gaps: Technical Writing in English for Engineering Students in Gujarat, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, *26*(1), 353-355
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v26i1.10237

ARTICLE INFO **ABSTRACT**

In the evolving landscape of technological education, writing remains a critical skill for effective professional communication. This paper explores the unique demands of technical writing for students in technological institutes. It emphasizes the role of precision, objectivity, and structured presentation in achieving clarity and impact. The research discusses the importance of proper content planning, use of appropriate grammatical structures, and adherence to academic and ethical standards such as referencing and avoidance of plagiarism. Additionally, the study underlines the need for effective drafting and redrafting strategies to enhance the communicative power of technical documents. The insights offered aim to guide engineering and technology students toward producing technically sound and professionally effective written communications.

FULL PAPER

Introduction

In the modern knowledge-based economy, effective communication is central to professional success across disciplines. In the context of science and technology, written communication—particularly technical writing—plays a foundational role. Engineers and technologists routinely engage in report writing, documentation, project proposals, and academic presentations. This paper examines the specific characteristics of technical writing and proposes best practices for students in technological institutes.

Understanding Technical Writing

Technical writing differs significantly from literary or general-purpose writing. It is defined by its precision, factual accuracy, and logical organization. The purpose of the document dictates the choice of structure, tone, and language. Technical documents must convey information clearly and objectively, often under strict academic or industrial standards.

Structuring Content

Effective writing begins with well-organized content that provides clarity and coherence to the reader. Writers should focus on a specific theme or subject area rather than trying to include multiple topics, which can confuse the reader and dilute the overall message. To maintain structure and completeness, it is advisable to prepare a rough outline or list of key points before beginning the actual writing process. This not only ensures that important details are not omitted but also helps in organizing thoughts logically. Additionally, the use of tables and charts should be limited to those instances where they contribute meaningful and accurate data to the discussion, reinforcing the points made in the text.

Drafting Techniques

The drafting stage transforms raw ideas into structured communication. During this phase, writers should expand rough notes into well-developed, coherent paragraphs that logically flow from one to the next. Maintaining a clear and logical sequence of ideas is essential to guide the reader smoothly through the document. Sentences should be concise, grammatically correct, and easy to understand. Referring to credible sources not only strengthens the argument but also helps in avoiding plagiarism. Proper placement of tables, graphs, and other visuals enhances comprehension. While technical terms and jargon may be necessary to convey precision, they should be used sparingly and with clarity to avoid alienating non-specialist readers.

Grammar and Style Considerations

Tenses in Technical Writing

The use of tense in technical writing carries significant weight in conveying the status of research. Past tense is typically employed when referencing completed research or findings that are no longer current. Past perfect tense is useful when drawing contrasts between older studies and new findings, establishing a progression in thought or discovery. Present tense is appropriate when describing universally accepted facts or the ongoing relevance of current research.

Verb Usage

Verb choice in technical writing should aim for clarity and scientific neutrality. Overuse of "to be" verbs—such as "is," "was," or "have been"—can make writing feel heavy and imprecise. Modal auxiliaries like "may," "might," and "could" are preferable as they maintain the tentative tone appropriate for scientific claims. Verbs such as "indicates," "suggests," and "appears" invite critical engagement and imply openness to alternative interpretations, enhancing objectivity.

Voice and Objectivity

Active voice is generally favoured in technical writing for its directness and clarity. However, passive voice can be employed when the focus is on the process or outcome rather than the actor, thereby reinforcing objectivity. To maintain academic tone and neutrality, personal pronouns like "I," "my," or "we" should be avoided unless specifically permitted by the writing context.

Analytical Writing and Argumentation

A high-quality technical document is analytical rather than merely descriptive. It should present logical arguments supported by empirical data, examples, or quantitative evidence. The use of cautious, hedging language—such as "suggests," "appears," or "indicates"—is encouraged, as it aligns with the tentative and revisable nature of scientific knowledge. Such language invites scholarly dialogue and allows space for differing viewpoints, reinforcing the credibility and openness of the writer's position.

Presentation Design

Visual presentation significantly influences the readability and professionalism of technical documents. Standard formatting includes a title in 14-point bold font, body text in 12-point Times New Roman, author details in 10-point font, and email addresses in 9-point font. Consistent use of a recognized citation style, such as APA or MLA, enhances academic rigor. Proper punctuation and use of grammar and spelling tools are critical for maintaining clarity and correctness. In the case of PowerPoint or other visual presentations, font choices may vary, but readability must always remain a priority.

Documentation and Ethical Practices

Ethical practices in technical writing are paramount. All sources of information must be accurately documented through in-text citations and a comprehensive reference list. Plagiarism is a serious offense, with potential consequences ranging from academic penalties to expulsion. Even paraphrased material must be properly cited. Respect for Intellectual Property Rights ensures that original authors receive due credit and protects writers from legal or academic repercussions. Upholding these ethical standards is essential to maintaining integrity and trustworthiness in technical communication.

Visual Aids: Tables and Diagrams

The use of visual aids such as tables and diagrams should be deliberate and meaningful. Tables should be labelled above the content, while figures are labelled below, in accordance with academic conventions. These visuals must align closely with the text to ensure the reader can easily identify and understand their relevance. Phrases such as "as shown in the table" or "the details are illustrated in the figure" help maintain continuity between the visual and textual elements. Importantly, tables and diagrams should support, not substitute, the narrative explanation.

The Writing Process: From Notes to Final Draft

The development of a strong technical document typically follows a three-stage process. First, note-taking captures essential ideas and data in their raw form. Second, the first draft transforms these notes into a structured piece, giving shape to the content. Finally, redrafting allows for refinement—enhancing clarity, ensuring logical flow, correcting errors, and improving overall presentation. Following this iterative process ensures that the final document meets both technical standards and communicative effectiveness.

Conclusion

Technical writing is a multifaceted skill that blends creativity with precision. For students of technology, mastering this form of communication is essential not only for academic success but also for professional

competence. By focusing on content, structure, language, ethics, and presentation, writers can produce documents that are both scientifically sound and communicatively effective.

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