# **Pat Brannan / ENG 7745 Assignment/Teacher Mentoring Assignment**

The main teaching concepts in technical writing have been nebulous and difficult for me to grasp since the beginning of this course. In an earlier discussion board post, I reference Chen’s article as a means of differentiating TPC (Technical Professional Communication) basic and introductory coursework. Citing Meloncon and Herschel, Chen describes a basic TPC course as “the introductory courses to the practice of technical and professional writing and communication” and notes that basic courses are often service courses for other departments and disciplines (113). In contrast, introductory coursework is described as “an introduction to the field of TPC” (Chen 113). Lawrence and Hutter also identify the basic courses as service courses usually taught to “majors in computer science, health science, engineering, and environmental science” (93). Introductory courses usually include the history and theory of the TPC field (Chen 113) as well as the role of social justice in TPC communication.

My research goals in my mentor communications were to further define the TPC paradigm in the four-year and two-year college classroom settings, and to determine the target focus in each one. I interviewed two professors in two settings to get a clearer idea of how TPC looks in the classroom. I developed questions for each professor and asked both professors the same questions. I have included the professors’ responses in a question/answer format below.

For this mentorship report assignment, I have included the responses from the community college professor teaching an Eng. 116 course.

**Community College Mentor Interview**

**Question 1: In which courses in the community college level is Technical Writing taught?**

Technical writing is taught in Eng. 114 and Eng. 116. English 114 will transfer to a four-year university, but Eng. 116 will not. English 114 is applied to associate degree program, and Eng. 116 is applied to certification or diploma programs.

**Question 2: What are the course descriptions for Eng. 114 and Eng. 116?**

**Eng. 114 Technical Writing Course Description**

This course, the second in a series of two, introduces layout and design of technical reports used in business and industry. Emphasis is placed on audience analysis, data collection and analysis, technical writing style and organization, oral presentation of technical data, and the appropriate use of graphics in written and oral presentations. Upon completion, students should be able to produce written and oral reports using a variety of technical communication models.

**Eng. 116 Technical Report Writing Course Description**

This course, the second in a series of two, introduces layout and design of technical reports used in business and industry. Emphasis is placed on audience analysis, data collection and analysis, technical writing style and organization, oral presentation of technical data, and the appropriate use of graphics in written and oral presentations. Upon completion, students should be able to produce written and oral reports using a variety of technical communication models. The computer is used as a writing and design tool in this course. *This course is a non-transferable course.*

**Question 3: How proficient does the professor need to be in computer program platforms and design?**

The degree of proficiency varies from course to course. Most professors are not digital natives and learn from assigning technologies to students. Community college professors do not usually teach computer technologies, but they learn from their students’ efforts.

**Question 4. What are some common media types used for assignments?**

The community college student uses basic media for assignments: either word documents or power point presentations.

**Question 5. What are some common media platforms used by the professor?**

The community college professor uses primarily current informational websites or google search. The professor I interviewed stated that most textbooks are not current on ways to write resumes, for example, and he uses websites with up-to-date material to teach chronological and functional resumes.

I was really surprised at how much and how quickly an appropriate resume can change over time.

**Question 6. What programs are your ENG 116 students enrolled in?**

Industrial Systems Technology, Commercial and Artistic Production Technology, Business Technologies, Accounting and Finance, and Computer Integrated Machining Technology.

**Narrative**

I observed the community college Eng. 116 course face to face classroom sessions on October 18, and October 20, 2021. The student learning goal was the writing of a resume. During the first 50-minute session on October 18, 2021, Professor Z., explained the two primary types of resumes, chronological and functional. He described the situations in which a specific resume was appropriate, and when it didn’t matter. I observed that Professor Z. pulled current resume information from a website because the existing textbooks were not up to date in resume practices. I was surprised that parts of a contemporary resume were so different than a few years ago.

During the second 50-minute session on October 20, 2021, Professor Z. recapped the main points of the Monday lesson, displayed online examples of effective resumes on the overhead screen, and then allowed time for student questions. Professor Z. showed online examples of effective resumes and then gave students time to create their own unique resume with the professor assisting as needed.

Professor Z. did a thorough job of identifying the steps in creating a resume. He also gave a detailed explanation of the importance of identifying key terms in the job description to reproduce in the skill section of the students’ resume. Professor Z. gave several helpful hints to help students create a professional resume.

The Eng. 116 course seems to fall under the basic course description by Chen in that it functions as a service course for other departments and disciplines, for example, Industrial Systems Technology, Commercial and Artistic Production Technology, Business Technologies, Accounting and Finance, and Computer Integrated Machining Technology. The topics included in the Eng. 116 course were job resumes, cover letters, job interview training and practice, report writing, and business proposal writing.

This assignment was helpful in clarifying what comes under the umbrella of Technical Professional Writing. Trying to define TPC was overwhelming to me in the beginning but is becoming clearer as I research the topic. Defining the main principles of technical writing helps me to find where I fit as an instructor under this TPC umbrella. I predict that I will enjoy teaching intermediate basic courses in the TPC field.

# **ENGL 7745 Reflection**