

Executive Summary

Understanding Elements of Technical Writing and Design

Over the course of English 2100, I learned the elements of writing and design for technical and professional documents. I will briefly discuss these elements, which include audience, purpose, style, and voice, and what I learned about my writing. Then, I will describe how I applied these concepts to the writing and design project, the major assignment for the semester.

Audience

To produce an effective document, the first concept I need to understand is the audience, to whom I am writing. A thorough impression of the reader will help me tailor the writing and design to best meet their needs and expectations. This was the most difficult element for me to grasp because it is hard to anticipate the expectations of the reader, but I discovered I can rhetorically analyze documents in my field to get a better idea of what the audience wants.

Purpose

Understanding the purpose of a professional document helps me narrow my writing and make my message clear. During revision, I can use the purpose of the document as a guide towards cutting what does not apply and clarifying what is important. This element helped me fine tune my revision skills.

Style

Style is what gives professional documents consistency and recognition. Specific design elements, which are often found in a company's style guide, drive the look and feel of a company's brand distinguishing itself from other companies. It also alerts the reader to the types of documents that are being presented and makes them easier to navigate. I felt comfortable with the element of writing, and I found the Style Guide to be easy to follow and adhere to.

Voice

The voice within a document is how a specific writer tells the message within the company's standards and expectations. This is where the writer can show creativity and ingenuity. I felt familiar with this element, although I am still discovering voice as a writer. I enjoyed the opportunity to test a few things out.

ePortfolio Contents: Writing and Design Final Project

My goal was to use the elements of audience, purpose, style, and voice to analyze a document in my professional field, specifically nonprofit trauma recovery outreach. I compared sample trauma recovery blog posts to better understand the needs of the readership, the goal of trauma blog posts, the design elements that make these posts accessible, and the author's voices. After this analysis, I planned on creating my own post using what I felt was effective in the design and writing.

Learning Outcomes and Reflection

I felt comfortable and familiar with technical writing when I started the semester, although I was able to focus my writing by learning about audience and purpose. I had been introduced to Style Guides in a previous class, but this was my first experience writing with one. It was both helpful and tedious, but I can see how such a tool is important in brand consistency. I am attempting to build my own brand online as a resource for trauma recovery, and I have discovered that style is an important indicator in recognizing my work. It was a great experience writing in my own voice within the industry standards for style and design. As I am coming to understand the writing and design elements of effective technical and professional documents, I am able to apply those elements in my own writing and within my professional career by paying attention to audience, purpose, style, and voice.