



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
O L L S C O I L L U I M N I G H

‘Writing for Business-not Academia. An analysis of what employers tell us they don’t like about Graduate Writing’

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WHAT EMPLOYERS TELL US

- “ New hires have no real idea of how to structure, draft and edit a memorandum, report or even an email. It’s all about transmitting data and little about the reader or even the purpose of the writing”
- “We have to constantly stand over our younger employees and correct the same mistakes over and over again”
- “I pointed recently out to (Sorry for the split infinitive!) a new graduate that they tended to write in the passive. She did not understand what I meant as she assumed passive was the past tense”
- “My new PA has an inappropriate and informal style on her e-mails.”
- They take forever to get to the point. They use words that are not content appropriate and I don’t know why”

WHAT GRADUATES TELL US

- **“WE WERE NEVER TAUGHT HOW TO PROOF, EDIT, WRITE OR PLAN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION”**

THE PROBLEM IS CAUSED BY THE FOLLOWING

- Assignments are usually described in tuition by size rather than approach. *I need 5000 words on the following*
- Assignments are written for an audience of 1
- With some notable exceptions, no student gets specific assistance in learning to write well
- Social media has had a disproportionate impact on the rules of good writing
- Rote learning encourages data heavy examination answers



The Solution

- Get students to recognise good writing by comparing their own writing with high quality content
- Show students the principles of effective clear writing
- Give students the opportunity to practice planning and drafting their writing
- Demonstrate to students the most practical way to proof and edit their own writing
- Encourage students to put this into practice by offering marks for preparation and reader analysis

Crucial intervention of a third party

Neither the geographical location or the timeline are possible to ascertain in relation to the foregoing circumstances, however one seeks to. This must be noted whilst not serving to obviate the possibility of personal development – albeit at a rudimentary stage implicit herein. Suffice it to say that the circumstances surrounding the individual who may be assumed to be at the nub of the account would suggest a precipitate loss of disposable income (although this precipitate loss is unexplained and is juxtaposed against social conditions of near although not blood relatives so different as to represent a quantum leap) are established both by the vocational calling of the central character and by the palpable dearth of regard demonstrable in the behaviours of those kin towards the subject of the case study. What may be drawn from standard courses, taking into account commonly articulated warnings about the applicability of apocrypha to the quotidian, is that an element of jealousy over relative pulchritude may have been instrumental in the absence of the normal female affiliation one might have expected between the two siblings and their adoptive family member.

The crucial intervention of a third party resulted from a social engagement involving the siblings but specifically excluding the central figure who was on her own as a consequence of their departure when visited by an individual claiming a spiritual relationship with her. She then caused the manifestation and mutation of rodents and vegetables into means of transport into which she embarked having first undergone significant alteration of raiment, the latter involving items for the termination of her nether limbs of doubtful durability but immediate transparency. How could the central figure have undertaken the activity recounted so garbed?

The Preparation in Advance

- Before you start to write, put yourself in the position of the person or people who will read this writing. Ask yourself some questions about them:
 - What do they currently know about the topic?
 - What's their current attitude?
 - What information do they need?
 - What do they like/dislike in a written format?
 - What do you want them to think or do after they read your piece?
- If the writing is aimed at a single reader, then this becomes more important. A little research will allow your report to meet their individual preferences:
 - Brevity, for those with little time/patience
 - Evidence, for those who base their views on data
 - Illustrations, for the visually-minded.

- Before you put your hands to a keyboard, you should profile the audience at whom the writing is aimed. It will help you select and order what you put into it.

This analysis starts with a simple question. What does your reader know about this topic before they start reading it?

Your objective after that is straightforward. What do you want your reader to know after they have read your piece?

Don't get it right...get it written

- The format of most corporate writing is standard and dictated by each corporation's house style. Follow the in house standard, if there is one. If there is no standardised house style, consider the following as a checklist to good writing.
- Get the main body of the material saved. Then print it out and go looking for the following:
- Does the start of the piece indicate who the piece is addressed to and what is going on?
- Big, dense paragraphs. Break them up.
- Long sentences. 20 word rule.

Don't get it right...get it written

- Passive, rather than active voice.
- Unowned statements: “It seems...” “There is a sense...”
- The big, grey words of the academic lexicon. “Infrastructure.” “Methodology.”
- Repetitious beginnings to sentences or paragraphs.
- Assertions without evidence.
- Inconsistencies. Double and single inverted commas are a frequent example.
- Cliches. “Pushing the envelope.” “Thinking outside the box.”
- Reversing to the point. “Given that the circumstances surrounding the event have left us in a fire and flames context, it might be suggested that evacuating the room would be appropriate.”
- Re-write sections to take care of any of these problems, if they surface.

What is the most important piece of data on this slide?

Review of Test Data Indicates Conservatism for Tile Penetration

- The existing SOFI on tile test data used to create Crater was reviewed along with STS-87 Southwest Research data
 - Crater overpredicted penetration of tile coating significantly
 - ◆ Initial penetration to described by normal velocity
 - Varies with volume/mass of projectile (e.g., 200ft/sec for 3cu. In)
 - ◆ Significant energy is required for the softer SOFI particle to penetrate the relatively hard tile coating
 - Test results do show that it is possible at sufficient mass and velocity
 - ◆ Conversely, once tile is penetrated SOFI can cause significant damage
 - Minor variations in total energy (above penetration level) can cause significant tile damage
 - Flight condition is significantly outside of test database
 - ◆ Volume of ramp is 1920cu in vs 3 cu in for test

Diminishing Significance

- **Tufte quotes from the Columbia Accident Investigation Board:**
- ***“As information gets passed up an organization hierarchy, from people who do analysis to mid-level managers to high-level leadership, key explanations and supporting information are filtered out. In this context, it is easy to understand how a senior manager might read this PowerPoint slide and not realize that it addresses a life-threatening situation”***

A word on e-mails

- They will follow you around!
- Salutations are important-people earn their titles so get them right
- Do you need to write an e-mail-can you call or meet them?
- How would your e-mail sound read out in court?

What do you prefer?

Text A - Smith's version

The first experiment in our series with mice showed that total removal of the adrenal glands reduces aggressiveness. Moreover, when treated with corticosterone, mice that had their adrenals taken out became as aggressive as intact animals again. These findings suggest that the adrenals are necessary for animals to show full aggressiveness.

But removal of the adrenals raises the levels of adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), and Brain (1973) found that ACTH lowers the aggressiveness of intact mice. Thus the reduction of aggressiveness after this operation might be due to the higher levels of ACTH which accompany it.

However, high levels of ACTH have two effects. First, the levels of glucocorticoids rise, which might account for Brain's results. Second, the levels of androgen fall. Since animals with low levels of androgen are less aggressive, it is possible that removal of the adrenals reduces aggressiveness only indirectly: by raising the levels of ACTH it causes androgen levels to drop.

Text B - Brown's version

In the first experiment of the series using mice it was discovered that total removal of the adrenal glands effects reduction of aggressiveness and that aggressiveness in adrenalectomized mice is restorable to the level of intact mice by treatment with corticosterone. These results point to the indispensability of the adrenals for the full expression of aggression. Nevertheless, since adrenalectomy is followed by an increase in the release of adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), and since ACTH has been reported by Brain (1973) to decrease the aggressiveness of intact mice, it is possible that the effects of adrenalectomy on aggressiveness are a function of the concurrent increased levels of ACTH. However, high levels of ACTH, in addition to causing increases in glucocorticoids (which possibly accounts for the depression of aggression in intact mice by ACTH), also result in decreased androgen levels. In view of the fact that animals with low androgen levels are



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