



A POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTION

School of Computing and Academic Studies  
Professional English Language Development (PELD)

COMM 0004  
Technical Communication Skills for ELA Students

**Start Date:** Monday, January 7, 2008**End Date:** Friday, February 8, 2008**Total Hours:** 84 **Total Classes:** 21**Term/Level:** **Course Credits:** 0**Hours/Class:** 04 **Lab / Week:** 01**Shop:** **Seminar:** **Other:****Prerequisites:**

COMM 0003 Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Reading Skills for Technical Communication for Second Language Students (or COMM 0009 test with placement at the COMM 0004 entry level).

**COMM 0004 is a Prerequisite for:**

COMM 0005 Technical English and Learning Skills for Second Language Students  
You will need to obtain a minimum grade of **50%** in COMM 0004 to enter COMM 0005.

---

- **Course Description**

Prepares students whose English language skills need upgrading to enrol in COMM 0005. Focuses on paragraph writing for technical communication. Students prepare and interpret graphics; write classification, cause and effect, and comparison paragraphs; and make oral presentations. Articulated at Level III of English for Academic Purposes.

- **Detailed Course Description**

This COMM 0004 consists of twenty-one, 4-hour classes over a five-week period. The course is designed to prepare students whose first language is not English, yet who have good writing and speaking skills for study at BCIT. The course focuses on developing reading, speaking, and study skills required for technical and business communication, with a strong emphasis on pre-writing strategies and writing skills.

- **Evaluation Components**

Writing Assignments (6)	45%
Midterm Examination (1)	15%
Oral Presentation (1)	10%
Message Board Responses - myBCIT.ca (10)	5%
Final Examination (1)	25%

TOTAL

---

100%

- **Course Learning Outcomes / Competencies**

When you have successfully completed this course, you should be able to:

#### WRITING SKILLS

- 1) Organize, draft, revise, and edit a variety of texts
- 2) Identify and correct major grammatical, structural and lexical errors; demonstrate control over sentence structure errors in own reading
- 3) Use a wide range of sentence patterns appropriately in written tasks
- 4) Recognize and demonstrate an understanding of audience (e.g. needs, background knowledge) and purpose
- 5) Use appropriate vocabulary to express message clearly
- 6) Choose and apply appropriate paragraph organization when writing on a familiar, relevant or previously researched subject

#### READING SKILLS

- 1) Read and understand a wide variety of written materials of moderate length
- 2) Read and analyze a wide range of texts to analyze sentence structures
- 3) Comprehend less familiar and/or technical terms using a range of decoding strategies and context clues
- 4) Adjust reading techniques according to the level of the material and the purpose for reading

#### SPEAKING SKILLS

- 1) Ask questions to clarify instructions; respond to questions appropriately
- 2) Demonstrate the use of appropriate of verbal and non-verbal communication skills (e.g., turn-taking, eye contact, body language)
- 3) Provide appropriate peer feedback
- 4) Participate effectively in a variety of classroom activities

#### LISTENING SKILLS

- 1) Understand discussions, instructions, and lectures at a normal rate of speech
- 2) Understand a variety of natural speech with a varied rate of delivery with some dependence on repetition

#### PRE-WRITING STRATEGIES

- 1) Use brainstorming and outlining as a way to prepare for writing tasks.
- 2) Express ideas by creating and using graphics. These may include: classification trees, tables, flowcharts, and pie charts.

• **Verification**

I verify that the content of this course outline is current.

Dennis Hall  
Authoring Instructor

January 5, 2008  
Date

I verify that this course outline has been reviewed.

N. A. Graham  
Program Head/Chief Instructor

January 2008  
Date

I verify that this course outline complies with BCIT policy.

Patricia Hackwell  
Dean/Associate Dean

Jan. 2008  
Date

*Note: Should changes be required to the content of this course outline, students will be given reasonable notice.*

- **Instructor**

Dennis S. Hurd

Office Location: NE 21 Room 110    Contact Cell: (778) 235-6668

Office Hrs.:            By Appointment    E-mail Address: dhurd3@my.bcit.ca

- **Accommodation**

Any student who may require accommodation from BCIT because of a physical or mental disability should refer to BCIT's Policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities (Policy #4501), and contact BCIT's Disability Resource Centre (SW1-2300, 604-451-6963) at the earliest possible time. Requests for accommodation must be made to the Disability Resource Centre, and should not be made to a course instructor or Program area.

Any student who needs special assistance in the event of a medical emergency or building evacuation (either because of a disability or for any other reason) should also promptly inform their course instructor(s) and the Disability Resource Centre of their personal circumstances.

- **Learning Resources**

The purchase of textbooks **will not be required this term**. All in-class study materials will be photocopied and provided by the instructor.

For your hand-written assignments, you'll need:

- ✓ 3-hole lined 8-1/2 by 11" notepaper
- ✓ a pen (black or blue ink only) or HB pencil
- ✓ liquid paper or other means of making corrections neatly
- ✓ 4 write-on overhead transparencies
- ✓ 2 different colored water-soluble (washable) overhead transparency pens

Recommended:

You'll want to have a good paper **English-to-English dictionary**. I strongly recommend you bring your English dictionary to each class if you want to improve your spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension. For example, **COLLINS COBUILD ADVANCED LEARNER'S DICTIONARY**, or **the OXFORD ADVANCED LEARNER'S DICTIONARY**.

The following grammar books are highly recommended and are available in the BCIT bookstore.

AZAR – Understanding and Using English Grammar **Chartbook**

AZAR – Understanding and Using English Grammar **Workbook**

- **Information for Students**

**Assignments:** Late assignments, lab reports or projects will **not** be accepted for marking. Assignments must be done on an individual basis unless otherwise specified by the instructor.

**Your myBCIT Message Board Answers:** You must complete **all** message board topics by 5:00 pm of the last scheduled day of class. The completeness *and* accuracy of your work will be evaluated.

**Makeup Exams or Quizzes:** There will be **no** makeup tests, exams or quizzes. If you miss a test, exam or quiz, you will receive zero marks. Exceptions may be made for **documented** medical reasons or extenuating circumstances. In such a case, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor **immediately**.

**Ethics:** BCIT assumes that all students attending the Institute will follow a high standard of ethics. Incidents of cheating or plagiarism may, therefore, result in a grade of zero for the assignment, quiz, test, exam, or project for all parties involved and/or expulsion from the course.

**Attendance:** The attendance policy as outlined in the current BCIT Calendar will be enforced. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each session. Students not present at that time will be recorded as absent. Students who are absent for any reason, other than substantial illness, for more than **10% of the time prescribed for the course** may not be allowed to complete the course with a passing mark.

**Illness:** A doctor's note is required for any illness causing you to miss assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, or exam. At the discretion of the instructor, you may complete the work missed or have the work prorated.

**Attempts:** Students must successfully complete a course within a maximum of three attempts at the course. Students with two attempts in a single course will be allowed to repeat the course only upon special written permission from the Associate Dean. Students who have not successfully completed a course within three attempts will not be eligible to graduate from the appropriate program.

**Course Outline Changes:** The material or schedule specified in this course outline may be changed by the instructor. If changes are required, they will be announced in class.

### • Assignment Details

You are required to complete all **6 assignments** for this course as well as write the midterm and the final exam. In-class assignments must be completed and handed in during the class in which they are given. Any take-home assignments must be submitted at the beginning of the next class. Required writings on the message board area of myBCIT will be reviewed and be a part of your overall final mark.

If you miss an in-class assignment, it is your responsibility to arrange with the instructor to write it in another class or at another time under the instructor's supervision. If you fail to do so, you will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. Assignments received after other students' marked assignments have been returned will receive comments but no grade.

All writing assignments must meet the following requirements:

- 1) **Acceptable Layout:** Use lined 8 1/2" X 11" notepaper with 1 inch margins. Documents written in a BCIT computer lab must be saved in 12-point font in a standard, Microsoft Word file format.
- 2) **Proper Identification:** Include your name and BCIT Student ID number on the top of each page.

### • Classroom Methods for Communication Courses

We will be using teaching methods which have proven most effective for teaching students at BCIT:

- 1) **Teamwork:** Just as in most courses at BCIT, you will be working in small groups. This will allow you to develop the interpersonal skills you need to succeed at BCIT and in the workplace. You will also learn more in groups as you teach and support each other.
- 2) **Peer-Editing:** You will spend time editing the work of other students. As well, you'll work with one or two partners to locate and correct errors in each other's work.
- 3) **Explaining in Your Own Words:** You'll be reading from textbooks, case articles, and handouts and then putting ideas into your own words. You will know you have gained knowledge and language skills when you are able to explain the ideas clearly for your team members and to your instructors.

## Detailed Course Schedule

This is a weekly schedule of assignments and test dates. Moreover, you must refer to the announcements and news on <http://my.bcit.ca> as it will contain up-to-date information.

Weekend of/ Number	Outcome/Material Covered	Writing Assignments / Oral Presentations / Examinations	Reference/Reading
<b>Week 1</b>			
Mon. January 07 / Tue. January 08	Introduction to the Course. Getting to Know Each Other. What's in a Resume? <b>Begin the Introductory Module.</b>	<b>INITIAL WRITING:</b> EXPLAIN YOUR LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCES (NOT GRADED)	<i>Types of Sentences, Eliminating Errors, Types of Fragments, Main Idea Sentences, Order in Paragraphs</i>
Wed. January 09 / Thu. January 10	Intro to the Purposes of Classification. <b>Start the Classification Module.</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT #1</b> CREATING A CLASSIFICATION TREE: SURPRISING THINGS	<i>Outlining Paragraphs, Using the Language of Classification effectively.</i>
<b>Week 2</b>			
Mon. January 14 / Tue. January 15	Classifying Programs at BCIT. Practice using the Language of Classification.	BE PREPARED TO OUTLINE AND DISCUSS SUITABLE ORAL PRESENTATION TOPICS	<i>Mastery of Structures of Classification and Comparison. Locating and Correcting Poor Paragraph Unity.</i>
Wed. January 16 / Thu. January 17	<b>Begin Module on Cause and Effect.</b> Comparing Typical BCIT Students. Making Effective Comparisons.	<b>ASSIGNMENT #2</b> USING A CLASSIFICATION TREE: FEELING STRESS AT YOUR PLACE OF BUSINESS	<i>Practicing and Expanding Cause and Effect Language. Using a Chain Diagram</i>
<b>Week 3</b>			
Mon. January 21 / Tue. January 22	Writing About What Others Have Suggested. Continue Module on Cause & Effect.	<b>ASSIGNMENT #3</b> WRITING PARAGRAPHS THAT FOCUS ON EFFECTS	<i>Direct / Reported Questions and Statements. Writing Complex Cause &amp; Effect Structures.</i>
Wed. January 23 / Thu. January 24	How Cause and Effect Language is used in Technical Writing.	<b>MIDTERM EXAMINATION</b>	<i>Brainstorming Ideas. Using Prepositions, Subject/Verb Agreement</i>
<b>Week 4</b>			
Mon. January 28 / Tue. January 29	Complete previous module. <b>Begin Process Description.</b>  Giving Step-By-Step Instructions on Paper.	<b>ASSIGNMENT #4</b> WRITING A PROCESS DESCRIPTION FROM INSTRUCTIONS	<i>Using Time &amp; Reason Clauses. Language of Sequencing. Passive / Active Voice.</i>
Wed. January 30 / Thu. January 31	Begin module on Comparison and Contrast Learning How to Write Descriptions of a Technical Nature.	<b>ASSIGNMENT #5</b> DESCRIBING AND COMPARING TWO LOCATIONS	<i>Side-by-Side Comparison format. Using Appropriate Pre-Writing Strategies for Comparisons.</i>

<b>Week 5</b>			
Mon February 04 / Tue February 05	Creating an Outline, Writing, and Evaluation of Comparison Paragraphs. <b>Begin the module entitled Interpreting Visual Data.</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT #6</b> COMPARING WORK-RELATED ITEMS USING POINT-BY-POINT FORM	<i>Overview of Advanced Comparative Structures.</i>  <i>Sequence and Use of Adjectives in Technical Writing.</i>
Wed. February 06 / Thu. February 07	The Choice of Appropriate Graphic Depends on the Info. Paying Particular Attention to the Details of Charts and Graphs  Summary of module on Visual Data. General Review. Course Evaluations.	<b>ORAL PRESENTATIONS</b>  SHARING INFORMATION ON A VANCOUVER BUSINESS. GIVEN ON BOTH WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY.	<i>Expressing Broader Information and Justifying. Presentation Techniques</i>  <i>Reviewing Technical Style</i>
<b>Fri. February 08</b>	Review Technical Writing. Course Evaluations.	<b>FINAL EXAMINATION</b>	