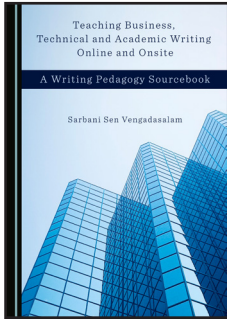


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Teaching Business, Technical and Academic Writing Online and Onsite: A Writing Pedagogy Sourcebook

Sarbani Sen Vengadasalam

Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

Cambridge Scholars Publishing
2021, 146 pp.

Reviewed by Priyanka Ganguly

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Sarbani Sen Vengadasalam's (2021) *Teaching Business, Technical and Academic Writing Online and Onsite: A Writing Pedagogy Sourcebook* offers the best practices for teaching online, hybrid, blended, or face-to-face technical and academic writing based on three aspects: "instructional design, participation management, and multimedia use" (p. x). The primary goal of this book is to provide technical and academic writing teaching principles that could address the long-lasting tension existing between the real-world (professional development) and academic expectations (exercises/ assignments). Therefore, the author has written and designed each chapter with a practitioner focus.

Vengadasalam divides her six-chapter text into two sections. These two sections are preceded by a Preface and an Introduction written by William Marrino and followed by an Afterword by Miriam Jaffe. Part One, "Pedagogies, Instructional Principles, and Syllabus Design" includes three chapters that are intended primarily to help educators design their technical, professional, and business writing

courses with an aim to diminish academic and real-world divides, promote student empowerment, and assist students in transitioning from learners to scholars. Part Two, “Facilitating Online Discussions, Incorporating Digital Multimedia Assets, and Using Visual Tools” includes three chapters that encourage writing instructors to adopt a multimodal approach to teaching, make use of unconventional teaching resources, including visuals, and implement a participatory approach of discussion in which students’ presence is prominent without the erasure of the teacher.

In both Part One and Part Two, each chapter offers one or more teaching principles or best pedagogical practices that have been tried and tested by the author herself in her own online, onsite, and hybrid teaching. Instructors will find the lesson plans and rubrics (primarily attached to the appendix sections for most chapters) extremely valuable to apply the pedagogical tools and practices in their own courses. Another appealing characteristic of this book is the integration of practitioners’ perspectives in each chapter that could help both educators and students to gauge the real-world expectations. In addition, this book’s pedagogical relevance is further amplified by the inclusion of a vast array of technical, academic, and business communication pedagogical topics, tools, principles, theories, and practices that could be used by a range of online and onsite educators with different levels of experience.

Chapter One, “Superimposing R.E.A.L. Principles on the Project Writing Pyramid: A Paradigm Shift in Teaching Professional Writing,” offers R.E.A.L. principles—reader-oriented, extensively researched, actionable solution, and looped composition—for educators teaching project writing courses, including proposal writing, in online, onsite, or hybrid formats. These principles are supportive in reducing the tension faced by professional writing teachers, i.e., the importance of making a connection between an assignment’s academic credibility and real-world demands. Through these principles, a student can center reader-benefit heuristics, understand the differences between an academic research paper and an actionable proposal, carry out extensive research about their external audience (readers), and visualize and practice writing as a *process*, not as a *product*.

Instructors can use Chapter Two, “Transformative Pedagogy and Student Voice: Using S.E.A. Principles in Teaching Academic Writing,” to encourage students to move from writing a well-cited to well-voiced paper in their undergraduate and graduate academic writing courses, including Writing Across the Curriculum and Writing in the Disciplines. This three-sectioned chapter offers a transformative pedagogical ap-

proach consisting of a triple enabler, S.E.A. (scaffolding, empowerment, and awareness), that could be helpful in creating a supportive, not normative, academic environment where student voices are fostered.

In Chapter Three, “Publish or Perish!: Sharing Best Practices for a Writing Instructor-Led ‘Writing for Publications’ Graduate Academic Writing Course,” Vengadasalam argues that whether writing teachers as discipline-specific practitioners should teach “Writing for Publications” courses or not remains a debatable topic. However, there is no denial that graduate students and novice researchers need guidance in publishing and finding their identity in academia. Considering this need, she offers practitioner insights and the best practices for conducting online peer reviews and reader response notes by incorporating S-W-S (strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions) in graduate courses. This chapter also provides a sample syllabus with week-by-week activity for writing teachers who teach or want to teach an interdisciplinary “Writing for Publications” course.

Chapter Four, “A Learner Centered Pedagogy to Facilitate and Grade Online Discussions in Writing Courses,” is useful for instructors who employ discussion boards and learning management spaces for their onsite, online, or blended teaching. In this chapter, the author primarily offers innovative online discussion management pedagogical tools and methods that reject a top-down (teacher-to-student) interaction and foster a bottom-up (student-to-student or student-to-instructor) conversation in an asynchronous discussion online learning space. In this approach, educators can adopt a learner-centered strategy by incorporating W.R.I.T.E. (Warm, Responsive, Inquisitive, Tentative, Empathetic) and avoiding W.R.O.N.G. (Wordy, Repetitive, Offensive, Negative, Gossipy attributes) principles. Through these principles, students will be able to move up the Bloom’s taxonomy scale in their class discussion participation by creating discussion threads and trees. In addition, this chapter offers a progression-based cognitive rubric that can be used in basic to advanced, online or hybrid, undergraduate or graduate writing classes at all levels of institutions.

In Chapter Five, “Moving Towards an Open Educational Resources (O.E.R.) Pedagogy: Presenting Three Ways of Interfacing with O.E.R. in Business,” Vengadasalam offers the best practices for using the open educational resource (O.E.R.) repository particularly for technical and business writing instructors and outlines a possible O.E.R. taxonomy and pedagogy. A potential O.E.R. taxonomy could consist of four parts: collecting relevant O.E.R. materials, connecting the identified sources with course outcomes, curating and localizing the O.E.R. materials, and contributing to new knowledge creation by transforming the existing

O.E.R. materials and sharing them publicly. Through this taxonomy, an instructor can move from a learner to a contributor not only by curating and localizing the existing O.E.R., but also by transcreating it for the benefit of the larger academic community. In this regard, a rubric containing five parameters has been offered for the best usage of O.E.R.: content, accessibility, format, shelf life, and wow factor. Finally, this four-sectioned chapter further suggests at least three ways for the educators to use O.E.R. in an organized manner: O.E.R. “as additional materials, as prescribed textbooks, or as additional educational materials in the institutions” (p. 115). Ultimately, the author argues that O.E.R. as multimedia assets can be the future in the academic writing community. The O.E.R. lesson plans included in this chapter’s appendix section are extremely valuable for instructors to systematically plan O.E.R. usage in their pedagogy.

Chapter Six, “Infographics in Academic & Professional Writing,” offers the practitioners’ perspectives on the best practices for using infographics and two teaching principles and a rubric for implementing infographics-oriented pedagogy in technical, professional, and business communication courses. Because visuals are an indispensable part of technical and professional writing, the author argues that infographics—a combination of data and ideas—can play an invaluable role in pedagogy. Vengadasalam further suggests that to use infographics in an effective and accessible manner, instructors should be aware of audience, stylistic conventions, brevity principles, and logical orientation. In technical and professional writing courses, instructors can use the L.A.T.C.H. (location, alphabetical order, timeline, category, and hierarchy) and C.R.A.P. (contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity) principles to organize data, ideas, texts, and visuals in a logical manner and to focus on the actual data that will feed into an infographic, respectively.

Post COVID-19, when traditional classroom settings are no longer considered as norms, Vengadasalam’s timely publication is extremely helpful for both educators and students to cope with online, hybrid, or blended pedagogical approaches. As responsible technical, business, and/or academic writing teachers, our obligation is to offer the necessary skills to our students who need both professional development and academic credibility. In this regard, this book is the first of its kind to offer some unique pedagogical practices that blend technology with multiple genres/formats and help create student-advocates.

Author Information

Priyanka (Priya) Ganguly is a third-year PhD candidate in Rhetoric and Writing at Virginia Tech (VT), where her research is at the intersection of rhetorics of health and medicine, technical communication (social justice), and transnational institutional/organizational communication. As she transitions into the dissertation phase of her program, her research interrogates how technical and professional communication (TPC) practitioners, working as public health communicators, exercise rhetorical agency and manage knowledge within their institutional domains and how their rhetorical decision-making and knowledge management impact transnational audiences' health.

Priya has been teaching in the Materials Science and Engineering Department's Engineering Communication Program (ECP) at VT for the past two years. Currently, she teaches Technical Writing courses to undergraduate students. Her recent publications include articles on the statement of purpose (SP) genre, online technical communication pedagogy, and the international reproductive justice (RJ) hashtag activism in journals such as *Xchanges*, *Technical Communication Quarterly*, *English for Specific Purposes*, and the *39th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC'21)*. She has presented at various conferences, such as RSA, CCCCs, ATTW, and SIGDOC.