

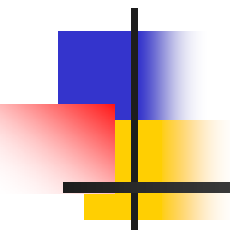


# ENGG 5204 - Effective Verbal & Written Communication

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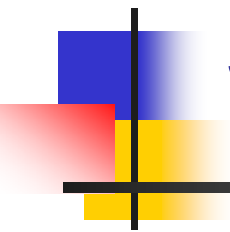
John Currie  
ACIIC

Effective Verbal & Written  
Communication is the key  
factor in achieving  
Professional success!!!



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Empathic Consideration of Audience needs is the primary attitude for Professional success.



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Placing yourself in another's position to see things from their perspective is a practiced skill.



# Key Features of Verbal Communication

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- Speaking
- Listening
- Presenting



# The Verbal Communication process

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- What messages will you send to your presentation audience?
- How will you present the message?
- How will ensure they listen & respond to appropriately?



# Potential Messages:

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- What? - descriptive
- So What? - analytical
- Now What? - evaluative



# What?:

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- Topic? - largely descriptive
- Selective aspects of the topic?
- Delivery approach?
- Audio - visual aids?



# So What?:

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- What is the significance of the topic, your approach to it & the work you have done?
- Why is it important to listen to you?
- Concentrate on analysis & synthesis of your project in comparison to and contrasted with others in the field.



# Now What?:

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- Future oriented
- Where is the project up to?
- What still has to be done?
- How does this compare with your project plan?
- What outcomes will be achieved?
- Recommendations for further work/research?



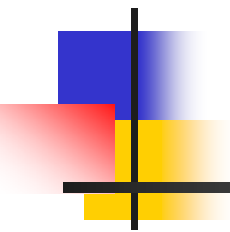
# How much time should be spent on each section?

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Introduction - approx. 25%

Body - approx. 50%

Conclusion - approx. 25%



What level of knowledge  
about my topic will the  
audience have?

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What level of knowledge do I  
assume?

(clients, supervisor, academics,  
peers)



What likely questions will the audience ask?

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Anticipate & prepare!!



# Communication of messages:

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- Verbal
- Logical argument
- Clear, strong, well modulated voice
- Non-verbal
- A-V aids, Graphics & other aids
- Body language
- Eye contact
- Dress



# Audio-visual aids:

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- Good A-V aids can make a good presentation better, but they won't save a poor one!
- Prepare appropriate A-V aids
- Don't rely on technology!! - back up plan?
- Must have OHPs



# Active Listening:

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- Physical setting
- Management of body language
- Affirming questions
- Awareness of own & others feelings
- Avoidance of anger
- Suspension of judgement
- Patience



# Engineers as Written Communicators

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- Professional Success through Written Communication
- Consideration of Audience needs
  - professional background
  - scope of communication
  - style of communication



# Professional Background

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- Technical - engineers ( all disciplines) & scientists, academics
- Non-technical - other professionals inc. legal, sales, finance, managerial



# Scope & Style of Communication

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- Scope -
  - Level of technical detail
  - Audience's needs
  - Desired outcomes
  - Visual aids - figures, tables etc.
- Style -
  - Reports
  - Essays
  - Memos
  - Emails
  - SMS messages
  - Proposals
  - Conference Papers



# Essays

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- Continuous prose - sentences & paragraphs
- Introduction, Body, Conclusion
- Developing an Argument to Answer a Set Question
- Substantiation through supportive references



# Reports have 3 basic sections:

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- Front material
- Body of the report
- Back material



# Documenting Sources

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- listed alphabetically by author in bibliography
- book/journal - author's name, initials. publication year, title, volume no. (jrnl), publisher, publication place
- internet - site title, URL address, date accessed



# Acknowledging Sources:

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- all ideas & material from external sources, except that in public domain, must be acknowledged
- failure to do this is plagiarism & is ethically unacceptable



## Sources within text:

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- following paraphrased or quoted material - author's name, publication year, page number
- eg: (Smith, 1998, p16.)
- full details are available in the bibliography



# Plagiarism includes:

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- Representing another person's creative work as your own original work without acknowledgment
- Direct copying of any written or creative material, or ideas, without attribution
- Minor paraphrasing - not using enough of your own words
- Submitting all or part of another student's work
- Portraying group work you have not fairly contributed to as your own.



# Overcoming Plagiarism:

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- Keeping good research notes to enable acknowledgement
- Draft and edit your work to improve it
- Allowing sufficient time to do references for all assignments
- Bibliographic software - Endnote
- Seek support @ the Learning Centre for poor written English skills.



# University Plagiarism Policy:

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- Negligent (thoughtless, lazy) & Dishonest (deliberate) plagiarism
- Negligent - 1st offence - counselling & written warning; 2nd offence - penalty
- Deliberate - 1st offence - penalty, written warning & counselling; 2nd offence - stronger penalty (Uni Bylaws)
- Academic Honesty/plagiarism coversheet for all assignments.



# Front material:

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- Title page
- Foreward, Preface, Acknowledgments  
(published reports only)
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Summary
- (NB - for Essay report only Title Page  
and ToC required)



# Title page:

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- first page of report
- descriptive title
- author's name
- date
- name of author's organisation
- name of client



# Summary:

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- brief factual description of report
- written as prose (sentences), not notes
- known as Executive Summary in business reports



# Body of Report:

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- Introduction
- Main text
- Conclusions



# Introduction:

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- nature & scope of situation examined
- context of work as relates to existing knowledge (scientific &/or commercial)
- discusses findings of previous similar research, if available
- states investigation method
- presents key results



## Main text:

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- elaborates themes in introduction
- develops them in sections &/or chapters
- written with organising principles in mind



# Conclusion:

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- summarises findings from main text
- does not introduce new ideas/material



# Technical reports main text features:

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- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion



# Literature Review:

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- Summarises and evaluates the literature used
- Considers contribution of the literature to your research/study
- Evaluates the strengths & weaknesses of previous work
- Informs your understanding and framing of the research issue/problem.



# Methodology:

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- Explains data gathering/generation process
- Outlines data analysis method & process
- Written in past tense, passive voice (“research was carried out”)



Successful methodology relies  
on good research practice

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Laboratory Notebook -  
Complete and accurate notes and  
records!



# Results:

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- Research findings - represented in texts and graphics
- Explains key findings, results, issues
- Shows trends or relationships
- Indicates explained or unexplained findings



# Discussion:

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- Assesses & analyses research results
- Comments on unexplained results
- Compares research findings with literature
- Applies findings to broader research context



# Back matter:

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- Bibliography - alphabetised list of references cited
- Appendices - detailed data related to main text
- Reference List - additional material consulted, but not cited



# Writing Process:

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- Plan - time, aim, audience, scope
- Research - data gathering
- Draft - creating ideas & information as text
- Edit & revise - quality control; proofreading, checking, rewriting, formatting.



# Checking content & organisation:

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- achievement of aim?
- logical flow of argument?
- appropriate headings and title?
- level of detail: too much, not enough?
- paragraphs structured around a key idea?
- appropriate visuals to clarify argument?



# Rewriting-clearly & briefly:

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- clear, appropriate, direct words and phrases
- content that clearly informs the reader & supports the argument
- removal of repetition & clichés
- short, clear sentences not long wordy ones



# Proofreading:

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- spellcheck
- 'naive' enquirer - external editor
- correct contextual word usage
- punctuation & grammar check - read aloud: do the sentences make sense?, punctuation spaces in the right places?



# Document Formatting:

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- white space between words & paragraphs
- numbering pages & sections/chapters
- font size (size 12 average)
- underlining, *italics*, CAPITAL LETTERS
- indenting
- lists
- visuals - tables, figures, illustrations



# Academic issues in report writing:

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- Unclear articulation of desired requirements & expectations
- Presumption that students understand application of written communication process in all subject areas
- Assessment - variable quality of feedback, unclear marking criteria



# Student issues in written communication:

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- Poor time management
- Incomplete / poor presentation
- Unclear purpose/themes/thesis of communication
- Poor referencing practice
- Academic honesty/plagiarism issues