

English 320, Fall 20

Key Passages and Take-Aways from First-Week Reading Assignments

In SWAW, Chaps. 1-3:

1. *Knowing how to write at work is a big deal.*

“Writing keeps businesses moving. It allows employees to communicate with one another, with management, and with the customers, clients, and agencies a company must serve to stay in business. The average office worker receives 80 emails daily, and that means that most [people] are receiving at least one email message every 6 or 7 minutes while at work. A survey conducted by the McKinsey Global Institute found that workers spend more than hours a day just reading and answering their emails.”

2. *A lot of employees show up on the job without knowing how to write well.*

“The National Commission on Writing estimates that American businesses spent \$3.1 billion annually in training employees to write.”

“Unfortunately, as the Associated Press (AP) reported in a recent survey, “Most American businesses say workers need to improve their writing ... skills.” Yet that same report cited a survey of more than 400 companies that identified writing as “the most valuable skill employees can have.” In fact, the employers polled in that AP survey indicated that 80 percent of their workforce needed to improve their writing.”

3. *Audience awareness is one of the most important elements of writing we will be talking about this semester.*

“Knowing *who* makes up your audience is one of your most important responsibilities as a writer. You can form a fairly accurate picture of your audience by asking yourself key questions before you write. For each audience you need to reach, consider the following questions (...)”

4. *Clarity, precision, and concision are three of the most important qualities of writing we will be talking about this semester.*

“Here is a list of the common tasks you will be expected to perform in the workplace that will require clear and concise writing to get them done well [8 detailed items listed]...To perform each of these essential workplace tasks, you have to be an effective writer—clear, concise, accurate, ethical, and persuasive.”

5. *Most writing on the job is not solitary: it is part of a group, a team, a network—a vital and integral part.*

“A major survey estimates that 90 percent of all businesspeople spend some time writing as part of a collaborative team. Being a team player is one of the most prized skills you can possess in the world of work(...) Successful collaboration hinges on being a team player, one of the most highly valued skills in the workplace.”

6. *It's a small world these days.*

“To be a successful employee in our highly competitive global market, you have to communicate clearly and diplomatically with a host of readers from different cultural backgrounds. As a result, don't presume that you will be writing only to native speakers of American English. You may communicate with readers in Singapore, Jamaica, and South Africa, for example, who speak varieties of English quite different from American English. You will also very likely be writing to readers for whom English is not their first (or native) language.”

7. One of the most common means of communicating on the job is... **EMAIL**

And the most important point from the web links listed on our Schedule?

TAKE NOTES!

