Interview 2 / 2 August 2002 / 15:00 / Brad
Based on research Interview 1 /16 February 2005 / 16:00

Qualification: B. Engineering Mechanical
Department: Component Engineering
Work experience: 4
MT: Afrikaans

The first question was types of writing that you do in your mother tongue.
What type of writing is sent to colleagues and friends?
Well if my colleagues are Afrikaans then I write to them in Afrikaans,
there is no sense in writing in English if it is not something that will
be used as reference. You will obviously check your circulation list or
if you speak to a specific person? If it is a question of did you follow
up. If it is formal it can be used as reference with the mainstream users
then I speak English. When I think it is necessary for everybody to
understand then I will write in English but if it is not necessary for
everybody to understand... You would actually prefer or be more comfortable
with doing the whole thing in your mother tongue Ja always I suppose
especially when you have to...(not writing as much) when I speak and I
sometimes at a bit of a lost for words then I switch over to Afrikaans
and I speak Afrikaans, but that is speaking you if have to communicate,
but if you writing you got a lot of time to think and delete and carry on
using the spell checker etc. you got a lot of time to think about what
you want to say.
1.☐What makes writing more difficult than speaking, but often you have
time to think about things and delete and perfect it more? What I meant
there is that writing is easier because you have time to think. Speaking
is often difficult in the sense that you have to come up with what you
mean immediately and you have to use the language at the same time. If it
is not your mother tongue you have to think about the language and trying
to convey the concept. While you are writing you can order your thoughts.
How important is that process? It is very important to get across what
you actually trying to say otherwise people will misunderstand and that
is not what you want to achieve. In terms of... how often will the verbal
be part of the report itself? Often in meetings you will have to report
on the work. How often does the verbal become part of the writing and the
document? Seldom. If it is you and your manager you will obviously look
at it and if it is an end user he will ask that you will elaborate.

Ja and you got time to spend on it OK.
What types of writing do you do in your second language? And you said
formal communication. Now if you try to describe what to you are formal
communication?
Well typically what I just said is when I think it is necessary for the
mainstream users of my writing to understand then typically it would be
formal it will be sometimes a component you know whatever happened
history sequence of events you know first you did this test and then
that this is the cause of action from now on. That is typically formal
writing.
2.☐Describe a formal writing style. I think I used this image before the
language is a glass behind the content. In a formal writing style you
will try not to use figure of speech or not use slang or try and not use
generic names.

And circulation has been broader than just the narrow one which is
negative colleague. Yes that will be typically to ...You can go to Brazil,
Germany or wherever. It is quite wide?
Right, what types of writing did you do at school essays and exams which
is normal interesting what you said about how you were taught to write
at school? First of all you said you learn the alphabet then you string
the words. What I want to probe there is that you said the quality of
English writing improves at continuous exercise and reading various
prescribed books and prose. Now what do you mean by continuous exercise
to improve writing.
Well language is like that – it is very much a tool and the more you use
it the more the more proficient you become with it. What did you do at
school? Well you follow the curriculum you know you do what is necessary
to pass and the rest of the time you go play. You follow the curriculum
and it usually includes essays that you must write. They try and give you
exercises and projects – Then when you wipe the sleep out of your eyes
then you're in Matric and then that's it.
You achieved it all. Did you think that poetry and prescribed books added
quality to your writing? Yes in terms of seeing how other people use the
language as a model. It gives you ideas on how other people use language
you know different styles
3.☐What do you learn about language from the writing models you observe?
I can't say that I emulated a specific writer. It all goes back to your
school days. When you saw something and you try to internalise it. It all
goes... your style lies beneath the surface. You don't think about your
style or what you want to write. If somebody is not using the pronoun you
or we and you see that in terms of style not something as detailed as
that – this person doesn't use contractions like don't or wont and
therefore I must not use it.? Oh I see what you mean. I suppose you try
and stay in the third person and there are certain rules you apply.
It depends where you come from- for example people who grew up in
Scotland using different styles than the ones in the south. You feel that
that contributed to your continuous exercise and quality of writing. Nice
answer Ok. Right. Number six was: How experienced are you in doing the
types of writing that you do in your work and you said my experience
level is better judged by the people with whom I communicate. O yes What
do you mean by that? What I mean is I can't say. You have to read my
writing and then judge for yourself. I can't say how good I am. I think I
am good if that is what the answer.
1.☐What makes you a good writer? A good writer is somebody that can
illustrate a point clearly and using less words rather than more.
Somebody that will come to the essence of an issue in one sentence. That
is a good communicator. A good writer I think that depends on what kind
of literature you are reading. Do you think that this kind of writing
channels you into that kind of script to say as concisely as possible? At
work we are experiencing a lot of pressure to be concise – you often
have to refer back to work that you forgotten about. Or the decisions
you make and you have to pick up the details. Having enough details is
important.

To Ok you said somebody else will judge the quality rather than you say
...I'm good. Ja I prefer that. What do you feel has contributed to your
writing experience in the report writing field that would make you
experienced what made you experienced as a report writing specialist?
Just the writing notes of reports. And you write quite a few? Not here as
much as at University there you have to hand in reports. You feel it is

cultural practices

easy

meetings

interaction

wording

international, distribution.

improvement

models + examples

good wrtg, clarity, audience.

report content clarity.

improvement

types + forms, response,

just the continuous thing that improves quality all the time? Ja you have
to get feedback obviously. Somebody has to say at some stage why don't
you do it this or that way. I can see you are already doing this but try
and you know do this. Then you take what they say and you apply it and
you see OK it is working and it's improving and you are enabled to
structure your thoughts better. You know so having a feedback is
absolutely essential for growth and continuous improvement. You have to
start off in a direction and then, of course, correct as you find that
you either are missing or hitting.
5.☐Describe the feedback you usually get about your writing.

[margin: response, improvement, types + forms.]

6.☐Your response to feedback is very positive. Do you always feel
positive about feedback/ Explain your answer. At the moment I get a lot
of semantics and I also think it is sometimes personal. I am new and I am
learning. So I sometimes resent the fact that I am wrong. I do get ...-
it's like exactly this issue - being able to get down all the details and
using as little words as possible. Often I write down while still
remembering a lot of things in my head. And then when I have to refer
back to what I have written a month later then I can't remember all the
connections that I made between the paper and my head. And that is what
frustrates me at this moment. My boss is very good at that. So it is not
always positive comment? It is not always just but it is mostly
beneficial. But I think ...look if you here... a person must take out of
criticism what you need to improve and that is up to you.

[margin: responses, response.]

7.☐Is it (feedback) done verbally? Yes. Mostly. Is it ever done on hard
copy or electronically? Not really. Why don't you rather use this but
that. Do this say that. Not this that. Is this by the time your draft is
with your manager? Yes I must say I have a dirty way of jotting down the
bare minimum because I have a lot of work to do. And then have my manager
do the checking but that is suppose at the back side.

[margin: types + forms, supervisor.]

And you do that with most things in your writing. It is influenced by
outside perspectives. Yes. OK interesting here what assists you in your
writing in the work place no. 7 and you said MS word thesaurus. You
would use it typically to do what? It is a difficult question what
assists you in writing? What problems are you experiencing when you are
writing? I don't know sometimes you don't have the words or the spelling
so you look in the dictionary. And I don't have a dictionary so the only
thing I have is the thesaurus you get the variations so it helps you. So
it is a wonderful assistance? Yes. It helps.

[margin: software]

You mentioned the thesaurus, people giving you feedback on your work is
there anything else that you can think of that will assist you - that is
of benefit to help you to give constructive input into your report
writing? No I can't really think of anything else, but I am open to
suggestion. The most reliable thing is feedback. Maybe broadening the
feedback or broadening the distribution you can publish something but
then nobody will give it in any case it is just the people that are
working on the specific issue that will read your publication.

[margin: models + examples, wider aud, response, types + forms,]

8.☐Describe how feedback can be broadened? I can't remember the context
that I mentioned that in. But I think I recently learned that the
publication that gets distributed and usually when you miss something
important it does come back to you not as specific feedback on what
you've written but as a result of the mistakes that you made. It comes
back as a discrepancy on what you want to achieve. It comes back just to
show that you should communicate. Consequences to your technical
communication. Do you use the wrong technical procedure to measure that
or the way you communicated it? You see I am not in the testing
environment - it is much more a case of decisions you make. You decide
you must do this no typically it was the wrong decision or the
recommendation was communicated incorrectly.

[margin: links | wider aud, models + examples, data base.]

9.☐If feedback were broadened, what type of feedback would be received?

We are going to come back to that just now Ok we had this question of
what is difficult and easy when writing. You said what is difficult is
find the appropriate word, correct tenses, singular and plural rules and
so on and my question is what is done to overcome these apparent
difficulties you mentioned the thesaurus for the appropriate word but is
there anything else that is done to assist with these superficial
difficulties? There is nothing at the moment. I mean you basically have
to make do with your own knowledge of the language. Do they crop up? O
Yes I mean, often I wondered if I am mixing my tenses or am I in the
correct tense at all. Then you just carry on. At the end of the day it
depends on whether you get the message across. The most important thing.
10.☐What improves ones knowledge of a language?

[margin: links, grammar,]

11.☐Would reports be circulated if language is faulty or the message is
not clear? Is it more important that people understand what you said in
spite of the fact that your semantics might be different? No. Well my
opinion about this has changed since we last spoke. No I think that
there is one reason why something happens. Everyone will write down that
specific reason and the words will look similar. At the end of the day
there is only one way of writing to effectively communicate. It comes to
semantics. The words will have a slightly different nuance. And you
shouldn't have used it because it is the wrong word and thinking that
people will get the message - it is assuming that you can trust them to
take it up the right way. If you can't trust people to take it up the
right way then you must use the right words and there is no leeway about
it. The reports won't be allowed to be circulated if it is wrong. The
work that we are responsible for and if there is a mistake it won't be
approved.

[margin: Matrix Co-occurrence 3[1,2], Matrix Co-occurrence 3[3,2], Matrix Co-occurrence 5[2,2],]

How did this makes you feel I mean the fact that you might not be sure of
the tenses or ... Well you feel a bit at a loss I suppose. You know it is
not your mother tongue so there is always a bit of difficulty. In terms
of your you went back saying your experience level is judged better by
someone else. Do you get feedback from those people from the outside not
only meaning but also in terms of superficial things? Well fortunately
my boss at the moment is Afrikaans I think his English is marginally
better than mine; he never bothers me about it. My previous boss was
English and he constantly comments on my use of the language. So ja you
do.
12.☐Explain why you say fortunately your boss is Afrikaans? I've got a
new boss now I learnt to work with my new boss. What I meant there was
that if you have to communicate without thinking about the language then
using your mother tongue helps. It is second nature. The chances of
getting the message across is bigger.

[margin: types + forms, cultural practices, supervisor, Matrix Co-occurrence 9[1,1], Matrix Co-]

13.☐Describe the type of feedback your present supervisor gives you. The
writing will be English and his feedback will be in English. He is very
strict about the words etc. He is much more strict than my previous
manager. He is bilingual.

[margin: words, supervisor, response,]

14.⬜What was your response to your previous supervisors comments?

Within that was there a system whereby you improved or didn't improve Ja
he will say this is a better way to put it. Were you open to that kind of
thing? Yes, of course. Sometimes I was thinking should I argue about
this, because I don't always agreed with him but then… Why would you not
agree with him? Because sometimes I think I'm right … but they grew up
in English so they will obviously have to say no, but I know how it
should be…
15.⬜What prevented you from asserting your point of view? I refered to my
previous boss. Let me just clarify. I had an English boss then an
Afrikaans manager. Albert was the first one. In that instance I was
referring to him. I am an assertive person and I will always defend the
way I do things.

16.⬜Describe why being English means they will have to say no.

And then the writing itself would it change or would it stay like you
think it should be? No, no I think you always write to an audience - you
want your audience to understand what you are saying so you will always
try and write in their language.
17.⬜Describe what your mean by writing in their language. I am
increasingly thinking of the downstream users. Because it is important to
understand what you have done a year later. You've developed that? By
living with the consequences of not doing it properly. I don't think it
was that clear and there was insufficient detail. You get the opportunity
to see in small ways how a slightly incorrect statement can have
repercussions.

What in the suggestions of your ex -English specialist would you perhaps
not agree with? What? No I think we had one thing he said that I didn't
quite agree with - I didn't think much of it. You were never in a
situation where you had to put it in your report. No. Ag usually he
changed a nuance or something nothing fundamental.
18.⬜What you describe as changing a nuance and something fundamental in
your writing?
It was extremely difficult to transcribe this interview because of noise
and interviews in the background.
It is long ago and I can't remember all of it. In the end it is just a
word that has a different meaning. It is funny how the language is
closely related to the level of detail that you look at. I used to look
very generally but now my current job forces me to look more at the
detail. It is interesting to see what effect that has on using the
language.

Easy: When you know what you want to say, concentrating on your work….
Putting down your thoughts is just a matter of typing. What type of
writing could be classed in this category? (i.e. what is an easy message
to convey?) When it is something that you been working at constantly on
over a period of time, you are hundred percent familiar with the contents
and you know what you want to say it is part of you the only thing you
have to do is to put it in words. That is typically easy.
19.What enable a writer to gain this experience?

20.All you have to do is put it in words. What makes this easy with
familiarity?

Would it be in a report? Yes I think it was a report that I was familiar
with. I think using words, maybe I am getting philosophical here but
people have different perceptions in their minds. And the perceptions
they have in their minds are not in a written format… it is there in (I
don't know) electrons going into brain cells I don't know it is a much
more it's a realization that they have and then to put this across to
people accurately is very difficult. Two people might have different
realizations about something, they would think that they feel the same
about it, because they might have experience something simultaneously at
the same time, but if they talk about it you will find that there will be
misunderstandings, because some person's perception of something might be
different to the other one. Using language is actually quite an
inefficient way of putting across what you know and I think being able to
do that, putting across you point of view is an art and you have to think
about it. Think about what the other person don't know I seen twins
communicating without speaking really that was strange. The one girl
that I knew, she could feel her sister, she could sense one another. They
did not need to use language.
21.What enables a person to write a message so that perceptions of the
message were accurate?

22.What is more efficient than a language to get a message across?

23.How are writers aware that perceptions of the message differ from
their own?

Yes that happens in families they know what the other one is going to
say before they even say one word. - But in a written form bringing that
same understanding across is quite a complex process. When it comes to
writing reports you said I gather the report information and compiles the
report. Now in your report gathering what kind of processes are involved
here?
Well first here at ….. you know when I was at desktops that's when I
did this questionnaire - typically you do a test following a certain
procedure and then there are certain points where you write down your
observations. At the end of the day it's a matter of going through and
look back at what have you done this is the observation and the outcome,
it is easy, that's the way you go though… having a systematic approach
helps you with the gathering of information because then it is already
gathered. See what I mean, at the point where you write your report the
information is already there.
24.Describe your systematic approach. Before you start off with a job -
planning it and trying to anticipate what will happen and trying to plan
for all the eventualities and elaborate on each of those and following
the steps according to how you planned. At the end of the day all that
information is contained accurately and writing the report is only a
matter of ………….. unclear.
Ok you describe your observations you described what actually happened
and you also you also go a step further; you say you do the outcomes or
the conclusions this is also part of your report writing process? Yes
that is where you headed at the end of the day if you write you have to
interpret the results in some way and make or draw a conclusion out of
that. And you do that? Yes, you have to add value to that as an engineer
you have to say my engineering experience suggests that you go this way
or that way because of this reason. It is a full analysis the

supervisor, response,

cultural practices

response, supervisor

audience, clarity,

audience, Matrix Co-occurrence 7[6,1], clarity, distribution, report content,

response, types + forms, cultural practices,

report content

easy

easy

writing process

audience, distribution, institution, audience,

conclusions and the recommendations are part of the whole process. Yes.
OK you said the other documents are a two-way user /originator situation.
What processes are involved in this writing situation? What is the
question again? No. 9 Describe your role/function when it comes to the
writing of reports and or documents. Two-way what would that be? I
communicating by email or writing. I think I was thinking of one of the
systems we have where somebody originates a document to keep track of a
job, it needs to progress. There is an originator and there are people
that have to perform certain functions. There are certain users that
gather the information... you usually fit into one of those. You maybe are
the originator or sometimes compile the test or the report. . I think the
users are normally the ones who are interested in the outcome of what you
have done. The most important person the one who ask for it in the first
place you will send it to him. The other people will see it there.
25.Are all these audiences considered when writing the report? Explain
your answer.

What writing steps do you usually follow when writing a report/document?
You said I think a lot about what I want to say... then put it down in
draft form. What do you think about? I think about what I want to achieve
and then I achieve it. I tend to spend a lot of time on it. I tend to
make a meal of things it depends on how many times I have done it
before. If it is something I've done before... it is different from the way
I would do something for the first time. Drafting will certainly helps
to make sure I have all the information. Describe the review process.
You said I put it down as a draft and then I review it to check for
accuracy and correctness. If time is limited, the user does it for me.
26.How often does this happen? I suppose that does happen. Frequency well
.... There will always be a discussion. That happened a while ago. We had
to do a presentation on all the changes on module 7 and all the changes
were submitted in a pack. When I opened my presentation I found that
quite a bit of content was changed. You don't have the opportunity to
explain you must use what is on the board. I don't know who changed
that. That was frustrating.

27.What would normally be checked and changed?
Do you normally find time for the review process? I would like to do
that. Deadlines not so much. It is sent out and I will try and qualify
it. Get it off my table. Would you say that rushing is often a part of
the writing process in engineering capacity? Ja you have to work fast and
try to get it out and right the first time. You normally don't have a lot
of time for it. Usually the contents are the most important thing.
Especially in the multicultural environment like this, how you get the
message across isn't as important as the message, you know making sure
that the engineering quantities are correct and that the integrity of the
information that you have to pass is intact. Then you're ...Ok that is
the core. The main knowledge has to be correct.
28.Describe why getting message across being more important than how you
get the message across. Detailed.

29.What ensures the integrity of a report? Making sure that the results
of the documentation is always the same. And the result is based on the
purity of the information. If the steps are not clear or correct you will
not have the desired result. There is various levels of checking
involved. In the end of the day you have to understand what the EPL looks
like and the change you want to achieve. Making changes must be accurate.
There are various people that use the reports. If your signature is there
you are responsible.

30.Is the importance of the main message being correct shared by all in
the distribution listing?

What in your writing do you usually revise or edit (change)? You said
detail changes. I struggle with that. I don't know - typically dates. I
get that a lot. Typically dates. Something academic. In the motor
industry small details are important right down to the date because
information comes in small packages in the first place so you have to
really look at the detail and make sure the details are right. Everything
has to be right. Otherwise if you want to put it together it in a picture
it might not make a lot of sense. That is the whole thing sometimes when
you miss some detail you might affect the integrity because you think it
is inconsequential but at the end of the day it is actually quite
important. It often happened.
31.The integrity of the reports is often affected. What specifically
affects the integrity of reports most often?
What things do you usually do to revise or edit your writing? You said
someone else reads it and adds suggestions. Who would specifically read
your work? It will be the user. The user often is your manager and he
will read it over. What is usually suggested to you in your writing? They
will just... if it is something silly they will give me a slap behind the
head and ask why do you have two of the same there and the next thing... I
will say sorry and quickly change it. It is normally detailed. Usually
you have to write down a lot of copy and lines and think Ok how can I
also make this work. At the end of the day when you are finished you will
know if you left out something. I sometimes feel stupid. You want to be
accurate and you don't have a lot of time to go over things.
32.What is something silly? Ja obviously you resent the fact that you are
wrong about something. You feel silly making the mistake and you know
that you could have done better. You do something and then you manager
comments about the quality of the writing and not of the actual content.
I referred to that. The way you presented the content might be slightly
incorrect and you feel silly. You can see it straight away and you could
avoid it if you thought about it more.

33.What enables you to know that you have left something out?
34.Why do you feel stupid?

What usually classifies a report as final or complete for circulation?
What will normally result in your boss's approval for a document? All
correct information no mistakes everything should be correct. They will
rarely do changes. I will do all the changes.
35.Do you always do all the changes? You are always 100 percent
responsible for the work that you do. What you meant there is to what
extend the manager do the revisions. There will be a discussion.

Who and what determine an acceptable report in your department. Direct
supervisor and end user. Anyone else? No.
What achieves clear and meaningful results in a report? You said correct
information. What influence would your direct supervisor have on a final
report? Once they passed it is fine and it is published. They might come
back but it never happened to me.
What connection is there between writing at school and/or tertiary
institutions and writing in the workplace? You said getting the message

across. What results in a message getting across in the workplace? Well
having your information structured well, having compiled it in an
appropriate manner, maybe using a multi-media tool to show a picture - a
visual aid. What could affect getting the message across? I think
sometimes when you leave out crucial detail. Sometimes something is so
much part of you you understand it so well but you don't put it on paper
 it is so obvious to you, you understand it so well and it is the premise
from which you argue. You make assumptions that the people you
communicating to have this knowledge and then you might not give them all
the details and then they read it and they don't understand it. Would you
go back and insert the description that has been left out? If I get the
opportunity yes.
36.When do you know if something in your report has not been understood?
It can happen anywhere. Usually it happens just before everybody approves
what you communicate.
37.When are you given the opportunity to change your report?
38.Would this be an important thing to do?

OK what causes you to describe your boss as a pedantic pain the neck?
Where did I say that? I could see the point sometimes some people
complain about their writing, their arguments. I don't think pedantic is
the correct work rigid is the correct word. I am not talking about
anybody specific it was just an example please.
39.Explain why your boss is described as being rigid rather than pedantic?

What was positive about your tertiary writing experience? Well you get
shown how to organize your thoughts, sometimes writing according to a
specific standard. That is followed by everybody in a specific
environment and that is helpful. So you can see it in context. Where did
you study? First I did my Diploma at the .... and my degree at . Did
you finish off your Diploma? Yes.
What would identify as barriers you experience in the writing process?
You mentioned time constraints, incomplete information. What would you
describe as incomplete information? If you have to make out a picture
and there is missing parts and you don't have the whole history. Where
would that come from? Sometimes you have to take something over from
somebody, interface between you and the other person and when there is
not proper communication.
10.What could promote more effective communication between managers and
engineers in terms of writing?
Well I think a possible way of reducing the amount of communication that
need to happen between you is to have help procedures available to help
step by step. To show you if you have not done it before how you go from
point A to B. And if there is no way to help yourself. You are busy and
he is busy and there is a lot of frustration and the quality of
communication suffers.
You have develop insight and it would be good if you could document it as
a procedure? That is something I often think about. I saw a comic about
these cave men hunting an elephant. The elephant is covered in arrows.
They are running and causing havoc and not achieving anything. In the
next block there is a mammoth lying there with one single arrow and the
cave men look at each other and said we should have write that spot down.
I think my managers have realised that this is a problem and they are
encouraging us to leave a trail. It is one of the things that I find the
most frustrating. I had three people around me and If you asked them to
help they don't. I don't know if they enjoyed it to see me struggle but I
can't throw it back at them.

How is your typing? Well I don't type fast but I don't get frustrated I
never have to type a lot. I don't really like typing but there is another
barrier. Sometimes the software you use is difficult especially if
someone else drew it up with his limited knowledge and it is in a certain
format and you have to use it in a different format. Like using Windows
3.1 and now you are sitting with Windows 2000. The guy did his best for a
year and now you have to put it in this book and you are stressed about a
little line going around the thing, but you can't do it, it will cause it
to be deurmekaar on the other side. Any other barriers? No not really.
What would you define as good writing? I liked your comparison of writing
and glass. You said the clearer the glass the less your attention gets
distracted by the glass. Ja the University gave out a little manual on
formal writing. It said good language use doesn't draw attention to the
language it helps you focus on the content. There are always these two
things. The language and the content. The language always comes in front
of the content and then sometimes if the language is bad you focus on the
language and you don't get to the content. Often people argue about the
language instead of the content.
1.What is your response to the language / content argument?

How does bad language affect the clarity of the glass? You said if you
concentrate on the language you don't actually get the character of the
message across.
Ok what would you define as poor writing? You said tenses, inaccurate
words, spelling mistakes, bad sentence construction, and poor message
structure. What causes this? I think bad education. Bad schooling to a
large extent. I think it is a very personal thing, it depends on your
aptitude.
2.What about schooling and aptitude affects writing? Yes. Shakespeare
was a good writer because he had talent. I am not a good writer because I
don't have the talent. You do have a good vocabulary.

Does poor writing exist in the field of engineering? Ja you do get bad
writing for instance you got this huge workshop manual that is written in
Portuguese because it comes from there but then they put it through the
internet translations services and they don't check the content of it
afterwards because they can't. They don't want to spend money on it or
get a professional and then they print it on and pass it on and we must
check the integrity. But at this point it is so jumbled, and the language
is so bad you can't even get to the content. I recently had it as a
matter of fact. ... Brazil is Portuguese. It is possible to overcome
this but they don't want to spent money. You then just lose interest
because you can't spend time on nonsense like that. What about ...
itself? I think the South Africans generally are quite OK with English
and because it is one of the official languages. And that brings us back
to what we spoke about right in the beginning. If it is official and
formal you make sure that it is correct, but if the bulk of information
goes through an Internet automatic spell checker I just said no I am not
going to spend time on something like that. At the end of the day you
must look at the content you can't check a huge manual's language if it
is not done properly from the start.

Thanks so much for all your comments and responses Brad. They were very
interesting. Looking forward to your responses to this too!

pictures + graphs, influence,

Matrix Co-occurrence 7[4,1], Matrix Co-occurrence 7[1,1], report content

route, determinants,

responses, types + forms, types, supervisor, response,

influence

barriers, report changes, data base,

supervisor, responses, interaction deadlines, types,

responses, cultural practices, institution, interaction, assistance,

barriers, software, types,

clarity, assistance, influence, good wrtg,

poor wtg

influence

poor wtg, international,

distribution, software, institution, response,

APPENDIX J

Interview 2 / 23 August 2005 / 14:00 / Clive
Based on research interview 5 / 22 February 2005 / 12:00

Qualification: ND Mechanical Engineering
Department: vehicle engineering
Work experience: 4 years
MT: English

Before we start on the actual questions I want to ask Did you read the transcript? It was a while ago I can't remember much. Were you happy with the content? Yes.

Ok Jessel let's just look at where you come from ... Yes. And you came straight to GM contact ... and it's your first place where you did the GIT programme? No I did not do GIT I am a ... garage technician and worked myself up to where I am now. That is quite something. Is this the normal route that you took? I am not sure I worked around quite a lot within product engineering. I started off as a garage technician, then a design check engineer, then a reliability engineer then I was in the engine testing section and now I am a senior engineer in power training as well is on the engine desk facility.
Have you ever gone back to continue to BTech level. I thought BTech but I don't think it is my ... in terms of... maybe the... I don't think BTech will benefit me really that is my personal feeling. And then join the MBA programme. Yes. Will you have to get BTech first? Not necessarily but your years of experience counts otherwise you will have to do bridging courses.
Did you go to school here? Yes. Not trying to get out of this area? Yes I spent three years in Cape Town that was from standard 4 to 7 and came back to do 8, 9 and 10 in PE.
Where did you go to school? ... Senior Secondary.
Your mother tongue is English. Yes.
We were trying to work out the number of English first language speakers in this section. The English guys are yourself and Gus. The majority is not English first language. Yes there are a couple of guys I think come from an English background. In my new section my colleagues next to me is Afrikaans. One of the trainees is also Afrikaans. There are three other guys in my new section that are English. One of the other guys does speak Afrikaans but his English is also very good.

What types of writing have you done/do in your mother tongue? All my reports, projects, emails, letters etc are all in English.

What types of writing do you do in your second language? Not a lot. Like I said I sometimes speak Afrikaans but hardly write in Afrikaans. If I received an email that is in Afrikaans I might reply in Afrikaans. I am quite comfortable with Afrikaans. When I stayed with my dad and step mom we speak more Afrikaans. My stepbrothers and sisters are Afrikaans. I spoke to my father in English.

Describe the writing instruction you received at school. (How you were taught to write?) You said it was structured. Your teachers taught a style of writing. It is difficult to say Essays - once I get going it was ok. It was fine I just get in with it and it came quite easily. Yes if I think back. The instruction was a set format. Your intro, body for essays, letters and heading etc. I tried to stick with it. What about rough copies? Not writing essays at school but more so in work where I draft reports. It will go through to my manager and when he wants to change something I will do it.
1. □Describe a draft report i.e. is it typed / complete? No it is printed out and then I read it. It is easier to read when it is printed out to see the mistakes. At that point will you then take it to your manager in draft format? Yes. Is it largely complete? Yes it is basically complete I would not date it if it were not complete. All the information is in there and it is basically a second set of eyes that is running across the report. Will that be your manager? Yes it will be somebody that is higher than you.
]
2. □What will your manager usually change in your draft report? You said if anything needs to change I would do it. What normally needs to change? Maybe content, not body of the content but maybe the data, just slightly. There maybe a slight error on one of the readings for example if there is I will go and double-check it. Once the report is distributed there could be questions ask around a specific measurement or .. So that is the only thing that gets change. It depends on who is doing the report. With Rob obviously he is very finicky and I will maybe say something that is different from the way he will say it. With Dave it is not really so much on the way you say something it is more on the content. In terms of your two managers are you more aware of doing things differently or is it the same? It is the same. I try to present it as accurate as possible. But you can't stall for the sake of getting things 100% - and the next person might not judge it if they are only interested in the results. The main thing they read is the objective, results and conclusion to see whether the objective has been met. If there are recommendations they will obviously look at that. But I've looked at other reports and the body and content is not as well populated as my reports. If your manager makes a comment how do you feel about that? I don't have a problem with that. If he marks and it should be fine it once will make changes but if he marks the same thing three or four times I will feel insulted and wonder if he can't make up his mind. But it had not come to that.

.□It is different from the school process. We are following a ... corporate procedure so we do have a set system. You start with the title, objective, background information, your conclusions and your recommendations. I like it with sub-headings.
.□Which of the above would you describe as difficult and easy to do when writing a report? The test reports which we do is pretty much set formats it is a set GM standard format. Doing the report objective is basically settled before you do the test so that is easy. The body of the report is maybe converting what you collected in terms of the data and translating that into something that is readable and understandable by the other person or the requestor and to others on distribution. So based on that there is a bit of work involved in converting that and making what you measured readable, highlighting the essential stuff and not adding in all the junk. And then obviously your conclusion will be based on your results if you met the objective yes whether or not the objective has been met in terms of meeting the performance requirements. If not, you will explain that and if while you are doing the test you encounter certain things that you can listed as recommendations to explore- those things should be bare in mind while performing the test.

the recommendations are not mandatory but it is purely based on your experience. Obviously it is necessary to make sure that you are testing the right thing. You said you like it with sub headings - why? It is more structured. It is on the template and we try to stick to the format. you are a test engineer? My role has slightly changed now - I am now a senior component engineer. I am still supervising the testing I just have more responsibility. Do you oversee the documentation? Yes. What does that mean? Well I had to ensure that the working structures and procedures are in place for the whole test facility and all the work that comes through the test facility will come through me and I will allocate the work accordingly. At the end of the day if there are reports required I will follow up. I have a trainee and I am training him in report writing. If there are hassles while they are doing the tests - because I am not there personally as I would want to be because of my other responsibilities, but I will try and highlight what he should look out for. Not just take things for granted. I have two technicians. All three of them meet on a daily basis and I make it clear to them that before they release any information they must run it past me. They are technicians and the trainee is studying mechanical engineering.

Do you submit a hard copy? Yes I put it in a specific folder that he will have to approve and send an email to tell him that there is a hard copy on his desk. If he is happy with it he will issue it to everybody on the distribution list. That is part of the process.
5.☐Is he usually happy with your report? Explain your answer.

What type/s of writing do you usually do in the workplace?
Test Reports. It originates from what we call a test and development request. Any test or work would come through the TVR. It is an access based document. It automatically generates a number. Each test request has a unique number. That number will be captured in the test report. So you can look at it at a later stage. We got component and vehicle engineering. Component engineering at times I am involved. They will spell out what is wanted. You will capture a template in the report and if you use equipment you will be logging it. That log data will be recorded in your report. So the format could change from a one page to a 20-page report. When I do my engine durability reports where the engine runs for 450 hours - between 0 and 450 hours we usually do performance testing every hundred hours the data are in there. Your oil analysis every hundred hours are also in there. The body of the report becomes all. The conclusions of the report will be based on the results and if it meets the objective. If it meets the objectives and you can recommend something or advise I do it then. The test engineer does that. You will still oversee the documentation. Yes the recommendations and conclusions must be relevant. The changes are minor.
6.☐To what changes are you referring?

How experienced are you in doing the types of writing described above? (Explain your answer) You said you improved. On what do you based that? If I look back at the reports that I have written in the past there could have been more changes. Our report writing structure was slightly different at .... It was not bad but it could be better. Those are the things that you pick up. As you become more involved the corrections become less and less.
7.☐What changes could you have made to your report? With the ... system there was a company general template and your body of the report will be listed on that form. Your explanations and findings will be on the form and any accompanied information whether you did it in Excel or Access you could then group it in one report. With the ... system you are using Word as the basis. You need to copy images and grafts into Word document. So it was a bit difficult in the beginning. Which way do you prefer? It is obviously easier to doing it the other way and you don't have to copy everything into Word. It is a little bit more work.

8.☐Which report writing practice would you rate as better (... or ...) and why? You've answered that one.

Which report writing courses did you do? Off hand I attended a junior development manager programme and part of it was communication skills like report writing. If I look back I definitely improved. If I got all the relevant information and there is no corrections and if all the relevant information are in there I will rate it as a good report. If there are no comebacks then it is good.
9.☐How important is it to you whether a report comes back or not. Explain your answer. Not really, but it is an indication of maybe how far you are in terms of with meeting the objective which was requested in the first place. One of the other engineers asked to do a test. During the test you might be unclear on something and you will discuss it with him. Compiling the report you will incorporate all that so that when he reads the report he don't have to ask questions. So you are trying to keep it with not too much data and graphs. It can be complicated if the explanations, data and graphs are not tying up with each other. Most of the reports don't come back. It will be only 10% of reports that come back.

What assists you in your writing in the workplace? You said looking at your previous reports. How often will you look at your previous reports? It depends sometimes the situations arises where you know that you did something similar in the past and I will then go back and look at that specific report and look at the conclusions. Just to get a bit more info. What would you correct or change in your reports of the past? It is difficult to say. I personally think one can only get better you have to communicate and deal with people and you know you have to raise that bar yourself to the next level. What has raised it for you? I would say the use of terminology. I would try and identify specific things. But when the report is issued you can't physically change it.
10.☐ Are reports never changed once issued? Explain your answer. No once it is issued it is issued. There is a system that is in place when it is issued it is locked. If something is wrong you can discuss it with the person who locked the report - you can ask him to unlock it. You can submit a new report and make recommendations on the one that is wrong.

What do you feel is difficult and easy when writing? You said when you try to convey a certain message and put it into words for everybody to understand. What is difficult? That is difficult. Coming from a technical background I can use technical terminology and somebody that comes from a different department like accounting won't be able to understand. Or speak to someone in terms of engineering they will not understand. It is difficult to say but at times maybe certain engineers or procurement people might be focused on one specific area, maybe electrical might not understand mechanical. I am only in component engineering and it is still new to me. At times certain things are not cleared, speaking personally and also generally. When people come back to
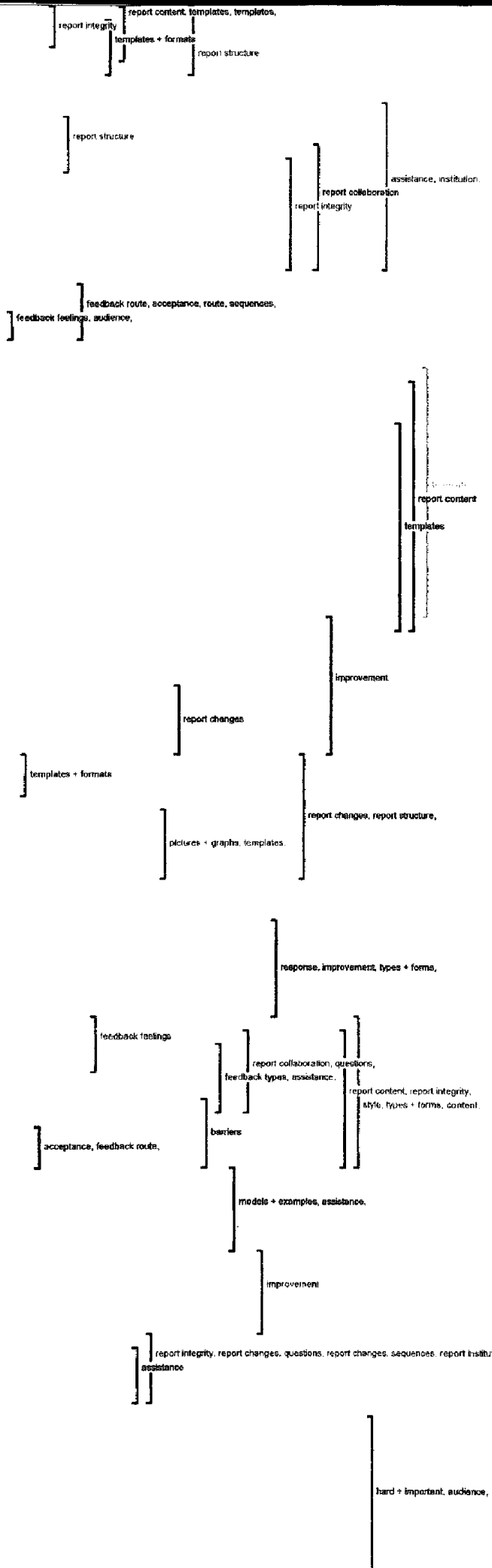
ne - I am not a person who will judge people if they don't understand.
Like myself in my new job if there is something that I don't know I will
ask. The systems are different. You work with different operations and
you might have an idea on what to do but whether or not the process is
correct it needs to be clarified
1.☐Describe how people may be judged if they don't understand? If you
become repetitive or if you receive a report that is every time incorrect
and the contents are incorrect there is people that will say this is not
giving what we want. I am not critical as long as the information is
there which I required.there will be a time…, maybe supply more
information than too little. If you give all the important information it
might be more than he requested but it is in there. I tell the guys…
there is not communication between the requestor and tester for example.
And the guys then …he just request a report and expect the job to be
done…….and expects a report at the end of the day and he does not get
involved. And to me that is wrong. You must discuss it with someone. With
ne - supervising the test facility - I have guys coming to me everyday
and ask can we can do this test. I tell them if the facility is capable
to do the test and if more additional information is required, etc etc.

2.☐ Explain what is meant by at times certain things are not cleared,
speaking personally and also generally?
I think I was just speaking in general in terms of me submitting a
technical report and maybe one of the marketing guys was on distribution.
He might not understand the technical aspects we discussed in the report.
So it is based on how you can make a report very technical or you can
just use simple English and be clear concise and to the point. Say
whether or not you met the objective. Some guys might give a 500-word
paragraph on why they did not meet the objective. Do you know who the
distribution list is when you compile the reports? It will differ
depending on the requestor. Again if you try and keep a report very
technical whether or not …..we will try to keep it in a forum where
everybody can understand it.

3.☐What is easy? Obviously when you use models. Yes. Is it easy to
access reports? Yes I normally keep my drafts so it is easy to go back.
We do have several data basis and the reports are archived. So you can go
back and see what was based on the same platform.
Describe your role/function (what you have to do) when it comes to the
writing of reports and/or documents. In terms of my own reports it
depends on the test and development request. Like myself in the engine
testing…most of the engine testing is performance related, some is
durability related and others will be exhaust testing. Obviously, it is
specific you set up your test according to the request and if you can't
meet anything in the request I will go back to the engineer and advise
him that it can't be done. We try and create the right report so that
things are transparent. Not necessarily the report only, but when GM took
over we had to get our procedures in line so that it clear and concise
and it should be understandable to anyone who will come in and read it.
4.☐What makes reports clear, concise and understandable? The content and
not being too technical and not adding junk.
In reviewing do you look at different documents? We did not necessarily
look at them but we discuss the documents. It is basically my
responsibility. I am responsible for drafting it or issuing it and it is
also emphasized that it should be understandable - the guy in the street
should be able to understand it and not too technical. Obviously they
won't understand all of it but it must not be too technical.
Your role and function … recommendations ok …your report by email? Is
that subsequent to the report coming out? Yes, say if you are doing
testing or if you see something that doesn't look normal then by word of
mouth or by email or if there is something that will jeopardize the
programme or if it might cause problems you will raise the alarm bells.
5.☐Describe what is done by word of mouth or by email if something
doesn't look normal. To me it doesn't matter as long as you get the
information out. I think the email is better because you have a
reference. How do you make comments? It is send out in minutes, if it
is one person I will give him a ring if he doesn't have email.

or as the situation is with …now with do we continue or not depending on
what the situation is or the severity of the problem the decision will be
make at that level.
Do you find that styles changed and do you express yourself differently
from what you put in your report? No we try to stick the procedure and
guidelines and in doing so we avoid a situation your format and
templates are the same.
What in your writing do you usually revise or edit (change)? You said my
use of tense and trying to be more concise. So that is in terms of
tense? Yes in certain instances. You are writing at the present but you
are thinking in the past. But when I reread it I will fix it. And to be
more concise? Yes that is to say for instance if you want to say that the
bread is buttered. You wont have to say that the bread was buttered by so
and so. I became more aware of that at doing revision and rereading past
reports. When I look back at previous reports you get better because we
go to a lot of meetings and you hear a lot of people speaking and
sometimes they don't get to the point. They go round and round in circles
without getting to the point. It is better to stay to the point and keep
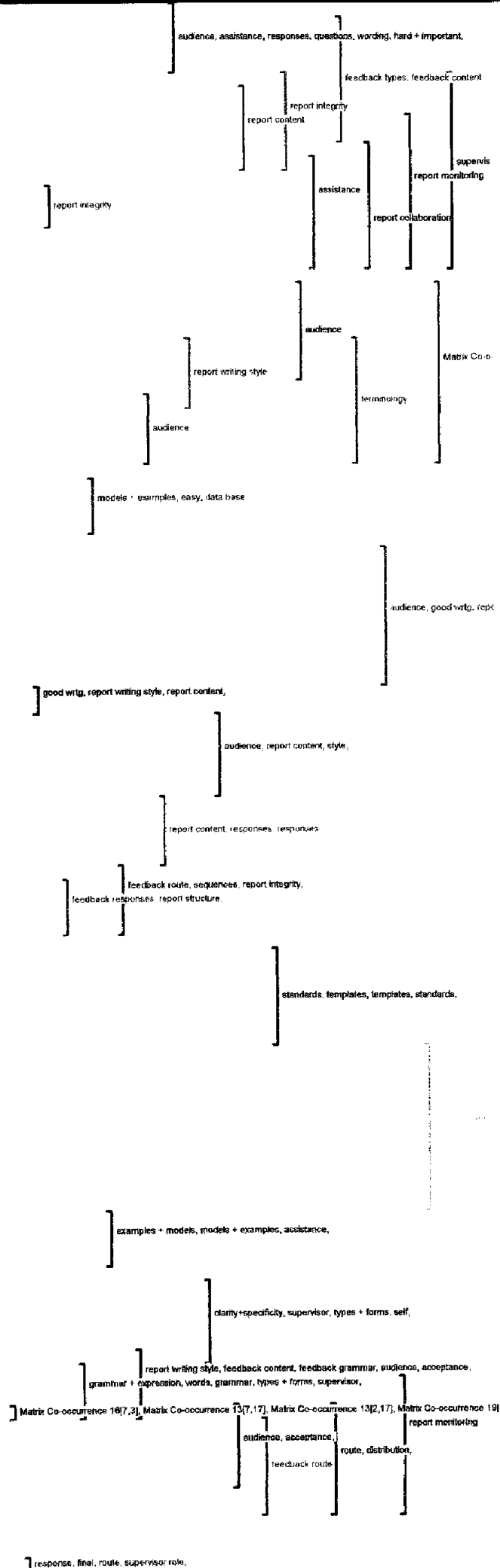things concise and clear. So my writing also became more to the point.
6.☐How do previous reports benefit the writing of reports? You will use
it as a basis. Most of my tests are similar in terms of the structure of
the report so I will pull out one, which was recent. I keep a copy of
each for myself. I think it is a pattern which most use.

What things do you usually do to revise or edit your writing? Revise
minor changes. Can you give me an example of the minor changes? Those
changes will be the things that are not concise and clear and I will take
the irrelevant things out. When suggestions are made Albert will mark it
in the report. And I will note those things. I will keep it in mind when
I do the final changes.
7.☐What suggestions would Albert usually mark on your report? That is
more about in terms of tenses or something. It is simple things. At the
end of the day the report might leave South Africa or to suppliers it is
confidential but it needs to be good with no negatives. All the names
will be on the report Routing is a bit difficult? Yes there are more
changes. I used to route to Albert, and he will give it to X who will be
on copy and then to the various departments. Now I've got the trainee
that's compiling the report, I will approve it - I am reviewing it
basically and then my new boss is approving it and distributing it. What
is the route back? If it concerns everyone it will go to everyone
otherwise it might come back to me.

8.☐What changes would usually improve clarity and conciseness?

What usually classifies a report as final or complete for circulation?

audience, assistance, responses, questions, wording, hard + important,

feedback types, feedback content

report integrity

report content

report integrity

assistance

supervis
report monitoring

report collaboration

audience

Matrix Co-o-

report writing style

terminology

audience

models · examples, easy, data base

audience, good wrtg. repc

good wrtg, report writing style, report content,

audience, report content, style,

report content, responses, responses

feedback route, sequences, report integrity,
feedback responses, report structure,

standards, templates, templates, standards,

examples + models, models + examples, assistance,

clarity + specificity, supervisor, types + forms, self,

report writing style, feedback content, feedback grammar, audience, acceptance,
grammar + expression, words, grammar, types + forms, supervisor,

Matrix Co-occurrence 16[7,3], Matrix Co-occurrence 13[7,17], Matrix Co-occurrence 13[2,17], Matrix Co-occurrence 19[
report monitoring

audience, acceptance,

route, distribution,

feedback route

response, final, route, supervisor role,

you said my immediate supervisor and if he is satisfied he will release the report. Nobody else will go through it? Yes Albert does that but I am currently split between sections. It will go to X my previous director. The test facility still remains under vehicle engineering but I am in component engineering now. There are a couple of organizational changes with me moving up there with Albert. Routing is a bit difficult. But my manager is also coming upstairs to component engineering. We will still discuss how the test reports will look. At the end of the day it will be my superior that will have the final say and approve it. It is all based on how I compiled the report and performed the test. If there is any thing in the results that is a bit sceptical, he will maybe discuss it with you and make recommendations.

19. Describe the type of discussion you would usually have with your manager if the results were sceptical. It is marked on paper and we will discuss it. If it is small changes we will not discuss it.

20. What recommendations would your manager usually make?

What connection is there (if any) between writing at school and/or tertiary institutions and writing in the workplace? You said not too different. Yes in terms of my academic stuff what I found is that each organization works differently. Each one has its own structure. But in general engineering is broad and to say that you study in a specific area is a bit difficult... In terms of report writing at the Technikon you obviously do projects and assignments. You can't classify it as the same. You have to do research for projects but here with testing and based on the testing you will draft your report and at Technikon on projects it is based on research and information. What would you say gave you the most expert knowledge in terms of writing here in the workplace or at Technikon? I would say in the workplace. But someone else might differ. For me the most experience came in the workplace. Because you've adapted to the procedures, the systems and everything. Technikon is short and you have different subjects all the time. The time you spent on a subject is not as long as what you will do in the workplace. If you could put yourself in a time line to write a complete test report how long will it take from start to finish? Generally it could reign from a short test which will be 45 minutes to anywhere up to four or five hours. You would not spend more than a day to write a report? If you are busy with other stuff it might take more than a day. It depends on the inputs. Again it depends on the testing. If you submitting an interim report it will obviously not be complete. If you are submitting it as a final report it will be complete? In that time period? Interim reports normally happen when you have huge programmes within the organization. You expect it to be finished in three months time but if nothing happens in those three months, everybody needs to know about it. You draft the interim report on the basis that X, Y and Z still have to have three months.
That would you identify as barriers you experience in the writing process? You got here expectations, what they would like to hear choosing the appropriate content as potential barriers. Ja I think it is again - it's got to be factual. Expectations I think are again like you said earlier on the different intellectual levels. You don't want to put a lot of information in the report that nobody is going to read. You are wasting your time and his time. Say for example a 20-page document could have been a 10-page document. So you try and consider all those aspects. You look at the distribution, which the report is going to and you look if the information is going to benefit the person. So would it be the different levels that will be a possible barrier? Yes. You put here choosing the appropriate content? Is that to meet what is relevant to A and B. Ja also in terms of like appropriate content will again be based on the initial request. In the request he might not have stipulated the procedure x, y or something else. You might put it in. Will you put it in automatically? Not necessarily I would normally discussed it with the requester. If he is happy I will put it in. Would you always discuss it with the requester? Most of the time yes. I don't want to submit a report and it don't have the information that is needed
Good writing you said simple facts and when it is not boring. What would you define as boring writing? It is all the irrelevant information. It is when you report writing skills are not … or you write things that are not needed. The facts are important. Bad writing you said is bad language and spelling and bad writing. You come across this? Sometimes in emails and when people are not specific. Especially with vehicles and stuff we work with. You … unclear. You just specify the …we have … when you have to go back and get details. When it is not clear upfront. If you think about released reports would there be some that are classed as not good in terms of structure and language? I don't think so most of them have been clear and reviewed. Just in general you find emails that are not clear but it is informal – sometimes it will be information. It also depends on the person reading it and what your expectations are and if you are a critical person then you can be critical and want to change the tenses and spelling. But the information is there. It doesn't come back as a comment for me. I cant speak for others sometimes you see and hear it specially when a person is Afrikaans he maybe battles with English, it may sound funny but the information he gives is excellent.
21. What are the usual responses to reports, which give correct information, but the expression is problematic? That is difficult It might be small things or maybe how the information has been translated. Generally it is understandable. It is very rarely that you can't make out that a person means.

22. Describe the characteristics of a critical person. It is difficult to say you will always have critics but I think in general everyone is not bad.

You find that people are critical of language? In general I think so. I think the higher you go within the organization the expectations are obviously raising. We do communicate with our counterparts overseas and you want to be clear, accurate and concise when you send information over to them. Sometimes I would think people get the impression when the language is bad or so they will think what are we dealing with back in South Africa whatever the case might be. Are you aware of language? I tried to be – it is something that I worked hard on. I am no rocket scientist what I know and the way I approach it now is always based on that I learned in the past. In terms of writing how would you rate yourself? Writing in general… I don't know. I think I submit good reports. In terms of relating to my work my reports are good. Most of the information is in there - all the requirements are met. I try and be specific. And you rate yourself comparing to what others has done? I would not go and say that someone has made mistakes but I will think that I approach something better. It is little details. Like I said if the reports are submitted and it doesn't come back I am happy. Especially the big reports it is easy to make mistakes in the bigger reports. Everyone's expectations are different. Even in email communications I am trying to be precise.

23.0 Describe precise writing.

And even Albert, at a time - there was times when he will comment and say
this is a good email that was send to the suppliers and the information
is good. Are those comments good? Yes it keeps you on your toes and if
you select those emails and can compare and use that as a benchmark for
your baseline it is good.
 Any other comment/s about writing? Not from my side.

types + forms, improvement.

Thanks so much for all this effort

Thanks so much for all your comments and explanations.

They are all appreciated.

Regards

Interview 2 / 2 August 2002 / 16:00 / Face
Based on research Interview 1 (no. 5) / 23 February 2005 / 14:15
Transcript response 4 July 2005

. □Qualification: NDip Mechanical engineering /S4 /
. □Department: product engineering
. □Work experience:12 years
. □MT: Afrikaans

Your qualifications? What is S4?
That is the National Higher Diploma part of product engineering.
Your mother tongue is Afrikaans? Yes.
You said interestingly enough you never write in Afrikaans. No my report
writing was mostly in English. That was with courses at the Technikon and
in the workplace everything is in English. Everything, meetings etc.
What types of writing do you do in your second language?
You said report writing and work documents updating. I wasn't too sure
what you mean. It is basically… we've got systems where we track, like
concerns, vehicle improvements and things like that. It also a type of
reporting but it is not in a report form it is more in word-based format
that is basically what I referred to. It is to change things and improve
things on the vehicles. We do a lot of testing, especially in this
section. For   testing the local content and improving the products and
testing the source plant components to see if it fits nicely in our
environment. So yes there is a lot of testing and documentation will
follow.
You said at writing you did basic report writing, memos, essays and
different letter styles. Yes that was during my language skills. That is
not secondary? Yes that was at tertiary level. You were at Technician?
Yes I was at the ....Technikon for three years and then I came down to PE
where I completed S4.
You said your instruction at school was where you learned the format of
writing, layout and you said the focus was away from language skills.
What do you mean by that? Basically it was more to do with documents, how
do you restructure the document – it was more like teaching the document
and I assume the norm is to teach English. They are basically teaching
English-speaking people. Because it is an international language.
Ja I think they say Mandarin and Chinese is spoken by the most people as
their first language and English second language is used by 800 million
people. Yes, my first year was the most difficult all my textbooks were
English. The lecturers and colleagues were all English. Me coming from an
Afrikaans school. There was a lot of self finding and struggling at
first. My strong point in my field is mathematics but I failed it because
of the language. In my second year it was a new lecturer, a more hands on
person and I coped far better. Now I just write in English.
You just basically do in the workplace reports and word documents. Yes
and all the Microsoft packages. Like PowerPoint, Excel of course. Yes it
is part of my job description. It is in different phases not necessarily
in a reports but it is part of my job description. Do you programme or
set up structures in terms of the different packages? Basically I
complete my portion of it, in a project document, some of them I create
and some are already created.
How experienced are you in this kind of writing? Yes I work with it
daily. Running my daily job, running meetings. I am involved with testing
running the testing vehicles coming in and supervisor of the drivers yes
with all that concerns I work with it basically daily and I will rate
myself close to ten in terms of experience.
What is your manager's role in your success and expertise? He is an
English-speaking person and he is brilliant with English. He left
unfortunately. I have a new manager, and it is too early to tell. But I
must admit the previous guy was more clued up especially with the
nitty-gritty stuff. And he could pick up word and sentence structuring
which the normal engineers don't pick up. From his comments I was more
successful. He normally commented where I could add or change things or
make improvements. It was not the spelling it was more on how to converse
with non-technical people.
1.□Describe the role of your new manager if you consider the role of your
English manager and your report writing?
My new manager is more a computer literate person and not as technical as
the previous manager. He is also English based and will see it from an
outsider viewpoint. How does the change of managers affect your writing
style? It is basically the previous guy was more thorough he went
in-depth. He went to the extreme and overboard a bit. My current boss is
more computer literate. The difference? Not in report writing. We have
· standard templates but yes in the other stuff he is more computer
literate. He makes it a lot easier.

2.□What would you describe as nitty-gritty stuff?
This is better wording or more in "lay man's terms"

3.□What was your response when your manager picked up word and sentence
structuring in your writing?
I never saw it as criticism because English will always be my second
language. This will only guide me the next time I want to express myself.

4.□What type of comments would he make on your reports?
Swapping words or restructuring my sentence or deleted the sentence and
replace with his own. What is your response to that? I am an easygoing
person so it totally depends on the personality. We also print the hard
copy and he will make the marks on the hard copy. It was more editing
changes. What makes you think that you must add extra information? He
asks for it and I will add more information. It was more background
information. If it is necessary for the purpose of the report. He will
ask for the extra details.

5.□Would these comments be written on your hard copy or given verbally?
This was on hardcopy then he or myself will update the electronic copy.

5.□How many non-technical people need to access reports?
People in marketing, purchasing or source plant persons (Brazil, Germany
where English is also second language.

7.□Describe how writing can be made more accessible to non-technical
people.
Use plain wording and explain to the fineness detail. Try not to short
supply info. Rather give more then necessary.

We do have a spell-checker. It is more your sentence structure and how to
convey yourself to non-technical people. When I converse with Germans,
Brazilians or Portuguese I have to make myself clear. They are not always
English first language speakers and I have to explain myself by using

words, pictures, photos and that type of stuff. You must be specific. Yes
it is a learning process and I improved.
What was your reaction/response to his comments?
Look I know that I am Afrikaans. There is a need to improve. I look at
it very positively. The longer I worked with him the easier it became.

9.☐What made it easier?
Less and less sentence restructuring took place and I added info, which I
regarded as less important.

He after all is English speaking and I was developing through his
comments. As we progressed I learned a lot. The changes became less and
less.
He also told me at the last appraisal I really improved grammatically.

9.☐What in particular did he mean when he said that you had improved
grammatically?
Less and less sentence restructuring took place and I added info, which I
regarded as less important.

Then this question about what is difficult and easy when writing? You
said what is difficult is to put what you want to say in words so that
the non-technical person understand and can make sense. Yes it is
basically what I just told you. I mean when I speak to purchasing, which
is non-technical, or quality people who is non-technical. Overseas people
you have to convey the message so that it is easy for them to
understand. When you order parts. They must basically look at it and
understand the request. What I find useful is what our one boss suggests.
He really pushes us for photos in our reports. Because that is an idea to
get the message over more clearly. For a German for example the picture
will work better. Yes Moses was telling me that some people refer to a
tailgate while others refer to it as something else and when you have a
picture it is easier.
Yes talking about a tailgate they will call it end gate. That type of
thing. If you look at the photo they will know exactly what you are
talking about.
My next question is what will assist you in putting what you want to say
to your reader? Exactly that. With the direct manager, photos, hyperlinks
and database and they can access additional information if they need it.
What is easy? You said to express myself and my technical background. Yes
I would say my technical side is stronger than my language side. To
combine the two is tricky.
10.☐What would you describe as tricky?
Converting the technicality into words. The decision is always must you
start at the bottom or must you start in the middle. After you expressed
yourself you always wonder if the reader will understand you? You as
report writer will never know the answer on above question. Will the
bottom be the start of conclusions? I don't think it is difficult. Yes he
must be able to understand the technical part of it. You have to describe
yourself in layman's terms. Our reports are now globally. If a person
reads it for whatever reason they should be able to understand it. Most
of the time on your data basis you have a dropdown of the meaning of
technical words. It is a general ... system the glossary they normally
use. The ... system tells you that certain words you can't use. Specially
the negative ones.
Your role is to compile the reports and forward it to your manager for
approval. What will normally result in approval?
Approval will be reading through the documents it can be any document.
And then if you have to make corrections or say for instance he said
include Moses' report or Moses' results or supply a sample just to make
it more presentable or let a dealer take photos or something like that.
Or get the production line involved. Normally he will read through it. If
he finds that some additional information can be inserted into the
document he will suggest it. I will then go back and insert the
information. And he also checks the spelling and the sentence structure.
11.☐Do you check this as well? When?
As accurate as possible I use my computer spelling and language function
to assist. This is normally after compiling the report. I print a hard
copy and read it carefully making corrections or changing sentences.

12.☐ What are you able to rectify without feedback?
Normally spelling errors and sentence structures.

Do you give it to him once it is finished or will he see it at prior
stages? No there are three stages. I will compile it and finished it to
my best ability, he will go through it. This is Albert. Albert is the
group engineer he will go through that document. Correct it or add stuff.
Then it goes to X. If X wants to add stuff he will sent it back to
Albert. It is a three way process. X will ultimately send it out
Do you let anyone else see it before Albert sees it. Yes sometimes if it
is a very complicated report I will ask a colleague, most probably the
guy next to me, to read through it but that happens very seldom. It is
more between the managers and myself to give that kind of feedback.
13.☐Why is the guy next to you seldom used to give feedback?
I normally have some high confidence level after checking my report over
more then once.

14.☐ Do you give feedback to colleagues? If so, what type of comments
would you give?
No, I will just update if I found it appropriate. If I do not see the
need to change I will not make the change unless my manager recommends
the change. Do you look at colleagues work? No I don't need to what I do
is quite unique. Because it is plat-formed based. Maybe the structure
will be the same but when it comes to the contents or testing it is quite
unique.

Your writing steps you said you do have a template. I will write it, and
then spell and grammar check it. What does the template do?
The template is because we merged with the mother company in June and
they have standard report or memo templates for each documentation. With
... we had different templates, which was completely different to the...
template. Now after we merged we use a global template. When we forward a
report for example to Mexico they will now exactly what document it is
because they are using it as well, it is standard.
You said then you spell and grammar check it. What kind of grammar do you
normally check? From the report writing I learned from it is that you
normally use basic sentences. You don't use very complicated words.
Mainly I will do a spell check. If I can't spell a word I will go to the
Thesaurus and find a word. But that is very selfdom required because my
reports are plain and simple.
You said your sentence structure you will change as you feel is necessary.
Yes.
What things do you usually do to revise or edit your writing? How often

Will you read through your reports after completion? I think I agree with
all my reports. I don't read it electronically. I will print the report
and make a hard copy because you pick up mistakes easier on hard copy.
Like page number or two dots after a sentence. I will then make
corrections electronically. When it goes to the manager do you also give
him a hard copy? Yes what I normally do I will print it, correct it and
forward it electronically. If there are changes he will bring me the hard
copy and I will process it from there and update it electronically.
5. Describe the changes on the hard copy i.e. are they comments or
changes (or both)?
It's both. This changes is manually recommended on hard copy. Are the
changes only recommended or can you decide when you going to change it?
In this situation you will rather go with what your superiors suggest.
The acting manager at engineering will ultimately be responsible for the
reports. It will come eventually back through to me via my superiors.

What usually classifies a report as final or complete before circulation?
You said approval by your direct manager. Yes I can't skip him. With his
absence it went straight to X but that is only if there is no direct
supervisor but my direct manager has the final say. He is the only one
who will say a report is final.
6. Describe why this is part of the report writing system.
He needs to approved due to questions raised must be answered by him or
during my absence he needs to comment. Therefore he needs to be informed
by everything to avoid lack of info needed higher up. If there is a major
concern we will have a brainstorming meeting and they will act in a
certain period. It will distributed to all the relevant role-players. The
superiors are the primary customers. The dealer can also ask for the test
report. And they will go to my superiors. Once it goes to the superior he
will sign it off. No one can change or alter it.

Then what determines an acceptable report and you said routine. Yes. The
routine to the direct manager. Yes the standard route.
What connection is there between writing at school and/or tertiary
institutions and writing in the workplace? You said between layout and
basic language skills it is quite similar. Yes it is basically the same
in terms of formatting. What I learned in the report-writing course was
to keep it simple and short. Keep it in bulletins and make sure it is
more user friendly. That was helpful. There wasn't a lot of difference.
Because with the templates the tertiary templates was more like the old
.. templates, it was straight forward but with the global templates it
has a lot of electronic bullets and embedded stuff and database. That
helps a lot. The main thing that was different was the fonts. They
specify with each section a certain font - you have a specific fix font.
What will you identify as barriers in the writing process? You said the
expression of technical details into the format of English 1 individuals
would understand. What helped you overcome this barrier?
Well it is a very sensitive issue. Because you never know how that
non-technical person see it.
6. Describe why you called expressing technical details in
understandable English a sensitive issue?
It is based on there are no rules. Explaining a German or Brazil
speaking person to understand not only the language but the technical
detail as well. What makes it sensitive? Like words or problems concerned
people can interpret it wrongly. Say for instance bolts on the vehicle on
the suspension. A non-technical person may not understand it. You know
the suspension is mounted to the chassis. For a non-technical person it
can be sensitive. You will not say a bolt came loose. You will rather say
the bolt will rattle. You have to use the right terminology.
So you try you best and hope that person will understand it. You keep it
simple. Look we are all technical people and where translation come in
you can never be sure that it will be understood. Specially a person from
a different language background. Like Portuguese or especially when they
use different words for the same thing or component you can never be
sure. If you look from a purchasing side yes there will be terms that we
are not familiar with. From an electrical point of view there will be
differences but you won 't be sure that they will understand it. It is a
difficult question. I don't know. Yes there are times that what we do
don't always be understood. Are there other barriers? Yes. Maybe from a
different side. Say for instance if you say the current is flowing from
point 1 to point 2 they won't see it. They are coming from a different
perspective. They will accept how I express myself but they will ask
questions.

7. What effect do the various perspectives have on the report written?
More questions will be raised. Unnecessary teleconference calls, which
are expensive, will be required. In our daily report writing questions
are not normally raised. All the role-players will discuss the report and
in certain instances the concerns will be distributed. I never had a
report coming back to me. From me it goes to my direct manager. So it
will rarely comes back.
8. What about your expression is accepted?
The general expression understanding. Not necessary everything but to
some extend the technical side overpower the bad expression.

9. What type of questions is usually asked?
The why did you do that and have you done this?

10. Will the report be changed to accommodate the questions?
No, most of the time the rest of the questions will be address in
different areas. Say for instant the reasons are supply in the
"recommendations" it will be explain in further detail in the"
background" section

For instance there are differences between mechanical and electrical. For
instance breakaway torque. For them it is loose instead of breakaway. The
finer details you are not always clear that it will be understood. So it
is better to have pictures but you can't have pictures for everything.
You can take the core stuff out. But the small finer details you can't
always be sure that it will be understood.
Right what will you define as good writing? You said writing your report
and when it is clear to you're manager. When no updates are required. Yes
then it is basically clear to him, it is simple and he feel it is
complete and explains everything. All the information is there. How often
does that happen? If I say on a point system from 1 10 it is a small
percentage that needs to be revised and I always do the revision. It is
minor stuff I will say two or one correction.
11. What usually needs to be revised in a report?
The word spelling or the sentence structure
12. What would managers usually revise?
The sentence structure or simpler wording used

Does poor writing exist in the engineer department? I would say

re-reading, report changes, supervisor.
sequences

supervisor, types + forms,

standards, sequences, supervisor, types + forms, supervisor role,

sequences, final,

route, report changes, institution, distribution,

international, influence, assistance,

cultural practices, audience, barriers,

international audience, wording, tone,

Matrix Co-occurrence 3[7,2], Matrix Co-occurrence 8[8,2],

Matrix Co-occurrence 10[1,9], Matrix Co-occurrence 9[1,9], barriers

standards, sequences, route, responses, distribution, supervisor role,

questions

report changes, report content

clarity, pictures + graphs, wording, audience,

good wrtg

spelling, sentences,

Definitely yes. Depending on how you look at it. If it is something
mechanical I will look at it and find fault or vice versa. Or if I look
at somebody out of our organization say for instance a Brazil report I
will find concerns. That will be both technical and language. With regard
to all aspects. With sentence structure or spelling. For instance they
will talk about a tyre and spell it tire. You know that type of thing. Or
they will call a component completely different. By the time you see
these reports they are already on distribution? Yes it is already in
final distribution. It is reports from guys in a different section in our
own department like design check which somebody else issued or a
Brazilian report or a German report. What happens when you find there is
something problematic at that level of distribution? If it is a concern
look we have different platforms. I am responsible for a certain
platform.
23. What is a platform?
Platform will be a couple of vehicles in a series (1.that means pick ups
in ... or pick ups on .... that means passenger vehicles in .... or
passenger vehicles in ...).

24. What is required of you when you comment on a specific platform?
In depth knowledge of the product gain through experience over the years

If it consists of life... depending on the outcome of my platform results
...we've got ... and we got all the import units like ... it is different
platforms. Each engineer is responsible for that specific platform. If it
entitles correcting something in my platform, which will give an end
result to maybe the customer, yes I will certainly comment on it. If it
something out of another database something I am just referring to and if
I use it as a background or specific concern, yes then there is nothing I
can do. Any other comments?
I don't think there are any major concerns. The main thing is improving
on the report like you learn in the report-writing course. That really
assists a lot and basically your immediate superior. The normal routing
system is effective. We are global now. It goes a step further where
source plants and other countries can read it is one step bigger. There
is more people that can comment and reply.

25. What effect does the routing system comments and replies have on
reports?
You are now on a wider global system and not just internally info and
comments will be experience.
Thanks for all the effort Face. Your comments and explanations are really
appreciated!

Regards

Any other comments?

distribution, international, audience, poor wtg.

peer

shortcourses, route, improvement.

route, international,

nterview 2 / 18 August 2006 / 14:45 / Greg
esearch Interview 1 (no. 4) / 22 February 2005 / 11:00
(no questionnaire completed)

ualification: BSc Mechanical engineering
epartment: vehicle engineering
ork experience: 3 years
T: English

reg are there any problems with the transcripts and the interviews or
ny comments? No I did not have time to go through at once it was sent
hrough. I didn't go through any of it.   ] methodology
ou have been working for three years. Yes. Where have you studied? I
tudied at ... BSc and mechanical engineering and immediately after that
 started over here... What school did you go to? I was at ... High
chool and straight to University. What types of writing have you done/do
n your mother tongue? Obviously your mother tongue is English so
verything is done in English. Yes all my writing is in English in the
orm of test reports. We do test components, whatever testing we have to
o I write my findings and recommendations, drafting test procedure etc
omething in the work environment maybe for example the transport field I
ave to create a procedure. Draw up the procedures for safe... Defines
eports. Sometimes we also have to draft working procedures for test   ] templates
rocedures and safe handling or something in the work environment. The
ayout is there. There are templates of other working structures but we
ave to draw up...
.☐How do templates assist in the writing of reports? Basically when it
s a test the first time you do it you will state what you did and put
our results in and when you do the same test again you just change the
ata for the new results. The description of the procedure will stay the   ] templates
ame. It is not a fixed template you can adjust anything you want to do
nd it is must easier to work from the template. You are free to edit it.
verybody will use the templates. It is not standardised.

hat would you class as your second language? Afrikaans but I do no
riting in Afrikaans, speaking a little bit? Not much. Did you enjoy   ] cultural practices
riting at school? No I didn't. I'm just not a creative writer I can't
xpress myself well I don't have so many words to express myself.
.☐What do you mean by saying you don't have many words to express
ourself? When I have to write a composition of 500 words I would end up
riting 300 words. I would never be able to write the exact words that
as needed. If we do something now we don't have to write an essay on why
ou did the test. You don't have to give the history of it. The detail is
here.

echnical procedures? Then it is facts and it will be much easier because
t is facts.
..☐What makes documenting facts easy? You think about the process, the
teps and write it down. You have a picture already in your mind of the
teps you have to follow to write it down. Some people don't? Sometimes
es it happens sometimes. Sometimes you read it from an outsiders point   ] responses, report content, determinants.
f view. The thing is the person who spends the most time reading the
est report is yourself. Most people don't really bother all they want
o see is just the results. They just want to know if it passed. Do
uestions arise once the reports go to the different roleplayers? Yes   ] supervisor role, report changes, route, questions.
here are sometimes questions but maybe it is not for clarification.
nce it is approved then someone might have questions. Your immediate
upervisor approves it. Once it is approved there can be questions. You
aid questions are not a big thing. No it is not.

id you feel the same about Literature as well? And oral presentations?
hat is a different thing. If it is a presentation, I will take something
echnical but I can give a presentation quite easily. I'm not creative
ut we don't have to do it quite often. What types of writing did you do
t school and did you enjoy writing. You said you didn't remember any
pecific instructions on how to write. I just remember the head body and   ] influence
ail of a cat. I remember brainstorming. In terms of marks? I suppose I
as just borderline.
.☐What makes you describe yourself as borderline in terms of marks? Why?
bviously my school marks. Out of school? I think I struggled a lot with
he reports at ... but most of my reports are now better. Practise makes
erfect. You need to calculate the data on the sections and I found it   ] improvement influence, report content
ifficult. The structure and examples for some reason it is difficult.
as it the schooling system that did not prepare you? No it is more in
yself. How my brain works. I am more a technical person and like to work
ith numbers.

orkplace engineering test reports what type of reports? You find that
hen you have to start with a test where you're testing different
omponents comparing it, you collected data maybe temperature readings,
erformance of a certain component, you normally have to use Excel to put
he data together and compare the components and measuring the different
nsulations in the vehicle to reduce heat levels from the exhaust. You do
ests of the different insulators and compare the heat levels then
iscuss it and put it all together. It is data, once the data and banners
re all together at a presentable format where someone can make sense of   ] interaction   ] assistance, clarity,
t. We have to discuss it. That becomes more descriptive than what is
one before. I have to make the report clear. I normally do it all at
ome. I have the assistance from the technician, then I do the report.
.☐What ensures that the reader can make sense of what you have written?
 will see if it makes sense to me. I try to distance myself from it and   ] clarity
ead it from scratch to see if it makes sense.

.☐Explain it becomes more descriptive than what is done before. Once I
ave written it I might change certain things. It is a difficult
uestion. I will add more detail, substantiate more but it depends. I   ] grammar, content, clarity+specificity, report content, grammar,
ight also take away unnecessary explanations. If I want to elaborate I
ill give more detail on that. I will sometimes change the grammar and
rder.

.☐What role does the technician have in the writing of a report? I lost
yself now. I don't know what I have done. Its new to me this mentioning
f working at home. I will check the transcript. The technician that   ] cultural practices
ssist me when it come to repairing the vehicle or measure the
emperatures but when I do the report I do everything. When it comes to
he preparation of the vehicle he does it.

ow experienced are you in doing the types of writing describe in 5? You
aid you are recently experienced. How would you rate yourself? As far as   ] standards, confidence, route.
hat is required from me in the workplace my reports are more than
cceptable because maybe it is a competitive thing. It is readable and

derstandable. The acceptances and assessments of my reports are
asonable. It is easy to understand.
□What makes you assess yourself as more than acceptable in your writing
 reports? I am not a good writer. More acceptable doesn't necessarily
ans it is good. I can measure me against the history and past reports.
 e or two years ago.

□What makes you describe writing as a competitive thing? 'I'm not
mpetative when compared to the next person but when I do my reports I
 ke sure it is in order. I don't want to beat the next person but I
 cive to achieve a good standard.

).□What about your writing style makes you describe it as readable and
 nderstandable? Yes I won't write anything you know... when I write
 mething I will make sure it is to the point. That is all I can do is to
 rite to the point.

y colleagues will normally ask me to have input in their reports I am
ble to help and give recommendations but they don't normally come to me
o do that. We all report to one manager and he reads through it but
ometimes they will request me to look at their work before it could get
ssued. .But sometimes he will ask me to go through other reports too.
1.□Why do your colleagues not usually go to you for help? Sometimes when
hey are not sure or when they will seek an opinion they will come to me
o ask. If they need help. Technical or expression? Some of the guys are
nglish second language and even if my grammar is not good I can help.
ut I also help them to present the data. I will help them with technical
hings.

2.□ Who is the he you are referring to when you say are requested to go
hrough other reports? That is my manager. If he is too busy or out of
 own he will ask me to go through the report to check if the objective
 nd conclusions are clear. I don't think the other managers do that or
 ormally ask that. We are three groups two of the groups do a lot of
 est reports. I am with the group that does test reports. We are three
 esters and one manager. They don't have a problem me reading the
 reports.

13.□ What feedback do you give on the reports you go through? Not too
much I won't change it too much. As long as it is clear and concise and
 jets the point across I will not change it. As long as the objective is
 :lear and all the results are there. Are you doing it on hardcopy? I
 ion't know about hardcopy........ all the reports that are waiting for
 ipproval are on the server and we have access to it. Will you change
 something technical? I haven't been through a lot of reports lately. But
 t could be maybe changing the way the results are presented. I will
 juggest changes and show the person where to make the changes. Be it
 jrammar or anything else. It is normally done in Word. They are going to
 ut it into PDF. At the moment it is still in word. Once it is approved
 t is a read only file.

 That enabled you to be at that standard? The university experience and
 :echnical reports and regular practice helped me to do technical reports
 .n the workplace. Just practice. The first time I did make one at the
 rorkplace I felt... but I feel the same as when we did it at university.
 The type of work I am doing... the different groups and different work lend
 tself to the similar things I am used to do.
14.□You have been working for 3 years. What besides practice and
 iniversity experiences has enabled to write reports with greater ease
 :han your colleagues (as well as give feedback)? Besides that I can't
 :hink of anything else. Practise does help and it might be that you have
 in eye for detail. You are talking of pictures just now? I started using
 iictures in the reports and when there is a picture it is easier. Excel
 ind graphs? Yes it goes back to university and goes back to using
 :omputers since standard five. I think that if you spend 4 years at the
 :ertiary institution it should bring you to an efficient level. The older
 juys suffer a little bit with computer skills. They are less efficient
 iut they are learning. The younger guys catch on much quicker.

 That assists you in your writing in the workplace? You said same formats
 ind common interests similar reports and templates. Yes when I do a test
 :or the first time it takes time to see the reports, discuss the
 ibjectives and your recommendations and conclusions and putting your
 :results together... once you repeat maybe the same test on another vehicle
 rith a different system maybe or they change the system and the results
 ire different which makes it easy to write reports. How often do you have
 :o do something that wasn't done before? Half of the time. But maybe a
 iit less. And things that you create do they become part of the system
 :hen? Once you issued a report it gets stored on the server and on the
 system so anybody can go and search for any type of report. Greg, would
 /ou have a problem letting anybody see the kind of report that you write?
 : will have to look and see what you are going to use. I want a format
 ind I ask each one to give me an example... sources are confidential. I
 rill never disclose information, but I will send out an email about that.
)ifficulties in writing? You said finding the right words to describe
 something. Arranging the words. I also take out paragraphs and change the
 rords maybe rephrases it again just completing the report. Not technical
 lata. What will you use to assist you? I will ask someone to read for me
 ind tell me if it makes sense to them.
 .5.□How often would you do this? I think not too often maybe once in
 rhile.

 .6.□What type of feedback are you usually given? Not normally much
 :hanges. I will use it. If they want me to add detail I will do it.

 'ou said here, expressing what I have to convey in lengthy paragraphs are
 /ou expected to use... No I am not expected to, I'm suppose to keep it
 :oncise and easy to read. But if it does come to that... Is it because
 /ou are used to write things in a concise manner? Ja, we don't normally
 lave to add anything to our writing. It is not a requirement to have
 lrafts. I sometimes feel I must make it a bit more detailed so it is
 iasily understandable.
 .7.□What is meant by not being expected to add to writing? It is more
 jenerally. It is not required to have a lengthy report because our
 :ustumers are not outside clients. As long as all the results are there a
 :oncise conclusion is better. It is standard. Looking at their reports
 :hey also don't add too much detail.

 .8.□What use is drafting when writing reports? Drafting? Do you write in
 :ough and do some planning? I go straight in and put everything together
 ind working from there.
 lould someone tell you that you need more detail? I normally just feel

confidence, standards. roune

good writg. responses,

clarity

supervisor, supervisor, assistance, peer, cultural practices, writing, peer,

peer, grammar, peer, assistance, content,

content, peer, supervisor, types + forms, writing,

Matrix Co-occurence 7[1 2], Matrix Co-occurence 7|5.2

influence, improvement, assistance,

pictures + graphs, cultural practices, influence, software,

templates

easy, improvement.

modals + examples

assistance, peer, re-reading, wording,

types + forms

peer

content, types + forms,

clarity, report content, audience,

audience, audience,

words, self, barriers,

₃t I must do it. Is what you said here your biggest challenge in
₁ting the wording, the paragraphing and the sentence order? Yes when it
suitable etc Yes, it is a challenge for anybody who is writing.
would you find it easy stating here what happens during the test, the
₁clusions and recommendation you find easy. Would you comment on any of
₃t? Ja if the one test is acceptable, if it is not you try something
₃e. Yes if it is straight to the point. The response to your writing?
₁r standard is reasonable. Ja that is easy. And your readers? That is
₋mally the type of response my reports are normally structured like
₃t. Your rating of your writing comes through what? What would cause
₁ to rate your report as good? Feedback on reports we have to do
₁ponent and vehicle engineering. The component group daily marks the
₃ign group and we are the vehicle test group. We do the tests for them.
₃ report goes back to them and the reports are not normally for me, it
for someone requested it and we get feedback to assess the viability
it.
.☐Describe the feedback that you usually get once the report is
₃tributed. As far as the content is concerned? There is sometimes
₃dback. But is not very often that they will come back and ask you to
₃nge something. There is positive feedback. Sometimes when it is a big
₃t and we are not to sure about the content we will jointly decide and
₃ comments to make. If no one comes back you know it was fine. If it is
₃itive it is good and if I get no feed back it is also OK.

₃cribe your role or function. You did it in terms of other people,
₃leagues that you are actually part of the process. Two of my
₃leagues report writing skills weren't so good but with my direction
₃y improved and more confident. It is not only the writing skills it is
₃o the pc skills and how to manipulate the data. As far as the writing
₃ill read it from an outsider's perspective. I will tell them how to do
₃erations or show them. I will give them something similar.
☐What direction did you give your colleagues to assist them in their
₃ting? In this case it was pc skills and how to use word and excel and
₃ to present your data and what to put in the test report. When I
₃rted I managed to find my way. Language skills? Mostly the Afrikaans
₃'s.

☐How do you show them where to revise? Ja I willcall them in and just
₁ them what is not right or incorrect and they will change it.

☐What is their response to your direction? They are happy with it and
₃y don't mind.

☐What would you give them that is similar? It will be a test report
₃t was done before. I will show them the basics. I will share my
₃wledge and information with them.

if you going to revise your own reports what will you change? I will
₃k at my grammar, the way I described the same thing and change the
₃agraph structures using different words. That can take forever; it
₃es up lots of time if you want it to be perfect. It depends on how
₃h time I have. I always spend time on rereading the reports. I always
back and I like things to be as good as it can get.
☐What is your response if your report comes back with comments? If it
good comments then I will be happy and if they want changes or it is
ative I won't get all angry or frustrated. I will just change it.

t usually classifies a report as final and complete for circulation?
₃manager normally reads through it. And then once he is happy with it
₃n it is final. Someone else will sometimes read the feedback. It is
₃ll possible to re-issue it at a later stage. Conclusions and technical
₃ails can still change. We will then have a discussion and will come to
agreement. I will then update it and rewrite it. It is normally the
₃son who compiled the report who will do that.
☐Would someone else read your report feedback and not the writer of
₃report? The feedback on the report? It will either be me or my
₃ager. I will normally get it. It doesn't happen too often. There is no
₃mal way or process.
☐Is the updating done before the report is issued or can it be done
₃er? The outside departments normally ..... once it is issued. We will
₃the other parties involved if necessary before the test report is
₃ued. You can re-issue the test report.

☐ Who else would rewrite or update your report? Does the writer
₃ally do this? The writer usually does it. They will give you feedback
₃the writer will do the changes. I prefer doing that.

₃ber 15. What connection is there between writing at school and
₃versity and writing in the workplace? You suggested that there is
₃te a strong connection. Yes the types of reports are very similar for
₃types of reports. By the time I finished fourth year the report
₃ting was easier. You work with many people will you say they have
₃ilar expertise in writing, between the Techniken and University based
₃son? No, It is easier for the people from University to compile a
₃ort. It is more in line with what is expected. If I look at the guys
₃ engineering degrees and the guys with diplomas the ones' with
₃rees reports are of a higher standard. I noticed the difference
₃ween the two. Maybe it is from schooling, University and Technikon and
₃types of writing are done there.
☐You are the only one that commented on this - Explain why you think
₃re is a difference between the report writing ability of University
₃Diploma engineers. Also the national certificates. Why? Yes there is
₃ifference you spend four years at University and at the end of the
₃r you do a thesis so it takes six months spending on the report and it
₃es you extra knowledge and experience. Do you come in at the same
₃ls? In this place getting my masters won't make a difference.
₃efully one day. There is no incentive. Nothing. There are guys that
₃: to ... and they were frustrated because they had the masters in
₃ineering. They studies four years and did their practical and they are
₃the same level. It is frustrating. But now? What else can I do?
☐Does this difference continue? I think eventually they will take
₃ifications in account. In my level there is no difference now. The
₃might lessen but ....
₃barriers in the writing process? No I will have to think about that.
₃ used to be difficult about writing reports in the past was the
₃at we had to follow. It did not allow you much flexibility to put in
₃ information and be descriptive but the new format allows you to add
₃ more details and made it much easier. If they need additional
₃ormation, it is there. If the structures are followed there are no
₃iers.
₃ you say that poor writing exists in this environment? Yes it is all
₃:.

₃ writing? If I read it once and I understand it it's OK, but
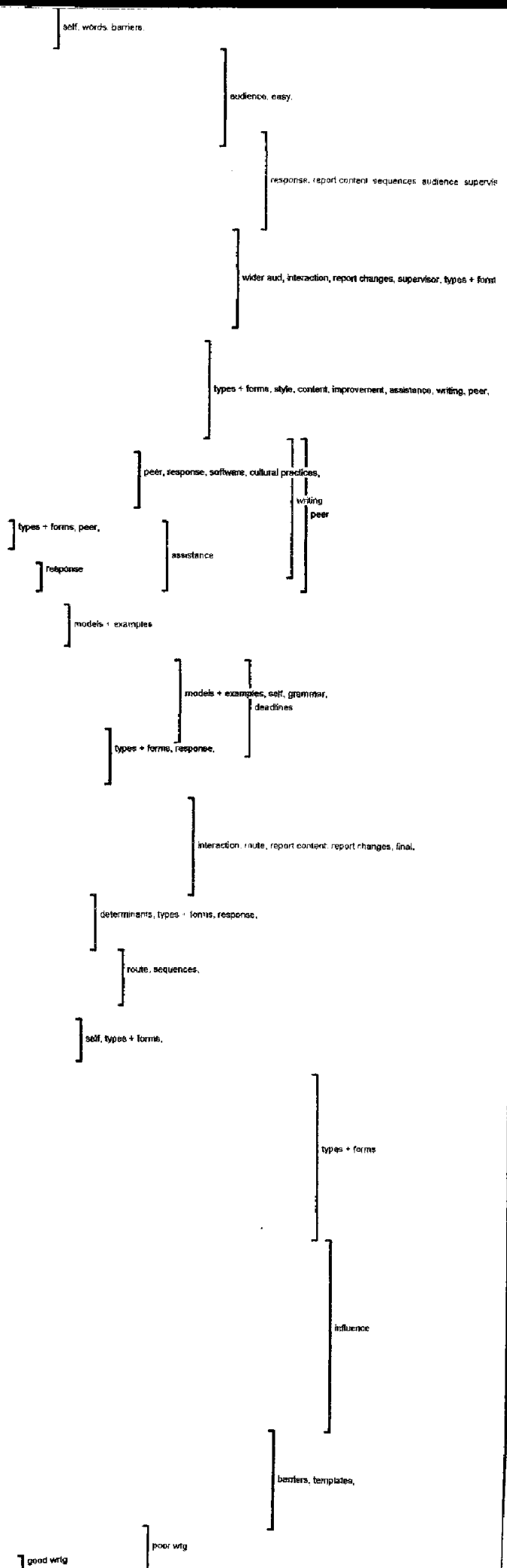
sometimes you have to read reports more than once to understand it. You can't immediately tell what the person wants to bring across. If it gets approved it stays bad writing. It stays forever in the system as bad writing. I guess there could be bad writing that is passed and gets into circulation. You just have to cope with it and get on with your job. Good writing does exists in this institution.
10.☐What makes it difficult to read something? I'm going to leave this.

11.☐How often are poor reports approved? Yes sometimes but most of the time the manager will request the writer to make changes or make it more clear. It depends on the person writing the report and the person approving the report and also the person receiving the report if they are happy with the report nothing will happen.

12.☐Did your manager change? No my manager is still the same person.

Any other comments? I can't think of anything. More comments? I think I said everything I could say.

Thanks so much for your comments and responses Greg. They have been so enlightening!

Regards

Any other comments?

nterview 2 / 11 August 2002 / 14:15 / Gus
ased on research Interview 1 (no. 8) / 23 February 2005 / 15.15

ualification: NTC 4 electrical/ trade auto electrical
epartment: Vehicle engineering
ork experience: 24 years / 18 months
T: English

our response to the transcript? I didn't correct the spelling and
rammer. I just corrected some of it.   ] methodology

choolwork - mother tongue is English. You said types of writing letters,
mails and reports. Are you studying further? Yes more technical
ubjects. My projects are mostly calculations very technical. I'm doing
ll that at .... Other languages? Look I can get by in Afrikaans if I
ave to. How long have you been here? .... So you do understand   ] cultural practices
frikaans. Yes I can get by. But that is not reading or written
ommunication. When I came down everything was in English.
he kind of writing you did at school? Your response to these written
asks? It was something I had to do. I was always technical minded. So
riting was just something I had to do not because I want to do it.   writing process, influence.
nfortunately I think a lot has to do with the language teachers. If they
on't make language alive you suffer. I do read but technical stuff is
ore logical to me and it is easy for me.   influence
nstruction? Very interesting you took it right from constructing
etters until you wrote English exam. Can you remember any kind of
nstruction in terms of essays or any kind of assignments? No you get
nstruction on how to write letters and format essays and so on. How you
o paragraphs etc. I went to seven different junior schools in three
ifferent countries and they were all different.
ou said the writing you do is reports, emails and presentations. The   templates, international, templates.
ypes of reports you do? Technical reports. Emails? Sending information. templates
elating to the reports and to get information. We don't use shortened
ords like you use in sms's. Your English should be correct specially
hen you send it to Brazil or Japan. The reports are all formatted so you
ust add what is required.
he presentations? Just one or two short ones nothing major. Basically
ust on test reports.   ] templates. templates.
ow experienced are you in this kind of writing? You said very little
riting is required. How will you rate yourself as an expert in terms of
eport writing? Not very good but the templates at ... helps.   templates
.☐Describe how the report template assists in writing reports.

he template supplies the layout and format required of the report. All
hat is necessary of the report writer is to fill in the details.   templates, templates, good wrtg.
hat will the details include? Each section will be on the template. The
eading the title, dates and further details about the test itself, the
est results. The basic document will be four of five page. The people
ho developed the template made it quite easy and if it is filed
orrectly anyone can get the same details.

hen I started here there was little help but the templates now help. If   templates, templates, templates,
ou were able to read and write you must be able to write a report. I
on't think I'm very good
.☐What makes you assess your report writing as not very good?
ou said lack of previous experience. What helped you gain experience?
ust doing it and I am now fine. For each type of system we are using   models + examples, improvement, templates, templates,
here is a template and a set layout. The templates are pretty
omprehensive. There is normally an instruction booklet. Some people will
se it others don't.

ut there are people here that are more experienced in writing. I'm not   ] report content, grammar.
rilliant or too good. I concentrate more on technical correctness than
anguage correctness.
.☐What would you describe as correct language?
se of the correct tenses, vocabulary, sentence construction etc. What   improvement, grammar, responses, report content, institution,
akes you aware of language correctness. The more I've done and read and
he awareness of language in the company made me more aware. I am an
nglish major.

.☐Would you consider technical correctness as more important than
anguage correctness? Explain your response.
o, both are equally important in any document. Incorrect language can   grammar, report content, wording.
ead to a misunderstanding and incorrect technical information just as
isastrous.

hat assist you in your writing and you said the PC. Yes without the   ] software
pelling and grammar checker to help me I will battle. It depends on what
s required.
hat is difficult? You said writing your thoughts in words in order for
eople to understand it when they don't have any background on the   wording, improvement,
ubject. Exactly. Some people are very articulate; they can put across
hat they want to say so you can understand it. I am not like that. I
ave a picture in my mind but I have to find the right words. It is not
omething I do naturally. However, when you repeat something the more you
et use to it and the easily it becomes.
.☐What would be doing if you were repeating something?   ] improvement
ractice makes perfect.

he comments from the supervisor does that reinforce how you think in
uture? Does it affect you in the way you think now? Yes if you get   response, supervisor, types + forms,
eedback either negative or positive it helps next time to do writing
ifferent.
.☐Differentiate between positive and negative forms of feedback.
egative: - complaining about a grammatical or spelling mistake and
etting everyone know. Does this occur? Yes it does.
ositive: - Spotting your mistake, letting you know and giving advice on   institution, distribution, sequences, grammar, wider aud. /
ow to make improvements. Does this occur? It depends on who is on the
opy list. You don't always get feedback. But we enjoy positive feedback.
f you don't get anything back you don't know if they even read it.

.☐What is your response to both forms of feedback. The comments on your
eports? I say it is fifty fifty.
ake a mental note of what has been done wrong or where the mistake is.
ry not to repeat the mistake again. To what extend are you successful? I response
an always go back to what Ive done previously. And make sure the
echnical content is right.

.☐What do you normally revise in your writing when you do it
ifferently?   audience, words, sentences,
t might be as simple as changing a word or two, restructuring a sentence

writing in a simpler format for non-technical people to understand.

w often would that be an issue to find the right words? I won't say
ry often but what I do find is when you write something and look back
it and think about it you will find an easier way to do it and change

.
□What would describe as an easier way to do it or could you find an
sier way without feedback? I think you can you put some down one way
d normally someone queries you you might find a different way of saying

.

there anything that is easy in writing a report? As long as you have a
ocess to follow but it don't come easy. It depends on what you have to
. If you have to think about it, it is not easy. If I do what I am
ained to do I don't think about it. It is easy. When you have to
ink about it, it is not that easy. It is the same with writing.
ur role and function in writing reports? You said planning the
cuments and communication from the emails and then from there to the
ports. Are these the usual processes? Yes I do the testing or involve
e testing and getting more information, formed it and fits it in the
port and send emails back and forth and getting everybody that is
volved, people from accounts and everyone else who is involved.
tting everybody's input that is required. I will download all the
formation getting everything together, tabulating the templates and do
e report. Then send it to the manager. Once it is Ok' ed by the
pervisor or department head it is OK. If it comes back to me I will
ijust it. Occasionally it will come back. It depends on which person it
sent to. Most department managers are... but once it is OK'd by the
pervisor or department head it is fine.
.□ What is meant by reports coming back depending on which person it is
nt to?
me people (no names will be mentioned) will read through a report and
ok for mistakes to criticize. Others wont recognize a mistake. Some
ll look for ways of improving the report or testing conducted and give
nstructive criticism. This is a personal opinion.
) you know who your audience is when you right a report? Yes depending
the report and you expect some comments to come back. It might not be
e final copy. It is important that things are done correctly specially
w that we are on a global system.

ything else that assists you like colleagues? Most of the people I
rk with are Afrikaans or Xhosa speaking. So when it comes to language I
ll do the writing. There are no other English-speaking people in my
oup. Most of the input last year came from the supervisor. This year is
bit different. That was before Albert left.
.□Describe how this year is different from when Albert was at ...

get the feeling Albert was a lot more thorough when going through a
port, maybe more attuned to the report writing process. What has
anged? Well the last report went through a month ago Albert would have
ne it quicker. But it depends on the workload. I have never heard any
mments on my reports.

2.□ What type of input would a supervisor normally give?

eck that the report is grammatically correct. That the report covers
ll the pertinent details of the testing conducted and that all the
sults are listed. Query anything that doesn't make sense, suggest
provements.

at do you do to revise and edit? The input that Rob gave you- does it
rtains to spelling and grammar or technical aspects? It varies. He
ight say listen to the way you word it you should not word it
gatively but rather positively. So the connotation should be positive.
t had to meet the criteria. For instance, I said there is no reason why
at part could not be used. So I had to change it. For example you must
ink how people will interpret it. Anything that is negative, example no
r can't can be perceived as being wrong. You just have to word it
sitively. Yes sometimes I will have to change the grammar to make it
re simplistic. I never had feedback to say things are not right. Or
e language is not right. We just processed what is questioned in the
ngineering section.
3.□What is usually questioned in the engineering section?
sults achieved during a test. Sometimes why a test was conducted in a
pecific manner. What about x, y or z.

fter 60 days you have to delete anyway so someone else might say that
ou must add something else. You can issue another test procedure as
appened in the past and that will be on the next report. So there can be
ollow-on.
hat classifies your report as final and complete? The group engineer has
o approve, it is then distributed. What is usually suggested or what
omments are made? It is normally to do with aspects, which could have
een covered in the tests. It is normally technical. Quite often what
appens if a test or a component fails, the people who receive it might
uestion it. The reports are being formatted as they are with technical
etail and are pretty straightforward. Your response to comments and
uggestions? My response is positive.
4.□What is a positive response to comments given about your reports?
hanks.

ow long does this process take? It could be weeks. I was in JHB in
eptember and the report went out in January. It depends on the tests to
e done. The reports could be held back to do additional tests or until
ompletion. Sometimes it is done in three months or sometimes in two
ays. It depends on the job. Sometimes it is an interim report. Normally
t is fairly quick. Depends on all the parties involved. You can do a
ob today and have the report tomorrow.
n your reports and testing, you are in charge? Yes what will happen if
here is a test - there is procedure to follow which is written out by
.. or whoever and you have to follow it. We are responsible for our own
eports. The supervisor is the go-between the senior engineers and us.
ho and what determines an acceptable report / writing in you department?
ou said the group and senior engineers. Yes everyone in the system will
ecide if the report is good enough and acceptable. X is the senior
ngineer in my department, we have vehicle engineering. The senior
ngineer is X. You also have the group engineers and below them the test
ngineers. Once X OK'd it he will issue it to all the other people. He
as the final say but he also is not necessarily interested in what
ollows or what the group engineers said.
5.□What could usually follow the circulating of a final Okd report?

part could be released for production. Another series of tests could be

---

Margin codes (right column):

words, sentences; audience,

words

types + forms, content response.

templates, easy.

audience, distribution, final, institution, interaction, report change

types + forms, response, wider aud,

final, international, standards, distribution,

peer, cultural practices,

deadlines, types + forms, response.

content, grammar, supervisor, types + forms.

wording, self, tone, wider aud, questions, supervisor, types + forms

report content, report changes, questions, sequences.

questions, standards, distribution, response, route

report content, sequences, warranty

supervisor role, route, institution,

response, supervisor role, route, final, questions, types + forms.

sequences

inducted. A report could be sent to a supplier approving / condemning the tested part. It is very much dependant on what the report was about.

;.☐ How could this affect the actual report?
: should have no affect on the report.

hat connection is there between writing at school and tertiary institutions and writing in the workplace? You said school gave you the foundation but little of these forms used in the workplace cause of the documentation process. Would you say the templates and formats you used ... should be included? Look computers are ......Look my kids are doing ... The eldest one is in grade 9 and they know more about computers than I because they do it at school. But whether if they teach them what the real world is like I don't know. Each business has its own formats. I don't know if schools teach that. I know the kids now do projects but most of them download stuff from the computer. The technical stuff is different. We did a lot of writing in other subjects but these days the kids use the computer.
arriers you identify in the writing process? You said limited vocabulary and lack of experience and lack of training. What would assist in overcoming these barriers? I would say the more you read and write the better you get. How many words the average person use? It is very small compared to what the number of words is out there and if you are not in an environment where you use it you lose it.
Do you think there are any other barriers in this environment? The biggest is
you have people here that use ... second or third language. (Rest is unclear)
7.☐What makes a second or a third language a barrier in the workplace?
: find it difficult sometimes to understand what is being said and others might not understand what I am trying to convey.
: have also noticed this problem in educational institutions where people either being taught or trying to teach in a second language have comprehension problems. It depends on the reaction from the other person. Fortunately most of the guys we got here are pretty well educated. ... Because of the understanding factor. If you explain something you must make sure they understand it. It will take time. I lectured years ago and every now and then there was a lack of understanding. Some of the staff might have a problem. Here it is not that bad basically people do understand quite well.

The feedback system they have here does that help? Yes. The more feedback is good. If someone comes into this business they will have to be shown how to do it or get the training.
That would you define as good writing? You said it depends on the subject, clear, concise and when it gives a good mental picture. Yes I visualize it. If I haven't got a picture of it once I read it, it is not good writing and it means nothing.
What would you define as poor writing? You said when it makes me have to think about how to interpret it. Does this exist in engineering?
Yes some of the documents you get from America they use language that is correct but is not clear for us. It is open to interpretation. In my work environment If you get something that does not make sense you might find someone that have more experience in a particular field. The reports and most of the documentation here are good writing. It is straightforward and we use simple language.
Any other comments about writing? I wonder how much is been done by business to let schools know and tertiary institutions know what sort of writing employees in the workplace require. Excellent subject marks in our profession do not automatically make one skilled in communication, probably quite the opposite. What can be done to bridge the gap? Well we didn't do any presentations at school. Kids are doing projects where they are told how to do layout and it is a step in the right direction. I think Technikons should concentrate on the technical fields and what the workplace requires. You should be able to learn from someone that comes from a work environment to present stuff. In the engineering field we should concentrate on how to present stuff.
18.☐Describe the type of writing needed in the workplace that should be focused on in higher education and schools.

As each industry has different requirements it is up to industry to inform the educational institutes as to their differing needs and the education departments to implement the required standards. Anything specific to help the engineers in terms of writing? In school there was very little report work. Most of my experience was on the job learning. The education system has changed now. The children learned to write reports. They are taught how to do something and then present it. But the standards are dropping. Did you read the article in the newspaper from the company that complained about how bad the people that apply for bursaries can't even fill in the application forms.

Is this an opinion shared by most engineers? I think so. Most of the people I spoken so who haven't done extra studies just to get those guys to write a report is difficult. Often handwriting is terrible and the language is bad. It is easier to explain in words than to write for most of the guys.
19.☐What makes it easier to explain in words than to write?
These guys are not forced to write in their second language. The gap is broad. For example very few people that go to the electricity department you fill in a form half the time they don't read the documents. If you ask them what it something means you find that even they don't understand it. If the examples are wrong you just perpetuate the problem.

Thanks so much Gus! All comments and explanations appreciated!

Regards

Any other comments?

ᵗerview 2 / 3 August 2005 / 14.30 / Marvin.
ᵗerview Part 2 response / 7July 2005 / 13:15
ᵗed on research interview 6/ 23 February 2005 / 13:15

ᵨualification: ND Mechanical Engineering
Department: Vehicle development engineering
Work experience: 4 years
MT: Xhosa

Marvin thanks for meeting with me again. Before we get on to the
ᵗual questions about five or six of them, I just want to ask your
ᵖsponse to the transcript was there any problems with it?
ᵖ there were a couple of problems but I can't think of them right now.
ᵖe of the questions were not clear some of them ...
ᵉre did you study? At the ...Technikon.
ᵃt types of writing have you done in your mother tongue?
ᵖrarely write in MT except emails to my friends. I do use MT for emails.
· home language never inspired me to write.
ᵃt inspires you to write? I don't see myself as a writer. Let me tell
ᵖu what I think a writer is. A writer is a creative person. I don't do
ᵃt. Things I write in the work environment are test reports. I find it
ᵖsy to write test reports because it is based on facts. In general I
ᵖn't' write.
ᵗat types of writing do you do in your second language at ...? Basically
ᵗere are two. There is report writing and then there is correspondence
ᵗke emails. Letters will be in the form of emails.
ᵗat types of writing did you do at school? You said essays and letters…
ᵖeded to come up with fictional stories but you were not creative.
ᵗat was difficult about being creative in writing coming up with
ᵗories? I did not like it, because at school the way we did it. They
ᵗll say write about your dog, but I didn't have a dog. If we got choices
ᵖwould have been able to write then.
ᵖscribe the writing instruction you received at school?
ᵗat was included in writing instruction at school? Like basics? It is
ᵗat we are doing now. Like the introduction, the objective and then you
ᵗscuss your findings. I remember part of what we learnt at school but I
ᵖcked up most of it at tertiary.
ᵗat types of writing do you usually do in the workplace? You said I
ᵖrite reports almost everyday/ keep on learning new styles.
ᵗat types of reports do you write? As I said before all are test
ᵖports. I am a test engineer and I make a judgment and I add my
ᵖmments. The length? We have templates for a report. The templates
ᵖstrict you. We just complete that. The background of the test. It is
ᵖsults and commentary.
ᵗat new styles do you learn? I don't quite remember what I referred to.
ᵗ is a structure of the report. Before I worked at ... I worked for
.... I came with my own way of writing reports. The way I wrote was OK
ᵖt I had to write for a German boss and I had to write in his style. My
ᵖriting changed for the better. Because he was critical of English.
.ᵖWhat were your feelings when your boss was critical of your English?
ᵖwill get frustrated because he knew very well what I was trying to say,
ᵖt calm myself by saying to myself that I'm not English and why should I
ᵖpeak it better than my home language.
ᵖo you have positive feed back from your managers as well as the more
ᵖritical responses?
ᵗ is positive feed back from him but at same time he is diplomatic about
ᵗt. He is polite although he wants me to correct the things I have done.
ᵗhat I mean is that did he ever say that it was really well put, that
ᵖomment was… you phrase that in a positive way or what I want to say is
ᵖjust being just critical about things are there ever the other side.
ᵖike positive to say I could not put it better myself? It is not positive
ᵖr negative he just says please correct this.
ᵖo you ever write in your MT? No- only when I make a note at home it will
ᵖe in my mother tongue. When you write a report will it be easy to write
ᵖn you mother tongue? No it won't be, because some of the expressions,
ᵖomponents or test procedures that I write will be difficult to translate
ᵖn my mother tongue. If you could keep it in jargon form? Yes then it
ᵖill be much easier then. You did Xhosa first language? Yes.
]

ᵗy report writing was still on track. Here I had to change little bit to
ᵖake it much more clearer.
ᵖ.ᵖWhat usually makes writing clearer?
ᵖy using simple English and straight to the point. Could you give an
ᵖxample?
]

ᵗhat is "simple" English? Sometimes if I write a report I put it in a
ᵖimple way I sometimes find that my boss changes it, It is not
ᵖomplicated English but it's not everyday English. It will be the
ᵖocabulary. It is the formal words, which you normally see in books it
ᵖepends even to him on where the report is going. I think so because he
ᵗnows how his managers want the report. I noticed that if it were going
ᵗigher up he would change it and make it more professional.

ᵗhat happened the first two months was I submit a report and I learned a
ᵖifferent kind of writing, which was good compare to what I wrote before.

ᵗow experienced are you in doing the types of writing in the workplace?
ᵗhat rates you as experienced as a writer? From a scale of 1 to 10, I
ᵖill rate myself as eight. The reason is because I write reports in
ᵗnglish and English is not my first language. I would have done better if
ᵗt were my first language. It is facts and I put it in an understandable
ᵖay. Our test reports are structured in such a way that it is easy for
ᵖomeone else to understand it. All of my appraisals are good. Our reports
ᵖo to other people and the comments are good.
ᵖ.ᵖWhat makes a report understandable?
ᵗry not to drift from the factual information.

ᵗ.ᵖDescribe why your report appraisals are good.
ᵗecause I write what people I write for want to hear and see. That is,
ᵖimple and short reports with relevant facts and information.

ᵗ.ᵖDescribe a good comment?
ᵗny positive comment about my writing is a good comment.
ᵗescribe a "positive" comment. I Sometimes you say I like the way you
ᵖut certain aspects of whatever you was doing and I like the way you put
ᵗt down and I could see that X was happy……. Something like that…If we
ᵗave a meeting and some of my issues come up - and then I start speaking
ᵗbout them or maybe sometimes present reports to senior management and
ᵗhen he is always there. If I present a particular report I will ask him
ᵗow did I do it is then that the compliments come out. Or sometimes he
ᵗill say you have to look at your audience. You feel that there is a need

methodology

cultural practices

report content, report content, templates, templates.

report content, cultural practices, responses,

supervisor, MT EFFECT types + forms feedback feelings, response, responses

supervisor, feedback types, feedback feelings, feedback responses, types + forms,

types + forms

feedback responses

MT EFFECT, cultural practices.

report writing style

Matrix Co-occurrence 3[1,2], Matrix Co-oc

feedback vocabulary

feedback types, report writing style,

audience, feedback responses, feedback route,

types, improvement,

types + forms, clarity,

report content

audience, clarity, types + forms.

report writing style, report integrity, report content, audience.

feedback feelings, feedback responses.

types + forms, supervisor, response,
feedback feelings, audience, acceptance, feedba

types + forms

r a balance between what's work or what has not work in terms of
edback? Yes you need to get both sides otherwise you won't improve on
ur writing. Are most of your reports presented? Not all of them – it is
ose reports that managers feel that the report doesn't justify what is
eded or recommended we test for different departments then we call up
meeting and we will explain our position -why we commented or did not
mment.
ll the comments influence the report? It depends sometimes it become a
ge document and a certain manager will defend his department we always
ike everyone feel that they can make changes but if something happens or
es wrong it is not our fault. □

.□Who are the other people who comment on your reports?
anagers and engineers from my department and other departments.

hat types of comments are made about reports?

hat assists you in your writing in the workplace?
ou said your supervisor/manager he is a very good writer. His writing
s concise and clear. What assistance does he normally gives you? My
upervisor puts things in a simple form. He will break it down so it is
asy. That is words and sentence structure. As I put it to you before
nglish is not my first language and so sometimes I lack vocabulary and
hat is where he helps.
.□Describe a simple form.
Ising a couple of small paragraphs instead of describing or explaining
various things on one chunky paragraph.

□What helps your "lack of vocabulary"? I use Thesaurus on Word or I will
explain it to my colleagues or ask them for the correct word.
Face said there is a drop down menu on sound. Do you have that? Yes – It
is a great tool especially for me.

3.□ What effect will a lack of vocabulary have on writing simply?
It impedes creativity

What do you feel is difficult and easy when writing?
You said what is easy is report body / methods and results.
What makes this easy? If you know what the object is about you want to
write about that part should be easy. You know exactly what you want.
Difficult? You said conclusions. What is difficult about drawing up
conclusions? It should make sense to someone. You must have a way to
write it down in a paragraph or sentence so it is clear for the person
that should read the report. Our reports are technical and the people
that are not technical should be able to understand it. Like our buyers
and finance people that have to make use of the reports.
9.□Describe what makes reports more understandable for non-technical
audiences.
Not using engineering jargons. Using illustrations/pictures.

Describe your role and function when it comes to the writing of reports
and documents. You said: After conducting a test I write a report to the
requestor and then send it to my manager for approval. What is the
requestor's role in the document? The requestors or any person that ask
for a test will tell us that there is a problem and we have to write a
report and then I will send it to my manager. He will distribute it to
everyone involved. I might sometimes call the requestor to find out more
or change something.
That ensures your manager's approval? I think it is standard that you
have to go through your manager. Some of the reports that don't have too
much detail will go quicker. It is not about being short or… Sometimes we
test things that are more complicated to understand even the senior guys
find it difficult to understand. It is those reports that will take
longer for approval.
10.□Explain why a longer report may take longer to get approval?
In most cases the approver is struggling to shorten and simplify the
complicated report.
Who is the "approver"? What is your role in this process? My supervisor.
He is on his own but sometimes he will come back to me if something is
not clear to him. But I got no influence what I find out is what makes
the report longer sometimes you test one component and four derivatives
and it is difficult to consolidate all the results in one report. It
makes the report bigger. If it is a complicated topic it can take days to
write it in order to put it in a way one can understand it. Sometime the
components completely differ and some of them they are not even close to
what is the norm and you have to make sense of that. I sometimes split it
in two reports but you can't runaway from it. I can give you an example.
This one time I inspected a carpet on a bakkie it is usually the carpet
at the back behind the seat. We tested the one bakkie and four different
carpets with four different adhesives and all came up with different
noise characteristics it changes the noise and the sound of the carpet
it becomes complicated. Because you don't know why we are not adhesive
experts. We don't know what the qualities of that are.

11.□Define quick and slow in terms of a time period.
Quick 1week
Slow Up to a month

We have to get our facts straight so it doesn't come back to us. The
standards have to meet every one's requirements and the specialists in
that field.
What writing steps do you usually follow when writing a report or
document? Is it normally the method, results, conclusions and
recommendations? I don't go in that order when I write test reports. What
I will do is to do the objective first and then the body and discussions
of the results and then do the other parts like graphs etc. Do you make
recommendations? Yes the recommendations will come before the
conclusions, because I know exactly what … the test tells you exactly
what needs to be added or what is lacking.
What in you writing do you usually revises or edit? You said yes. You
reread, correct your grammar and spelling mistakes. What do you find
rereading does? Usually when I reread the test I will do the discussion
part and the graph analysis usually in the afternoons because I do the
test reports in the mornings and leave it. In the morning when my mind
is fresh I will do my conclusion. After that I will reread the whole
report again. I put myself in a different area now like it was not I
writing the report and I will check the grammar and spelling again.
12.□How effective is your grammar and spelling checking?
It is good and effective but not perfect.

. What in the grammar do you normally revise? I will revise tenses and
Spelling mistakes. What cause you to focus on these? Ever since I
Started to write other things I find out where the problems in my writing

is. I have to look at the whole report and check everything. At this
point will you have someone else comment on it? I do that most of the
time. I sit next to an Afrikaans speaking colleague.. When I have
problems I will ask him to read the sentence to make sure it makes sense
or ask him to make comments.
13.□How effective is your colleague in giving you feedback?
He's always keen to help and gives constructive feedback.
What is constructive feedback? In every aspect if I am stuck I just ask
- it can be technical or non-technical. His English is far better than
mine. They are always helpful.

14.□Would you make use of an English-speaking colleague?
Yes I would if there was one closer to my desk.

Or sometimes I will go to my boss, write the report, print it out and
ask him for comments.
What determine an acceptable report in your department? You said your
manager. What will result in his approval? I don't know because what he
normally does he distributes the part. He goes over it and he will take
it further.
15.□What is meant by taking it further?
Distribution of the report to the relevant parties. He is the one who
have the power to distribute the report to the people concerned. If I do
a trial test solely for our record keeping or something like that we
don't ....but he will distribute it to the relevant people. He will do it
and my name is still on the report and I will copy it as well. He will
deal with any questions. Sometimes it will go straight to him and he will
copy and ask me to please answer or explain.

What changes are usually made to reports?

16.□When in the writing process will this happen?
When the final draft is complete

But there is no ... He will just check it for completeness. You also said
it must contain the relevant facts. Yes and it should make sense.
What connection is there between writing at school and writing in the
workplace? You said the basics/ writing in the past tense/ you did a
report for laboratory practical. Would this describe the only
similarities? It is similar but we did not concentrate much on reports
but it is very similar. Except here we use a Cambridge and more
templates. It is not the same. I use the same skills that I use at
tertiary. Consider the one at tertiary... it is more basic. I did not do it
everyday and I didn't get a chance to develop my writing skills very
much.
What would identify as barriers you experience in writing. You said
language ESL and you find it difficult to express yourself. Other
barriers? Yes. Access to information sometimes. We don't get a clear
instruction about what we need to do. At the back of your mind you know
what needs to be done but sometimes they don't give clear instructions.
Sometimes they don't give clear instructions about the tests that need to
be done. And you miss out. Getting information about what you have to do
or the equipment you have to do from the person is sometimes lacking.
Specs and so forth. What can be done to ease this? We must set up a
database of material specifications and things like that would help that
is accessible to us. Everybody should be able to access it.
What would you define as good writing? You said clear, concise and easy
to understand reports. If you write something like in or case it gets
distributed and so in that case if you are not clear and if it is not
short enough then it will be difficult to read.
What would you define as poor writing? You said large paragraphs and too
many pages with fewer facts. Does poor writing exists in the engineering
department? No. The only writing that I don't like is when it comes to
someone will send an email, requesting something in Germany and it will
be distributed to people and it is not understandable. They can send a
summary with it to explain. What you have to do is to read it from the
bottom up and there is no extra reference. In terms of formal writing
there is not a lot of poor writing, because we use templates.
17.□How do templates ensure good writing?
The writer is provided with a limited space to write on and that
eliminates unnecessary sentences. Do you find that sometimes you are too
limited? Yes but I will say eight out of ten times the spaces are
adequate but sometimes it is not enough. If you are doing..... and if you
have to elaborate on each test in that case it is not enough and you
have to cram it. Does the template allow you to add? No it is one page
for the conclusions. There are extreme cases where you have to say more.
When you answer those questions that come through are your responses
attached to the report? In many instances someone might say please change
or explain. Then I will change the report. You can always change or
replace it. There is a provision in the templates and you can say it is
the second issue.
What else is eliminated?

Any other comments? Writing is not something that I am fond of. That is
why they send us to do the course in the first place. I do get a sense of
satisfaction when I do a good report but I think the fact that I don't
like writing comes from the fact that I didn't like reading thick books
when I grew up. I first look at the size of the book. However, if
something interests me I will read it like technical reports.

Thanks so much Marvin! Appreciate all your comments and explanations!

Regards

Any other comments?

Right margin annotations:

- content, peer, grammar, peer, sentences, types + forms,
- content, types + forms, response, assistance, peer,
- feedback peer MT EFFECT
- peer
- supervisor, types + forms,
- questions, route, sequence, supervisor, supervisor role, questions, acceptance, audience, questions, report collaboration
- report changes
- report collaboration, revision,
- influence
- assistance, barriers, institution, feelings, data base, links.
- good wrtg
- templates, poor wtg, international,
- templates, templates + formats,
- templates, report structure,
- questions, revision,
- report changes
- improvement, shortcourses, cultural practices, types,

Interview 2 / 26 July 2005 / 14:30 / Moses
Based on research Interview 1□/ 22 February 2005 / 10:00

Qualification: NDip Mechanical engineering
Department: reliability vehicle engineering
Work experience: 5 years
MT: Afrikaans

I just want to ask you did you read the transcription? Yes I read through
most of it, but did not finish it all. Did you have any comments on what
was said or how it was done? No not at all. Are you quite happy that it
was a true reflection of what we…. Yes I can't remember all we said. Nor
did I. There was two questions so that was that and what in terms of
research getting people to give responses and respond to things like
interviews and questions what would you say is the most problematic
thing for someone like you in the work place to actually do something
like this? I think making time where you can sit down and concentrate
long because this is quite a document to sit and read through it and
concentrate and not going off and start gibberish or even be sarcastic
you have so much distractions and the only time you can do this is after
hours where you can do it on your own. So it is a practical thing more
than reluctance or not being able …. Is it more practical? I think just
because of I have such a work load for something like this it comes to
you want to do this but it is a thing that can wait and if you wait you
will wait forever. Thanks for that You will see on page 2 …

methodology

Where did you study?
What types of writing have you done/do in your mother tongue? In the
workplace? Ja luckily the people working under me are all Afrikaans. I
always speak Afrikaans. It is just at official meetings that we speak
English. Emails will only be in Afrikaans if it is sending out to
friends. Very seldom work related. I normally have to write in English.
I've got a spelling dyslectic problem and working for four years straight
in English makes me so much better to communicate in English than in
Afrikaans. It is easier for me to spell correctly in English than in
Afrikaans.

1. What types of writing do you do in your second language?   ·
You said reports. I communicate mainly via email to give feedback what is
currently happening. So that all happens in English because I speak to
German people all the time no work related except speaking in Afrikaans.

2. What type/s of writing did you do at school?
You said normal language report writing. English second language it
would be report writing in the sense of essays, writing reports on books
and the letters. Namibia is totally Afrikaans. I am totally South
African.

3. Describe the writing instruction you received at school. (How you were
taught to write?)
You mentioned styles of writing letters, short stories, essays and reports
·□What styles were taught? In English we just wrote letters that is only
one part of the curriculum the rest was Afrikaans. You had your projects
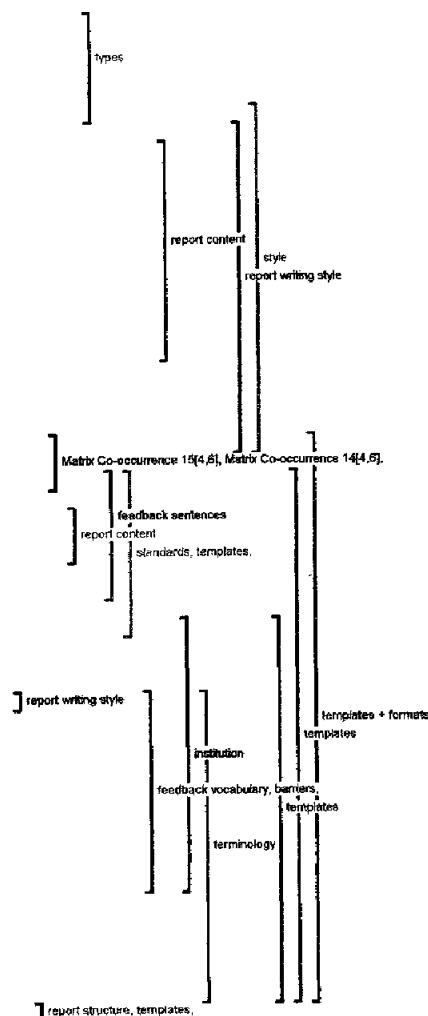where the styles were exactly the same.

4. What type/s of writing do you usually do in the workplace?
Reports Any other? The amount of what you do is once a month.
I have to write basically a summary report about everyday of what I do.
It is normally about five pages. The writing part is very technical.
Route mileage etc for every vehicle. I use templates. Once a month I will
do a proposal. My line of work is purely technical.
1.□Describe a typical technical writing style. Can you try and describe
what goes in technical writing? Ok a technical writing was more factual
more facts based and to the point. There are a lot of abbreviations. Are
they standard abbreviations? Standard in ... we have a 23-page document
of abbreviations in ... alone. So that is an international abbreviation
and if you use it anyone will know what you are actually talking about? I
am not sure I don't think so. But they have got access? In ... everybody
is supposed to. But you won't use abbreviations in a document that is
used world wide unless, of course…. You think that abbreviations in terms
of academic writing I will use the full term and use the abbreviation
afterwards and from then onwards I will use the abbreviation. Do you use
the same technique? If you are going to use an abbreviation more times in
a sentence or document, yes, I will surely use that. Are there any other
non-standard forms of abbreviations besides your official listing? Ja I
think especially in the technical department there is quite a few that
will overlap with the financial guys and you will be using the same
abbreviation for different situations. That's for including things like
dates, sizes and that kind of information.

2.□How do templates assist this writing style? Man because we are using
those
templates it gives you a guideline what to write. And also it is limited
to space and
once it is limited to space and characters you already know how to
shorten your
sentence and the objective can be a paragraph and it gives you a very
good
guideline. Did you ever read a template or report that was so concise
that you
could not understand it? Yes that is a big problem with us because you
get forced
to use the template formats and being to the point. Two departments can
be next to
each other and use different abbreviations and wording and you will lose
the whole
terminology of the sentence just because they use words so factually
based. If you
use a word like heterodyne for own department everyone will know it but
the other
department won't know the word. That car suffers from heterodyne? and you
don't
know what it is. What is it? That is when your vehicle gets to a
frequency. When two
frequencies match up. And you are driving it is just a peak normally from
the wheels
and the car goes through a shudder and nothing changes. A lot of
frequencies just
coming to peak together. So that is the fancy word. Ja.
3.□I noticed that you….the one report that I saw the time when you done

types

report content

style
report writing style

Matrix Co-occurrence 15[4,6], Matrix Co-occurrence 14[4,6].

feedback sentences

report content

standards, templates.

report writing style

templates + formats
templates

institution

feedback vocabulary, barriers,
templates

terminology

report structure, templates,

he course there is another addendum where you will add the conclusions
and recommendations seems that you get the chance to extend - is that
normal for all templates? Ja.. OK so you would have the concise template
form and you will extend in terms of fleshing it out a bit? Ja, because
the rule is the manager is suppose to only read the first page and know
what will be following and the rest. He doesn't need to read the rest. So
this is actually say for instance you have to go back a year or two after
writing a report and you are looking for a specific problem you would
just refer to the front pages and you are suppose to pick it up and if
you want to go into more details it is available. And it is important you
always have that part B? Ja because if someone wants more information or
if you have a problem you need to put all the circumstances that work
together to cause that problem you need to highlight it. Because it will
always come up and someone will ask how and why. A lot of times you get
that you got to a conclusion but six months down the line it was found
that you were halfway in finding the problem and it was something else.
You will give your circumstances and you will see the full extent.

5. How experienced are you in doing the types of writing described?
Spelling problem causes me to rethink sentences
.☐Describe your "spelling problem"? I am dyslectic I write the way I
can't spell for the life of me. I hear words phonetically and that is the
way I spell and that is why I have a problem reading be it in English or
Afrikaans. I battle with both.
.☐What do you rethink in your sentences? Especially when I get to a word
and I can't spell it it will take me a while I will use a synonym. I do
go to spell check or use the thesaurus but if you spell as badly as I do
it doesn't even give you the right spelling.
1.☐What effect do you think your spelling has on meaning? Yes I get to
words that I don't know how to spell it and then I will have to think on
another line of attack to get the same message across. Will you abandon
the word? I will normally try all the means and methods to get to it
normally it helps to ask your colleagues but sometimes they are not close
by and you have to think of another way of writing. Our writing is a lot
of time brackets. You have this amount of time to finish writing. But
doses if I read your work do you think I won't understand what you are
talking about? No, I don't think so. I think it is very irritating for
senior management to read something that is not spelled incorrect and you
get ripped off big time for that. If everything else is technically
correct and structured well you know there might be…the fact that you
have dyslexia that people should be able to sort that out? Well many
times when I come to spell check it doesn't help. That amazes me that
spell check can't help you. You get like … we were writing odour today
and I battle - I had it oder and it gave me outdoor and order …. Do you
ever use the Thesaurus? Ja but in the technical parts the Thesaurus also
does not help and you are back at square one. The technical words are
also more difficult and you don't have a spell check for that.
6. What assists you in your writing in the workplace?
You said you normally hand report to colleagues to review before
submitting to my manager
.☐What colleagues read your report? Normally I will take it to the people
that do similar testing and who will have the technical know how which is
probably not the best but they are Afrikaans.
5.☐What help does an Afrikaans colleague able to give you? I normally
find that if an Afrikaans guy can read my report in English and
understand what is going on the report is written in such a way that most
people will be able to understand it even if it is not always
grammatically correct. The structure of the sentences … in Afrikaans you
think in a backward way compared to…. And sometimes they won't pick that
up. That is where an English guy will fix the grammatical language
structure. Are there no English colleagues available? It is always
something, I had only Afrikaans colleagues for three years but now I got
virtually none. Only English guys around me. There is one Afrikaans guy
and one Xhosa the rest is English. Would you give it to anyone that is
available? Ja, someone who will understand what I am doing - I won't
give it to a junior that got no idea of what is going on. Say for
instance if there were an English and Afrikaans colleague nearby would
you prefer to give it to an Afrikaans guy? I will give it to an English
because I know most of time it will be the grammar and not the
understanding part. For instance one don't think…small things for example
om jou klere vuil te maak, to dirty your pants it's not the same.
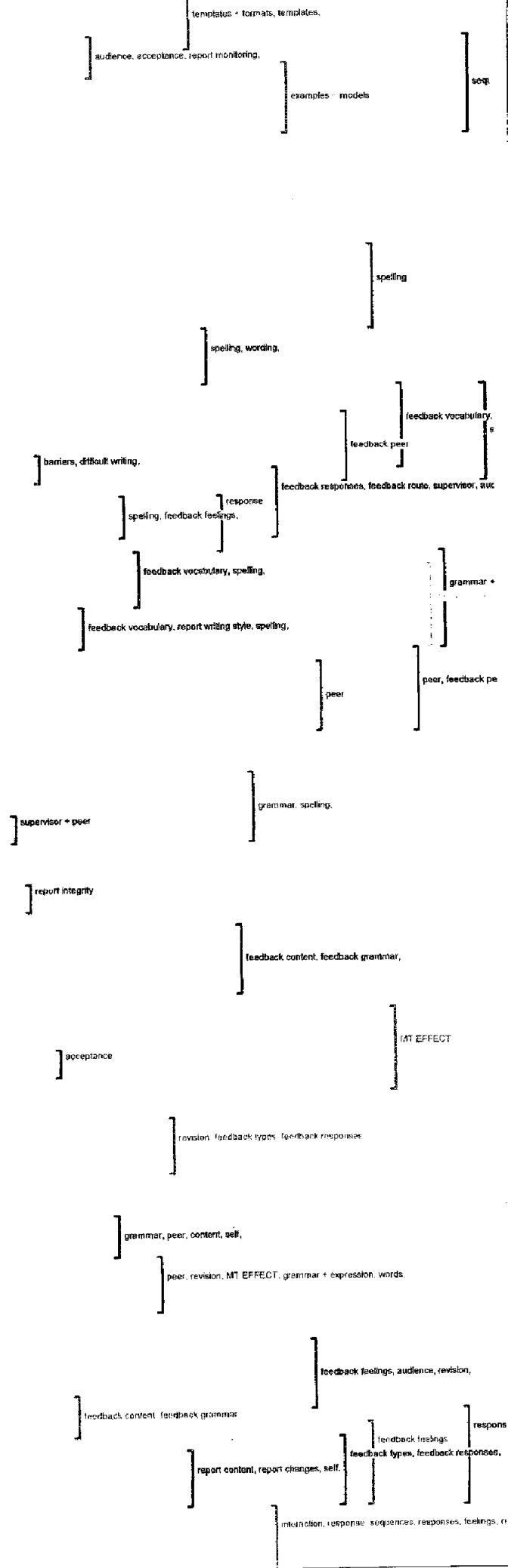Something small like that. ☐

5.☐What help do you think English colleagues will be able to give? How
often would you take reports to colleagues to check?
The higher the importance - the higher up the structure the report goes
to I will make sure someone proof reads it. When its finished I will for
the last time give it to my immediate manager to read it. Even if he is
my immediate manager I saw him as a colleague. Was Albert like your
manager is now? Ja. It used to go to X now it is going to Y then it goes
to ……. so there is another step? Yes. It all depends on who is in line
for …Albert would normally give it his rubber stamp and X will more or
less sign it off, but if Z or someone else who is also Afrikaans will
surely bring it back to you and ask you to rewrite it it is difficult to
say … It all depends on their line of thought. Ok it is funny - if X
finds a problem he will come back to you and not give it to Z. It all
depends on what mood he is in.

☐What do colleagues review? (And when?) They will check technical detail
and grammar. I will do it 99% of the time. It just becomes part of the
process. I will get a proofreader.
7.☐What grammar is usually checked? It is mostly word order - it is using
words where there are two words where you could use one that you don't
know in English. That would be more grammar. It gets better all the time
you are very bilingual in the way you speak? I am just on my nerves!

8.☐Describe the effect of their feedback on your writing. That depends on
the mood I am in. If you put a lot of effort in it and they don't see it
the way you see it you try and fight it but in the end you just find
yourself rewriting it. Because if they could not understand it someone
else down the line might also not understand it. Would you add more
detail? Most of the time it will be grammar. The technical part is
perfect. Just the way it is put down. You said sometimes you get
frustrated? Like I said it all depends on the mood I am in. Because you
put in a lot of effort, hours and hours of work and you feel it is
correct and someone else come and shoot you down. Sometimes I just blow
my top and said he doesn't know what he is talking about and then I will
anyway just correct it.
☐What is your reaction to their review? I will always discuss it. I
normally will compromise or use their opinion. If I don't agree I will
get a different perspective. They will think in a logical way and I will
look again at the way it is structured. It is normally the wording not

templates + formats, templates.

audience. acceptance. report monitoring,

examples - models

seqi

spelling

spelling, wording,

feedback vocabulary,
s

feedback peer

barriers, difficult writing,

feedback responses, feedback route, supervisor, aud

response

spelling, feedback feelings,

feedback vocabulary, spelling,

grammar +

feedback vocabulary, report writing style, spelling,

peer, feedback pe

peer

grammar, spelling,

supervisor + peer

report integrity

feedback content, feedback grammar,

acceptance

MT EFFECT

revision, feedback types, feedback responses

grammar, peer, content, self,

peer, revision, MT EFFECT, grammar + expression, words.

feedback feelings, audience, revision,

feedback content, feedback grammar

respons

feedback feelings

feedback types, feedback responses,

report content, report changes, self.

interaction, response sequences, responses, feelings, re

,e facts.
).□Who would usually give you a different perspective if you don't agree
th what is said? It is always easier to go to someone who wrote a
,milar report or understands the concerns that you are wording, because
, are trying to rotate the people in the department so there is always
;meone who has done a similar report. It is always easier to speak to
,ose who have done it. Are they quite accessible to you? Yes our
;partment is very open you can walk into anybody's office and ask what
,ey think.
..□What is the difference between wording and facts? The grammar and not
,e technical detail. That is normally the problem.
  What do you feel is difficult and easy when writing?
,u said: Difficult: reports must be written in the way your manager
,inks / write 10 months research as a 1 page summary / writing bad
;ports in a way that does not offend anyone
]What does your manager require in a report? (How does he think a report
,ould be written?) My manager is English he thinks in a different style
; we do and you have to get into his way of thinking otherwise he would
.p your report to pieces and you have to write it over and over again.
 should have to get more information and I come more in line with his
,ne of thought and acceptance. And I make sure the structure is the same.
?.□What is needed to get into his way of thinking and acceptance? It is
 lot of ... more the ... first what you want to achieve with the report. For
? sometimes the essence of reporting that something failed where he
)esn't see it that way. He sees it as it as something down the line that
,n cause maybe warranty claims. So he thinks of it in the bigger
:rspective. Or I said I complain from the stance ....The whole business
)rking with someone is it outlined expectations - so that you are clear
, your mind where this is going? After writing a few reports you start
;eing each manager's different style. Some would try and emphasise
)ncerns as being from the records, he is more worried about what caused
,e problem. Where others are more worried about the effects of the ....
,d that is where the line of thinking comes in. Where you actually
,ing in line...many managers for instance Dominique, he comes from outside
;aning a dealership, and he always thinks in the line of what it will
)st the customer where you will get a technical manager that will ask
,at caused the problem. He doesn't wants to know what the cause is; he
,st wants to know what the failure is. Is it that that the cause is a
,rranty issue? Yes and it is the perspective and background of the
,anager. That is my perspective.

3.□What is your response to your report being ripped to pieces? It is
;ain like I said it depends on the mood I am in. Some days I can take it
,ying down and see my mistakes and other days I fight a bit I will
,rbalise my frustration. Would they discuss it with you or you said you
,rite in red pen? It depends on what time they have to review it and he
,ill sit down and use it in a red pen. Other times he will just glance at
,u and something doesn't make sense he will throw it back to you and ask
) rewrite it. There is no standard way? It all depends on the time and
,ood.

4.□ To what structure are your referring when you say make sure the
;tructure is the same? You said once you keep on writing you make sure
,at your structure is the same as his. Yes I think it more in the way
,e sentences were grammatically and the way he thinks. I will respect
,is background and it is then easier to structure your sentences and the
,mphasis is on what he is concerned about.

,e wording - you have different companies working together. For instance
,e wording - in South Africa we talk about the fifth door and other
;ople call it a boot. Or others call it boot level and you have to get
,t so that the manager will accept it.
]What is difficult about summarising? You said to write ten months
:search, as a one-page summary is difficult. Because I hate losing info
,I try to get everything in. But it is mainly pictures and details and
,u are expected to put it down on 4 sentences as general comment on the
:hicle. I have come better at that After writing so many reports I
;arned how to accommodate and writing all the major concerns.
5.□What about writing many reports makes you a better writer? It is more
,, that line again where you don't have to think where this is going and
,u will start writing that way. Moses will you groom someone new as a
,aw engineer who don't have the background. Yes the new guys get thrown
,, the deep end and it normally depends on the manager, it all depends on
,,ich manager he is.

]You also said writing a bad report as not to offend anyone. What is a
,ad report? Meaning testing the component and it fails. You cannot offend
,,e guy who has the parts tested.
6.□What offends the guy who tested the parts? If you write a report
,bout poor design or failure it offends them. You are supposed to write
,he part didn't past the test. You are not blaming the person who
,esigned the part you blame the part itself. Many times the part failed
,ecause someone in the manufacturing process made a mistake. And now if
,u say poor design and it wasn't that you will take offence to it.
;pecially in this company where you never know who is you manager.

,he parts people don't like failure you are not even allowed to use a
,egative word like failure. We have been requested not to use the word
,ail or failure because of legal reasons. This is only in the last month.
,he fact that something did not pass, people take it very personally. It
,eans extra work for that person. It keeps the whole project back. I will
,ry to be human and feel a bit for the poor oke - give a person a chance
,o explain but I can be blunt. It is my style to be blunt I don't like to
,eat about the bush. I will rather use the word deficient instead of
,ailure.
7.□Describe a blunt writing style. You said you prefer saying it like it
,s. Yes I don't like beating around the bush. Many times it might be a
,aterial problem and from personal experience it will know it is the
,esign but the manager will say how do you know it is poorly designed and
,t is the small things. I will just come out and say it.

.2 Easy: rough outlines
]What is easy about rough outlines? I work very structured I normally
,se templates I like to use things that are proven to work, my reports
,4 pages are structured. I did the first one they way they wanted it,
,nd then later in the report put the stuff in I want to. I will go the
,xtra mile. To use the technology available. So far they are impressed
,ven if it is more work. They have to work a little more.

report changes, feelings, responses, response, interaction, types + forms, sequences,

examples + models

content, easy, grammar, wording,

models + examples. templates. peer, links, data base. assistance,

report collaboration. assistance,

supervisor. Matrix Co-occurrence 11[1,6]. supervisor role, s

supervisor, report monitoring, wording, report integrity, warranty.

report content, models + examples, aude.
report integrity, report monitoring.
report content, report collaboration.

types + forms, feelings, response, responses, types, writing, su

feedback types, feedback responses. report writing style.

Matrix Co-occurrence 9[1,13], models + examples. Matrix Co-occurrence 10[1,15], :
report integrity, revision, feedback sentences. examples + models,

Matrix Co-occurrence 3[1,2], Matrix Co-occurrence 3[1,3], Matrix Co-occurrence 8[2,1], Matrix Co-occurrence 8

pictures + graphs, improvement hard + important

peer, improvement, assistance, institution. feelings.

assistance

poor wtg audience warranty.

report writing style, report integrity, report content,

tone, wording, wording.

report content, responses.

report content, responses, standards, report integrity, tone, report writing style,

templates, templates,

3. Describe your role/function (what you have to do) when it comes to the writing of reports and/or documents. You said sifting all the dates recorded for a test and then deciding what should be highlighted and possibly make suggestions on improving a product or test.
- What is involved in sifting information? For instance the rim at the moment I am testing durability if your vehicle got a flat wheel it could be a splint in the tyre but it would be a minor concern. But if you have a failure for instance the rim you will mention that. Sifting means between minor and major concerns. Where did you get the information from? From ... or through the everyday data that I collected.
- What recommendations and suggestions are made? I am a very creative thinker and I can never stop without making recommendations and suggestions. Especially when the product is due for the market. The people you are testing it for don't know what the market is like and I make suggestions so that the improvement comes out before the product ... I normally document it. I don't get response, but I do check if my recommendations have been acted on. It all depends on your expertise.
18. Why are you not given a response to your suggestions? Most of my reports go to Germany and I don't see anything after that - after it left here. They process my work and they do what they want. How do you check if your recommendations are acted on? Describe your responses to this information Specially with the German things you must check when the next vehicle arrives, if it was changed but many of the things ... I talked about the mud flaps - I just get frustrated because three years down the line they still have a problem and I told them that the first day I tested it I told them it was poorly designed and there was a mistake. That is politics. It will be nice if they do follow on the suggestions I make. But if you don't follow up you don't get any feedback. It is up to them to make a suggestion or recommendation.

- Who else would make recommendations? Ja because I normally give it to the group engineer and get their input. It is general.

What writing steps do you usually follow when writing a report / document? You said - Proofread copies, handout for proof reading, then submit to manager who sends back for corrections. It will normally be grammar. He will change the grammar. My manager is English. Any report will always come back. You can write it how good it will come back with some comment. My response is... I will always laugh and fix it. You don't have a choice. The more you do it the more you learn about the style of your manager.
19. Describe the comments that normally accompany your reports. You said the type of comments are sometimes verbal or in writing or red pen or you can discuss it?
20. What have you learnt about a manager's style through rewriting and his comments? Like I said it all depends on the time available to the manager to review it.

- Describe your proofreading / Describe proofreading by others
- What type of corrections needs to be made usually? You hand in hard copy and they will do the changes in red. It is just easier because the paper is in black or blue. Just like school.
21. What is your response to changes in red? Red makes me angry and we are right back at the beginning. I would always read through it and sometimes get extra frustrated because I can read it in Afrikaans and I can't see why they have a problem. I am reading and think it is the stupid language but the red is quite aggressive to put comments down.

22. Where are comments usually made on your draft?
3. What in your writing do you usually revise or edit (change)? Compiling the conclusion -
- What details are usually changed? Especially with words that is globally been used, specially the parts that we give local names. It is normally around that and the structure of the sentences. I am getting more in tune with the global use of words.
23. What structures in sentences are changed? We have spoken about this. You mentioned just now that ...become quite interested in the questions. There does the questions come from? Mostly ... if it is ... it always is the person who have to interlink between you and the German counterparts they will ask to make clarity for themselves it is mainly the language barrier. Here you would get the questions from the component engineer. Once the report is gone out the questions will come back to me and I am expected to answer as soon as possible.

24. What things do you usually do to revise or edit your writing? You said: Make it more grammatically correct so that non-technical people can understand the results.
- What about grammatical correctness would help a non-technical person understand your results? Yes specially with my reports going back to Germany. They think in German but they are reading it in English. You have to be one step ahead. So that you can write it so that they can understand it. I learned this style and if someone is not technically minded they will still understand it. I do get comments back from Germany. Also questions. Once the report is issued it stays the same.
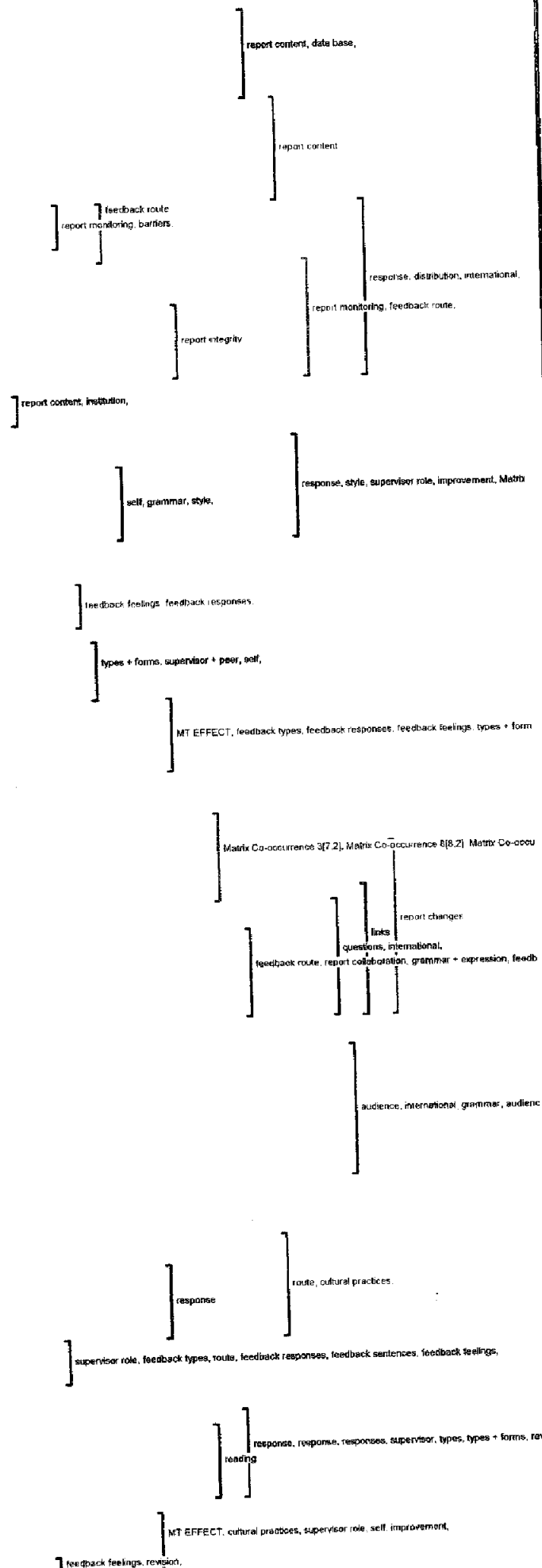24. Describe the style you have learnt.

25. What usually classifies a report as final or complete for circulation?
Manager
- Describe what would usually result in your manager's approval for a document. I don't know. I will try and get it approved the first time around. I am approaching an acceptable standard. There is a bunch of us that is writing reports and there is only one English first language engineer. Most of us are second language speakers. That is why we are so used to get the reports back.
25. Do only second language speakers get reports back? No again it is more the ... once you are in tune with the manager's line of thought in sentence structure you can expect the report to go quicker.

26. You say you are used to getting reports back. What do you feel about getting reports back? I am so used to getting it back - it came to a stage where I don't even proof read it, but then my manager starts putting pressure on me - you have to take responsibility. That frustrates me when you done everything you could and it still comes back.

27. What would be different with an Afrikaans-speaking supervisor? I don't think it would be a difference, but I was less experience at that stage which might have been the reason for it to come back, but afterwards it still goes to an English speaking person. So I don't think

report content, data base,

report content

feedback route
report monitoring, barriers.

response, distribution, international.

report monitoring, feedback route.

report integrity

report content, institution,

self, grammar, style,

response, style, supervisor role, improvement, Matrix

feedback feelings, feedback responses.

types + forms, supervisor + peer, self,

MT EFFECT, feedback types, feedback responses, feedback feelings, types + form

Matrix Co-occurrence 3[7.2], Matrix Co-occurrence 8[8.2], Matrix Co-occu

report changes
links
questions, international,
feedback route, report collaboration, grammar + expression, feedb

audience, international, grammar, audienc

route, cultural practices.

response

supervisor role, feedback types, route, feedback responses, feedback sentences, feedback feelings,

response, response, responses, supervisor, types, types + forms, revis
reading

MT EFFECT, cultural practices, supervisor role, self, improvement,

feedback feelings, revision,

would make any difference. But if someone rewrites your report it robs
of a learning process.

.☐Who and What determine an acceptable report/ writing in your
partment?
.1 Who? vehicle engineering manager
Anyone else? Then it goes to the other group managers and it also goes
Germany.

.2☐What?

.☐What connection is there (if any) between writing at school and/or
rtiary institutions and writing in the workplace?
ou said: Use a lot of nonsense to prove that you knew nothing at school...
: work as few words as possible are used to show that you know what
ou're talking about and just enough so that other people do not know
nough about the subject not to doubt you. Yes it is like a comprehension
est you are expected to write sentences to show that you know what you
re talking about.

☐What proves that you know what you're talking about to all audiences?
☐What could affect getting the message across?
☐What is "a lot of nonsense"?
ou will always find the person that think he knows more than you and you
ave to in that one sentence show that you know what you are talking
bout. For example driving on gravel roads. I have to write it in such a
ay that I don't offend the guy that designed the mudflats – ...It is just
oo difficult to explain.
8.☐Describe the person who would think that he knows more than you. That
s more technically – for instance a component engineer will be
pecialising in a part but he won't know the testing it was subjected to.
nd once you tested a part you know the technically specs off hand. He
ill knows it on paper and he will try to look better. He will try and
attle you with words. This part will normally be during the process.
very weeks testing gets scrutinised.

9.☐What would usually offend the guy who designed the mud flaps? Again
y favourite line is: They were not thinking. Down the line there is
till problem. I complained two years down the line but they try and
attle you with words. They did not do their work. I am just the tester.
ow you have to look and see where the problem is. Would it be visually
low acceptable if you let the mud flat hanging halfway? That is the thing
e acceptable if you let the mud flat hanging halfway? That is the thing
: would say the mud flap is not working. They would say if you make the
nud flap like you want it will not be visually appealing to the
ustomers. Normally … maybe one year you will wake up and see that mud
laps have changed? Ja

0.☐What would identify as barriers you experience in the writing process?
'ou said: Terminology and keeping it short
☐What "terminology" is a barrier"? Especially in the company there are
o many different technical layers for... there is no standard. You have
o be aware of the differences. Your manager will have to know what words
ou can't use. You never know for instance the word tailback. Because in
outh Africa it is the back of the bakkie. In Germany it is the boot of a
atchback. I try and cater for the Germans. Some people don't understand
he terminology. If you use an obvious word what we are used to they
ight not even know the word.
1.☐Describe the various standards for technical understanding.

2.☐ What would you define as good writing?
'ou said – No readers with blank expressions after reading your report
☐What causes blank expressions? I always think of becoming a teacher. If
ou can explain something so that they understand it a light went on and
ot the dumbstruck expression.

3.☐What would you define as poor writing?
'ou said: Questions about content and validity
☐What can be done to overcome these concerns? Sometimes you for instance
ou find a part to be failing and they say ja you should understand that
ou drive on gravel. For me failure is failure and to sweet talk it and
ay if the vehicle is used on tar it might cause trouble... You are not
llowed to say that it will fail. That frustrates me. It makes you doubt
he results. If you're not clearly stating it you imply that there is a
roblem. For a technical person it would always be a problem.
☐Does poor writing exist in engineering? Ja like I said when someone
eads it and there is a blank expression and you can see they don't
nderstand it. It takes normally a week to compile and write a report.
2. What causes a blank expression? I think as engineers as soon as
omething makes sense the gears starts turning. You light up and
hinking I could do it this way. If it doesn't start the gears turning
hen I know I will have to start explaining.

4.☐Any other comment/s about writing? No the research is not a problem
he – problem was right in the beginning deciding who should go on the
eport writing course.

hanks so much for all this effort Thanks so much for your responses and
omments Moses. They' have been such a help.

egards

ny other comments? Specially things like this we had this one class in
ommunication at Technikon and it was in Afrikaans. And also the
ecturers at Technikon they may be brilliant communicators but they have
o engineering background.
'ere there a lot of changes in the motor industry? Yes it is more
nternational. Everything is more standardised. We do have a lot of
emplates and we are trying to find out from ... what they expect, new
eport writing styles and new templates. There is a procedure for
verything. It is coming from the States. We have a website and if you
ant to know anything you have to go to the website. And the managers
on't have time to review all those things. If you move from here to ...
till it be similar? I don't know ... is more German orientated. So I
on't know ... came from ... and he might know the difference. You are
till in the process where you are learning skills that will translate
nternationally? But like I said the previous company I worked for was
erman orientated but it was totally different. The reports you wrote
ent out and the managers did not know what we were doing. Once you are a
upplier … got a controlling hand it is a very big company what you

write is going out and it is authority. Where if you are a supplier and
you write something you are just the village idiot. But they always try
and find fault with it.... is the authority and their reputation - they
will rather caution on the side.

report monitoring, report integrity.

Interview 2 / 11 August 2005 / 15:00 / Tani
Based on research interview 1/ 16 February 2005 / 9:00

Qualification: Diploma in Mechanical engineering qualification
Department: Engineering
Work experience: 3 years
MT: Venda

I see that you've got all these languages that you speak. I think your
mother tongue must be Venda? Am I right? Ja.
So my first question to you is what kind of writing do you do or have you
done in your mother tongue? In my mother tongue. Well basically was more
like classroom essays and poems and it was mostly I only did in my
mother, I mean writing in my mother tongue from school in my Primary
years and after that it was mainly first language in English.
Okay, so when do you now use your mother tongue? Every now and then well
when we speak and obviously… But I mean in writing?
Well in writing maybe when we're sending e-mails to friends and use
mother language into it and basically but nothing more essays or work
related stuff.
Ever been at this point? No.
Okay, obviously all the kinds of writing that you do are in your second
language, … What would you regard now as your second language?
As my second language. I would I would regard English and Tsonga together
cause I speak a lot of Tsonga and I speak a lot of Venda as well. Tsonga
is basically Shangaan, ja. Okay, from your area? Ja from my area and
English is more or less I could say I speak on a daily basis more English
than my mother tongue maybe because I spend most of my time here at work.
And if you bring it down to writing? Well down to writing, it's mainly
English. Would be mainly English, you wouldn't actually use your Tsonga?
Tsonga or Venda.
Okay. I think you've mentioned what kinds of writing you did at school.
It was your essays and poems (can't hear). And here, this is basically in
English most of the time? Most of the time, English.
Did you do Venda first language to matric or… ? I did English first
language. Now that this takes you back to school, how would you describe
how your teacher taught you to write at school. Think about an essay what
would you normally been expected to do? In my essays?
Ja or any kind of job. If they said to you write this essay what would
they normally expect you to do?
Mainly if you've got a topic then there should be an introduction to the
topic and the main body where you break everything down and after that
sort of like compile a conclusion that just closes up or summarises
whatever you're writing about.
So that's the most instruction you got in terms of. (can't hear) and pay
attention to how you structure your sentences and grammar and basically
the tenses. Don't mix them up, if you're going to use past tense then use
past tense and if you're going to change over to present then you must
make it clear that you you're changing over. It shouldn't be a case
where somebody is reading down the paragraph and they're like oh now
we're on the present tense. Okay. So there was consistency in your
writing and. Okay I'll see a lot of that coming in what you say later as
well… you've mentioned the kinds of writing you do in the work place.
You said presentations, parts and drawings, releases and other documents,
can you just describe what releases are?
Ihm, it's mainly when you have to release a part let's say for instance
there's a part coming in or you're inviting a part so it would feature on
the part then you sort of like have to have document out to notify
everybody involved and everybody who works with the part starting from
the (can't hear) that puts the part lists together. You're basically
stating the reason why that thing is being revised and well in this
instance you don't really have to specify exactly what's going to be
released because then it don't usually follows and then (can't hear) will
say what has changed. But it's basically to give an idea of what it is
the reason of change of (can't hear) and filtering that through to the
(can't hear) team department so that they know exactly what is changing.
Mainly you give, you basically give what it is that you do, whether
you're revising or changing or deleting or adding something new and you
give reasons as to why you're doing it and how it should be done and in
which model lines will be affected.
If you think about your sentence structure and the way you've mentioned
all those specific details but would this be done in a listing format or
in sentence format or phrases or…? Okay the reason should be given more
in a sentence format because that's where you should give a clearer
description of the changes or revision.
Is a template not used, you just tick things and?
There are. There's like a default form that is common to everybody and
then you use that form to fill in all the information where you have to
fill in that info but mainly the reason is mainly something that comes
from you. It's not something you've got default questions or something
like that. You explain exactly what it is that you're doing yourself.
Okay that would actually be what you generate on your own? Ja on your
own. Interesting presentations that would be like?☐
Let's say for instance or you want to introduce a change or something
new, you call in everybody from the front all the departments whoever is
involved in that issue and then you prepare a presentation and in that
presentation you basically give in the background and (can't hear) adjust
your certain design that you're going to introduce and you present that
design and you more or less explain how it would work and then you could
buy in from production whether they'll be able to fit it into their
production line and whether it's going to work for everybody. That's how
you call in all those different role players.
But you use overheads and power point?
Overheads and power point maybe power point. I prefer power point.
So your structure there would basically be the point and you'll talk
around it. Talk around it ja.
Sort of presentation not something formal. Would you ever document that
into your piece of writing or would it stay as a presentation format?
Stay just as a presentation format. And then they would buy into it or
whatever. Ja they would buy into it and usually you present and then you
discuss around it and then you minute all the evidence or the comments
and then after that you need to issue out minutes.
Okay so like a meeting type of thing? Meeting type of thing.
Alright , one of my questions is what is, you say how experienced are you
in doing this kind of writing and what would you say has made you
experienced in doing this kind of stuff that you've been doing?
This kind of stuff?
Would you say you are you are experienced in doing this presentations and
all that? I would think so ja.
What would you do, if you had to try and say something what would you say

speaking in public and you've all these eyes looking at you and if you're going to get a message across so that everybody understands. You shouldn't be in a situation where you feel intimidated because it's going to restrict you on how you explain yourself or how you convey the message so in that I would say the fact that in High school I did public speaking and I would say something that was built up from an early stage and as you do it the more often you do it the more you gain that confidence and it just makes the whole presentation more effective.
1. Describe what usually gives a presenter confidence. Well you just get confident when you do something over and over. It might be presenting different things but then you basically ...the structure and then you get used to your own style of presenting and you tend to get use to your own way of doing things and the more you do it the more you feel comfortable in what you are doing. And I also find that in most cases you are presenting to the same type of people and you see the same familiar faces. It might be management but it is management that you interact with on a daily basis or weekly basis and that helps in gaining more confidence. You know your audience. There might be one or two new faces but the majority is basically the same people. It is repetition and the audience. The more well prepared you are the better obviously. Do you find that the preparation gets easier? What I have experienced is that you can be however prepared but when you go in there and present it will never go the way you have planned. You know and you always have the odd person who wants to ask questions. Even if you are saying that you are not taking questions or any clarity. There is always one person who wants to get clarity in between and that also makes you deviate from your plan on how you had intended to present. That also prolongs your presentation. But I guess in terms of preparation then you are better prepared for questions that will come your way. Whereas when you are not prepared and you don't know what you are presenting you will be caught out.

Practice? Ja, practice basically. And would you say doing the releases has kind of? Doing the releases is on the job because from outside from tertiary I wouldn't have known that I would be doing releases and school I mean at work I wouldn't have known in which environment I would find myself working at so but would be on the job and I guess that also comes with work experience because at first you would have to know how to structure the reasoning. Okay you have an idea, you know what it is that you have to do but you there's a certain format that you have to follow so that would come with as you do it the more you do it and...
2. Describe the format you followed. On presentation. It is the normal structure. And if you have recommendations it is more verbal.
Were you trained or did you have to models to follow in terms of thinking about the releases again doing models for you or examples?
Examples. I could say that sort of guides you as a team in (can't hear) you should fill in a form like they say it's a generic form for everybody so.
But the structures; your structure would come often from you where you sort of phrase something.
Ja ja the way you phrase something. The structure is guided by the form itself I mean the documents itself. Ja but then you fill in the reasons and explanations. Let's go to number seven. What would you say assists you when you are doing these things in this place? Do you ever say what has been your assistance? What has helped you?
I come in on (can't hear) the hang on about things but then it's mainly co-workers because they know how to put it in and all of these documents there I finish it, my senior engineer has to see it and my manager sees it so basically they also come back if they've got questions and they'll give suggestions as to instead of doing it this way why don't you do it that way. That also helps.
3. What questions are usually asked about your work? It's normally more clarity or more background. At what point will this be? In most cases they don't really get to see my presentation beforehand. Well they will ask how far are you? And if something comes up they might ask if I included it in the presentation. In most cases when I present that is when they see the presentation. Most of the questions will come then. Do you note the questions? It is normally questions to get clarity and not to make changes.
]
4. What would result in work coming back?

5. What does the senior engineer and your manager usually suggest about your reports? There might be times when they want to implement something in production then and ok we know what it is we want to do but you might overlooked some of the processes that happens after like I am in charge of ...I am more involved with the body shop people. And after body shop it goes to paint shop. Lets just say for instance we want to add another hole into another panel and it is a certain size. And I overlook the fact that when it goes to the paint shop there are other layers that are added to the hole that might affect the size then they might come back and say did you look at that then I will have to go back and consider that.

6. Describe your reaction to these comments. If it is constructive then I will be happy with it. If it is negative where you get to feel that person is not there to help you but out to let you feel that you did not do your homework I don't appreciate that. I guess it is also in the attitude that they come to you. I easily pick up different attitudes you can pick it up if the person is there to help or just there to break down. If it is positive I can work with them.
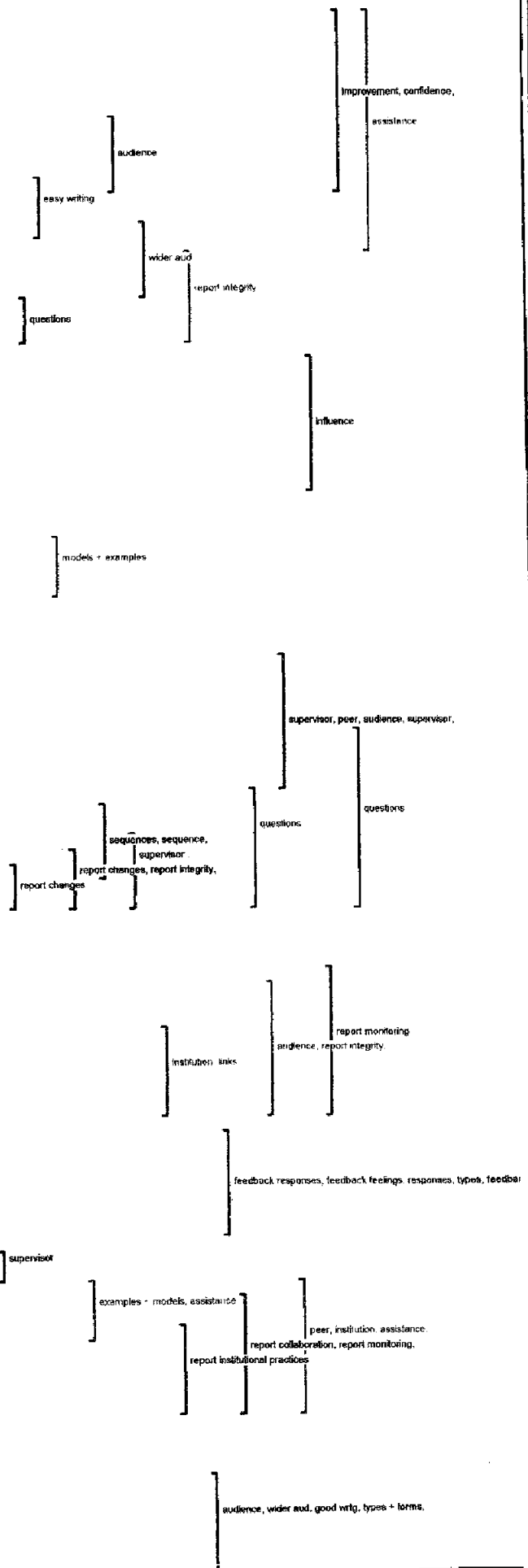
Okay. And basically I mean if I don't know how something is done he always helps me. I go out to people who've done it before.
7. Would you say going out to people is the usual practice for you and your colleagues? Is it usually the practice? Usually yes. If I don't know what step to take I will go to someone who has done it before or a person that I know is experienced enough to help me. Like how we work here. Every engineer has a certain responsibility. In my case I do more with the body of the vehicles. That is linked to other parts that other people are responsible for. They will come to me as a body engineer to find out if I have information that might help them to make their decisions. We are in sync and work basically together.

Who've done it before Uhm, and they sort of like guide me as well.
8. Describe the guidance you are usually given.

You had in this one question you had very nice thing the way you said what is difficult in writing okay you have a nice explanation... and one of the things you said is difficult is being highly specific and maintaining specificity. Why, what would you describe as been highly specific writing? You actually put that under the category of difficult, to be very specific. It is very. I could say for starters and technical

Improvement, confidence,
assistance

audience

easy writing

wider aud

report integrity

questions

influence

models + examples

supervisor, peer, audience, supervisor,

questions

questions

sequences, sequence, supervisor
report changes, report integrity,

report changes

report monitoring
audience, report integrity.

institution links

feedback responses, feedback feelings, responses, types, feedback

supervisor

examples - models, assistance

peer, institution, assistance
report collaboration, report monitoring,

report institutional practices

audience, wider aud, good writg, types + forms.

exactly what you've done and for the mere fact that I've not everybody whose working here is technically minded. I might understand a certain thing the way I understand it and the next person might not know what I'm talking about. And jargons that are used in technical environment and somebody who is business minded or working in a purchasing environment might not know that when I say it's (can't hear) what is it that I'm talking about or this they wouldn't know, so I okay I would have to write it down and maybe even explain if I have to explain further in a simple broken down format that anybody whose just walks in would be able to grasp what it is that I'm doing or what it is that I'm changing.
9.☐What makes writing for various audiences difficult? I don't have a problem with different audiences. I correspond via email and graphics I send out and sometimes you might explain in words and people might not understand. When you attached a picture or graphic it makes it easier.

10.☐Describe writing that is written in a simple broken own format?

And the reason for this is because it goes out beyond your field. Is that why? Ja, it goes out. I love different role players as team members usually in a team and a team that includes the quality guys and the buyer and the engineer and we should, we would have to work together so that they know exactly like if the buyer has to go out and (can't hear) on a certain part they need to know exactly what it is that you are quoting. So me just giving them a vague idea wouldn't really help them. That's why I'm saying I have to…
That's right, so that they can take your information understand it and then it will.☐It will get the correct information back. Ja.
And that the simplicity that you were speaking about as well is that that's for the people beyond your field so that they would understand. Okay now you've obviously answered this question in a way, the people that typically read your writing would be, please mention that list again of who would typically read what you write.
Material costs and (research analyst-not sure) and the (can't hear). ☐ You've got to. Do you think about them all the time when you are writing? Ja, especially when I'm especially when it's a new release and a part that has to be developed locally. Okay.
Ja, then I will have to think about all these people because when they have to do their jobs they need to take the information that I gave them and apply it to whatever it is that they have to do. Okay. Right, what would you define as an easy message to convey? What would be easy for you to convey?
.. straight forward (laughing). Well when especially when you know everybody is on the same level and we're talking about something that generally everybody would understand. That would be easy to convey because it's more like I'm touching just touching on something that everybody already knows. Especially in your field, you can do the jargon stuff.
Ja, we can do the jargon stuff and they will know exactly what I'm talking about. And that's the easy messages hey, you said here, what understanding are you referring to when you stated? "The more understanding one has the easier it is to put the message down". What is the understanding that you're referring to? I think you said here, "The more understanding one has with all the information, the easier it is to convey message to the next person". If you could just try and define what that understanding is that you were talking about?
Okay. Okay when you know exactly what it is that you're talking about or exactly what it is that you want, then it's easier to put down on paper and say this and this and this; this is how I exactly how I want it done. I don't have doubts and I'm able to be more specific…
11.☐What makes writing something you have knowledge about easier to write? If you have knowledge about something you know exactly what you want to say and to explain.

12.☐How is this knowledge gained? Interacting with people more , in stead of closing yourself off – when you interact you tend to have the feeling on how to present whatever subject presenting to different people. It helps quite a lot in communication when you interact.

where you're able to say I've already done all the investigations and now know exactly know what the conclusion is, I've come to this conclusion. I know this is what I want and you put it down on paper and if you've got a thorough understanding then you won't have doubts because you've already dealt with that part so it's easier to actually put it down and say this is what I want and this is how it should be done.
It's good to come to that understanding part. (laughing).
It's not always easy.I know. You said you don't often write reports, do you ever write reports? It's we're actually broken down as in the Test Engineers and they usually do all the testing and the report backs.
If I just think about even the presentations in your (can't hear) is formal (don't know word) in terms of giving background and you're sort of giving information out although you might not get the conclusions in terms of what the meeting discussed. Although it's maybe not the normal structure of the report but it does have some of the basic characteristics of what a report would be. Ja it does.
Now we're just coming to, you were talking about corrections and your revisions and so on and you said, when you re-read your work and you often make corrections. If you can, can you try and sort of say what kind of corrections you would normally make?
Mainly how I structured my sentences.
13.☐What corrections would you usually make to your sentences? The way I structured the sentence. When I read it again and it did not come across as I intended I will make changes. Do you read while you are busy writing? I often read my own typing and make sure that I read it again.

14.☐What else is also usually corrected? Sometimes the spelling as well.

It goes back to that thing of putting yourself in the shoes of somebody who doesn't know what you're talking about. And if I didn't know that this person is talking about would I be able to understand what it is that I'm reading? So I sort of like because when you draft it you're doing it the way you think and you still like have to come back and do it the other way round you know. So while I'm going about doing that then I'm making corrections to make it sound more specific, clearer and easier to understand.
15.☐Is making corrections usually done independently (based on your own assessment)? Explain your response. I mostly do it myself. The comments on my work are normally good.

How often would you say you re-read a document, if you were working on it? I re-read it, do you mean how may times or?
16.☐What does re-reading your work achieve? And why would you not asking someone to help? No I don't mind somebody checking my work if I asked

o if you can sort of once, twice, many times (laughing)? Okay, not too
any times cause sometimes there isn't much time to actually re-read all
he time, but once or twice. Would you say you read it during and after ...
an you try and remember when you're actually doing that reading?
hm, I would say okay sometimes during and after but most definitely
fter.
7.☐What would be read specifically during and after your writing?

re-reading

fter, you would actually look at the whole thing and that. Okay, I think
ou said people would sometimes read your work for understanding. Okay,
someone else reading see if they understand what I have written.
ho would actually, who's the person you would actually ask to read your
ork for understanding? I would usually ask somebody... okay, ideally I
ouldn't ask somebody (laughing) sometimes I would ask somebody in my
roup maybe one of my fellow engineers but if I know that somebody else
rom another department might be involved I would get somebody from there
nd ask them if they understand it... and usually when I go to (Ben-not
ure). Then I get a clearer much better feedback then somebody who knows
ho (can't hear) they might have an idea of what (can't hear).
8.☐Why would you ideally not ask anybody to read your work? You don't
ike to ask? I don't mind people checking my work if I ask them. It
ill mainly be for content.

response, peer,

focus, assistance, types + forms, self, feedback peer, content, feedback content.

9.☐Describe why colleagues are asked to read your work. You said
omebody in your group. They will have an idea what the work is about.

peer, feedback peer,

0.☐ What type of feedback do you usually get from your readers? Yes they
sually do. It is mainly the details and maybe the way I structured it.
ometimes when you put too much detail in the slides people tend not to
isten so I keep it as simple as possible.

focus, feedback content, feedback structure, clarity+specificity, content,

ecause they've got the other information, they've got the information.
1. It's good idea. Would you always do this or?All the time. Ideally ja
do.
kay, what would they; if you took it now to this other department what
ould they normally ask you to give more comment on or change? What kind
f things would they did give comment on your writing?
sually, maybe in how I explained the thing whether it's simple enough
or them to understand the thing. Whether I've broken it down enough then
hey would usually give me comment on that.
kay. And how do you feel when they give you these comments; your
eaction?
y reaction was obviously I'm not just going to take any advice that
omes along. I would I would really first check if it really works and if
t does and I'm more than welcome to comment.
1.☐What would happen if you ignored the comments you were given? If it
appened that I ignore something it is because it was not valuable and it
oes not add up to my content.

focus, clarity+specificity.

response

feedback content, feedback feelings, feedback responses,

hat's the main reason why I got it I took to them anyway so I mean if
hey come back with constructive comment then I would most definitely use
: and whatever it is that (can't hear).
2.☐Define constructive comment. If it adds value and the way the comment
s made if it is relevant and the person had a good attitude about it is
onstructive.

feedback responses types + forms, feedback types,

kay. So you don't feel negative, glad or?
: it's positive and I see that it works then I'm not unglad.
kay. What usually your report or any kind of documentation that's final
: complete; would managers show satisfaction, how would you say, well
management is now satisfied with my document. What would bring you to
hat conclusion for any piece of writing that you've done?
kay. Sometimes I'll say let's say I'm doing a presentation. Sometimes a
eport back comes back to say how you presented that one and I could say
hat that also motivates you some more you know. At least I'm doing it
ght when you know that you're doing it right. And sometimes it's like
ou need to work on that you know usually when there are too many
uestions still coming back then you know that the conclusion wasn't
ally (can't hear) as much as you thought. And you might (can't hear)
ou reached the conclusion but in the mere fact that there's still so
ny questions maybe there are loopholes that you never covered.
d in terms of documentation, do management also give you comment on
leases and things like that?
they do like for instance a document I might (can't hear) something
d then it goes missing in the Internet, it goes through him, it goes
rough my manager, it goes through the higher managers. If it goes to
e (can't hear) analyst cause they actually log it on to the system. If
goes that far then you know it is (can't hear) form. Does it ever come
ck?
does. It does. You know when it comes back then you know okay.
it comes back, does it come back for a specific reason?
usually comes back for a specific reason. Sometimes they may need
re clarity what it is that's happening and once you explain to them,
ay fine and then it goes.
.☐Would an explanation all that would be necessary? An explanation is
fficient. An explanation is sufficient. Once it is presented I get
other chance for the final review. I will add other things. If it is
e final review I don't get another chance. After the presentation I
ll have a verbal understanding and I then just will do the other items.
it done electronically? I will have a presentation and I will draw up
e minutes for all the activities we have to do. If it is just me I will
so draw it up. And if anyone come with questions they can get it from

response

questions, sequences.

route sequences.

determinants

final report changes.

d you do the changes then on the document or do you just give a verbal
planation? Sometimes it's just verbal and then it goes through.
d then it goes back again? Okay. And then it goes through.
ay, well I was going to ask you who is higher management? What was the
estion, "who determines in how acceptable a report is in your
partment" and you said higher management. Who is higher management?
's a hierarchy. We've got our groups and in our groups there's a senior
gineer and on the senior engineer there's a group manager, a group
gineer like the manager of the specific group and then after the group
nagers report to another manager and the two managers for vehicle
gineering and component engineering. I'm in the component engineering
ction. The two managers report to (can't hear). He's like the senior.
e senior guy? Ja, he's the senior guy.
at goes to him and everything will filter through to him?
t everything, but usually the releases.
ning back to your higher education and workplace. In terms of writing,

revision, report monitoring,

questions

route, sequence, sequences.

tiary institutions and writing in the workplace. My biggest
pply more or less the same that I always applied. My biggest
fluence I would say tertiary. Why do you say that? Because in school
don't necessarily have to be professional about how you write stuff.
can write about how you see things. In tertiary it was more
fessionally based, you are not taking from your own subjective
nion. You can't show your own prejudices and how you see things, you
more factual. Let me put it that way. It should be objective. That
es from communication skills. More so than your actual engineering
sses? Yes that could have been because I had to understand my
gineering classes. I am writing about my engineering classes basically
mainly how you structure you're course and reports.
t would describe as professional writing? Mainly objective and based
factual results from tests and from maybe experience. It is not about
u. Doesn't matter how you feel about it.
.☐Explain this comment. If for instance they decide they want green
ats in the car and I don't think that is what I want even if I like the
ey seats It did not matter what I think. It must be what the objective
. I don't have a say. It is what the goal is. I can't impose my
oughts and ideas and my position.

at is positive about you tertiary writing experience? It was again how
u are expected to communicate and I could say that the method gave me
e foundation to relate to the work environment.
at would you identify as barriers in your experience in the writing
ocess? Ok sometimes if you would need input from various people and
at you would prioritise as high priority is not high priority to them
d you are unable to finish because you could not have done all the work
ows you down and as much as you know you could have done all the work
u cannot do it. The barrier would be getting all the information. I am
rtunately in a privilege position where I work with people who are
lling to give information but the reality of it, although I don't want
touch too much on it, is that some people are insecure releasing
formation that is incomplete. Sometimes they will say that they don't
ve the authority to release it but it is mainly because they are busy
th someone else.
.☐What is incomplete information? Ja because sometimes you might find
at is a high priority to me might not be a high priority for the next
rson. And ok you do get people who if you or I need information then
ey will drop everything or said I will get tomorrow. And then you also
nd people who have their own priority and you become a nuisance because
u try to do your job and they are doing their job and our levels of
riority are not the same. And it becomes difficult. Is there anyway to
t around that? Relatively yes but generally it is quite a helpful
unch we have up here. They will support but they have their own stresses
d their own pressures and you are adding more pressures to them
pecially when you have deadlines. Because in my case I need to release a
art but I can't release it before a quotation from the supplier. I have
wait for the buyer to come back with the quotation. If I bypass the
uyer in some cases I can do that but the buyer has to be up scratch
th what is happening so as much as I can bypass that but it will come
ack to me and if people are not happy with the added cost then there
ill be questions.

hat would you say is bad writing? Bad writing is when you are vague and
ou don't get the message across. You go around and around and not
etting to the point. I would say grammar is very important. It plays
uite a big role. Sometimes people are not bothered about grammar. If you
ake sure about punctuation it makes it so much easier for the next
erson to understand what you are trying to say.
6.☐Describe what you mean by vague writing. Can you give an example?

7.☐What makes grammar so important? It is important because very often
ou interpret the same sentence differently. And if you have punctuation
arks it directs the person in what you want to say. Yes grammar is very
mportant at all levels. Will anything be released that is problematic
ith grammar or is not totally clear? It could be yes. I might have
omething that my boss understands but someone else might not understand
nd I will give more clarity. Sometimes people might not understand.

ad writing does exist, especially when they try to compile emails to
omeone else and I can comment on it. If a person writes badly I will ask
hem to be more specific because I can't understand it and they will be
orced to rephrase. But I will not say that they use bad English.
hat brings us to the end. Thanks so much Tani… there seem to be quite a
ew questions… I appreciate all your responses and comments.

Regards

ny other comments?

influence

style

wording
audience, report integrity,

influence

institution, feelings, barriers,

report institutional practices, difficult writing, report collaboration

institution, report integrity, report collaboration, assistance,

poor wtg

grammar - expression, report writing style, grammar,

poor wtg