
STC Outreach – Where Do You Come In?

Wouldn't it be great if more young people coming out of high school had a better grasp of communicating their practical knowledge and ideas in ways that would help them in jobs, at university, and in life? Now here's a program that you can be part of to connect STC to your local schools.

As part of the national standard, school districts are implementing "functional" communication in their high school classrooms, and we can help. Inspired by this movement in education toward national standards, the former Technical Literacy Committee was changed after the Anaheim Conference to be the Practical Communication Committee and to focus on functional communication curricula in high schools. Part of STC's Academic and Research Programs, its mission is to "Explore, develop, and coordinate programs with schools, agencies, and STC chapters to help high school teachers develop and use functional, practical writing curricula."

What is practical communication?

Practical communication provides students with the language arts tools they need to describe their interests and discoveries for a specific audience and the general public. It includes the ability to read technical information with full understanding, and to write both technical and other information so that it will be coherent, cohesive, and readily understood by the reader for whom it is intended.

How can you help? Be a school liaison

The Practical Communication committee is now pulling together a program to help chapters reach their local schools and teachers. We're creating a Web site where you'll be able to download presentation materials and handouts to help teachers teach technical communication in their classrooms. Eventually, we hope to have a few sample assignments. Here are some activities you can set up now.

- **STC teachers' nights.** Coordinate with the program manager of your chapter to hold meetings about what's happening in technical communication education, and how members can help create more space for technical communication in high school classrooms. You can invite local high school teachers and counselors to chapter meetings so they can learn about what we do for a living, and how that translates to skills that are useful for everyone, no matter the job. Show samples, talk about what might have been good for you to know in your first job (whether it was in technical communication or not) that you had to learn on your own.
- **In-service days or career days.** Call your local high school and make sure they know you would like to be a part of teachers' in-service days and career days for students. When we have them, you can use presentations from our committee Web site. These template presentations give educators and students information about what we do every day and why it's important to business and industry, as well as information about skills we have that every student should have when they graduate – and why.

Tell us what you know

We're looking for information about what is going on in your area high schools. Is practical communication part of the English, science, or other curriculum? (It may be called "technical writing," "functional writing," "professional writing," "applied learning" or other similar names.) Can students specialize in technical communication? Do you have other ideas about how STC can make a difference in schools? **Contact us by email: stc_prac_comm@hotmail.com.**