IIT ROORKEE

NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE

EFFECTIVE WRITING

Lecture 3: Principles of Effective Writing

Part I

BINOD MISHRA

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



Writers at Work

- Inadvertent writers
- Unproductive writers
- Aspirational writers
- Reluctant writers
- Frustrated writers
- Overburdened writers
- Successful writers

Some Common Myths

- Writers are special people.
- Verbal ability can help us write effectively.
- All writing is alike.
- One- size- fit style always works.
- Ideas can convert us into writers.

Efforts Matter More

"The 'naturalness bias' is a hidden prejudice against those who've achieved what they have because they worked for it, and a hidden preference for those whom we think arrived at their place because they're naturally talented". (Angela Duckworth in *Grit)*

Identify Your Purpose

- Why are you writing?
- For whom are you writing?
- What do you hope to achieve?

Knowing Your Readers

- All readers are not alike.
- Their educational background and experiences are diverse.
- Cultural biases and professional exposures affect.
- They may either be favourable or antagonistic.

Readers v/s Writers

- Cognitive ease and strain
- The curse of knowledge
- Cognitive empathy

“The curse of knowledge is the single best explanation I know of why good people write bad prose. It simply doesn’t occur to the writer that her readers don’t know what she knows”.

(Steven Pinker, The Sense of Style)

Contd.

- ✓ Audience's background may either affect or block the new information.
- ✓ Writers must remain sensitive to the audience's attitude.
- ✓ Attitude of the audience has to be anticipated.
- ✓ The writer must know where to emphasize and how.
- ✓ Thinking of your audience helps you achieve your communication goals.
- ✓ It helps in the choice of language and tone.

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Analyse Your Audience

- ✓ Who are my primary readers?
- ✓ Who are my secondary readers?
- ✓ What is my relationship with the reader?
- ✓ How much does my reader know about the subject?
- ✓ How will the reader react to my message?

Thank You