MODULE 3: Communication and Terminology for the Workplace

TOPIC 3: Workplace Correspondence – Email Messages and Computers

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- identify some common computer concepts
- write an email message about a computer problem in an engineering workplace

TOPIC	SKILLS	CLB COMPETENCE AREA	COMPETENCIES	PRE-TASKS	TASK	POST-TASK
♦ Workplace Correspondence – Email Messages and Computers	♦ Listening/ Speaking ♦ Writing ♦ Reading	♦ exchanging information ♦ formatted text ♦ formatted text	♦ understand format and layout of an inter-office email ♦ differentiate between language used in an inter-office email and a letter ♦ understand basic computer terminology ♦ apply knowledge of role of computers in the workplace	♦ classify computer terms ♦ discuss discipline – specific design packages ♦ read an inter-office memo	♦ write an inter-office memo about a computer problem in the workplace	♦ discuss solutions to a computer problem in the workplace

Facilitator's Notes for Module 3

Topic 3 : Workplace Correspondence – Email Messages and Computers

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Content

Basic knowledge of computer terms would be an asset, but the facilitator should also rely on the knowledge and expertise of the participants. Layout and form of an email message could also be reviewed. Facilitator could also provide other sample email messages as models.

Delivery

Copies for all participants should be made of the following handouts:

- Handout 1 Classification of Computer Terminology
- Handout 2 Email Message
- Handout 3 Synonyms
- Handout 4 Blank Email

There is no Terminology List for this lesson. See Handout 1.

Materials needed: chart paper and markers

Methodology

Introduction

(10 minutes) 1. Group the participants according to discipline. Have them discuss how computers have changed the engineering profession. What kinds of skills does an engineer need to have? What is the software that is used most by engineers? (Word, Excel, Power Point, CAD)

2. Explain that today's lesson focuses on the use of the computer in the engineering workplace.

Pre-Tasks

(20 minutes) 1. Explain that computer technology changes constantly, but that there are certain basic computer concepts that are necessary for almost everyone to know. Distribute Handout 1 and have the participants work in pairs and categorize computer terms under different headings. Have them compare their answers with another pair. Clarify any definitions

(15 minutes) 2. Group participants according to engineering discipline and have them discuss design packages specific to their field. (Make sure that the discussion covers customized company software.) Have the groups present their information to the class on chart paper.

(10 minutes) 3. Explain to the participants that since computers have had such an impact on both their profession and the workplace, certain problems can arise. Explain that participants will have an opportunity to read about a problem caused by computers in the workplace. The problem is in the form of an inter-office email message. Elicit from the class the features of an email (subject line; optional salutation; less formal). Ask the class the following questions:

- To whom are inter-office emails sent?
- Do emails have a salutation or complimentary closing? (salutation is optional but "dear" is not used; options might include "Hi _____" or just the recipient's name: "Jane, " Re complimentary closing: "sincerely" and "yours truly "are not used; signature files including any or all of the employee's name, title, organization, phone number, email address and Web site URL are often used
- How many topics does an email deal with?
- What goes in the subject line
- What is the average length of an email?
- Where should you place the most important information?
- Should you consider what the reader already knows about the subject?
- How formal does an email have to be? Are spelling mistakes acceptable? (No – stress that all emails should be spell-checked and read over for errors); is lower case "I" acceptable when referring to oneself in an email? (no); is "u" an acceptable substitute for "you" (not in a workplace email)

Brainstorm on the blackboard, examples of subjects that could be the subject of an inter-office email (e.g., staff relationships, clarifying procedures at work, follow-up to a problem).

(10 minutes) 4. Distribute an email (Handout 2) from an engineering workplace. Explain that it is an authentic workplace document. Have participants scan the memo and complete the questions. Take up orally. Review some of the questions from pre-task 3 as they apply to this email.

(10 minutes) 5. Distribute Handout 3. Divide participants into pairs and have them find synonyms in the text and take up orally.

(15 minutes) 6. Brainstorm with the class possible difficulties that could take place with computers in the workplace. Expect answers such as managing technical problems, office procedures, lack of user knowledge, training.

Task

(20 minutes) 1. Group the participants according to discipline. Have them choose a problem or difficulty that could arise with computers and their use in the workplace. The group should compose an email about this problem using Handout 2 as a model. Distribute Handout 4 for the group to use.

Post-Task

(25 minutes) 1. Have the groups exchange emails and read each other's workplace computer problems. Groups should get together and suggest solutions.

2. Choose one group's email and either copy it or make an overhead and discuss, using the question in pre-task 3 as a guide.

Handout 1

Classify the following computer terms under the appropriate headings -

Word-processing	BASIC	control unit	keyboard	barcode readers	spreadsheet	mainframe computers
Supercomputer	shareware	C	laptop	communication software	terminal	primary storage unit
Groupware	databases	C++	Pascal	integrated software packages		Personal Digital Assistants (PDA)
Microcomputers	scanner	Printer	desktop	graphics tablet	mouse	arithmetic / logic unit
Java	minicomputers	Cobol	plotter	CAD programs	accounting and financial management software	

Computers	Peripheral Devices-Input	Peripheral Devices-Output	CPU/ Microprocessor	Computer Languages	Applications software

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

Answer Key to Handout 1

Classify the following computer terms under the appropriate headings

Word-processing	**BASIC**	**control unit**	**keyboard**	**barcode readers**	**spreadsheet**	**mainframe computers**
Supercomputer	**Shareware**	**C**	**laptop**	**communication software**	**terminal**	**primary storage unit**
Groupware	**Databases**	**C++**	**Pascal**	**Integrated software packages**		**Personal Digital Assistants (PDA)**
Microcomputers	**Scanner**	**printer**	**desktop**	**graphics tablet**	**mouse**	**arithmetic / logic unit**
Java	**minicomputers**	**Cobol**	**plotter**	**CAD programs**	**accounting and financial management software**	

Computers	Peripheral Devices-Input	Peripheral Devices-Output	CPU/ Microprocessor	Computer Languages	Applications software
♦ *microcomputers* ♦ *laptop* ♦ *desktop* ♦ *minicomputer* ♦ *terminal* ♦ *mainframe* ♦ *supercomputer* ♦ *Personal Digital Assistant (PDA)*	♦ *keyboard* ♦ *mouse* ♦ *barcode reader* ♦ *scanner* ♦ *graphics tablet*	♦ *plotter* ♦ *monitor* ♦ *printer*	♦ *primary storage unit* ♦ *arithmetic/logic unit* ♦ *control unit*	♦ *BASIC* ♦ *C* ♦ *C++* ♦ *Pascal* ♦ *Java* ♦ *Cobol*	♦ *communication software* ♦ *databases* ♦ *desktop accessory packages* ♦ *integrated software package* ♦ *word-processing* ♦ *CAD programs* ♦ *groupware spreadsheets* ♦ *accounting and financial management software* ♦ *shareware*

Handout 2

Scan the email quickly and answer the following questions:

1. Who is the memo from?
2. Who has it been sent to?
3. When was it written?
4. Who has received a copy?
5. What's the subject of the memo?
6. What is the role of the PEO?

From: "Henryk Rogman" <hrogman@dvc.com>
To: "Victor Lypyavka" <vlypyavka@dvc.com>
Cc: "Thomas Koshi" <tkoshi@dvc.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2004 1:35 PM
Subject: Files #642 CAD Drawings—Responsibility/Signing

The CAD User Committee has discussed the potential problem of alteration of digital drawings and files without our knowledge or approval after release to client or other users. In order to maintain "liability" security of digital form drawings that are issued, it is important to take precautions to ensure that if the recipient of the digital files makes revisions to the files, that the firm will not inadvertently be held responsible. As such, the following procedure is put forward.

Do not "digitize" professional engineer's stamp into the file. Besides being illegal from the PEO's point of view, it can also cause loss of control of when and how the stamp is used. Instead, the following procedure should be used;

Place a note on all drawing files as follows:

"Only those copies of this drawing that have a signed Professional Engineer's stamp affixed are considered official reproductions of this document. All other reproductions should be considered unofficial, incomplete, review prints, or revised by other than the original designer."

The stamps should then be put on final plots and signed, this giving complete control to the firm.

Adapted from: Bergs, V. Engineering Workplace Communications in the Consulting, Contracting, Government Sectors. Toronto: Skills for Change, 1994.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

Answer Key to Handout 2

1.	Who is the e-mail memo from?	Henryk Rogman
2.	Who has it been sent to?	Victor Lypyavka
3.	When was it sent?	February 19, 2004
4.	Who has received a copy?	Thomas Koshi
5.	What's the subject of the memo?	regarding liability and clients changing files without the knowledge of the engineering firm who could be held responsible. Instructions to prevent this from happening are outlined.
6.	What is the role of the PEO?	to maintain standards

From: "Henryk Rogman" <hrogman@dvc.com>
To: "Victor Lypyavka" <vlypyavka@dvc.com>
Cc: "Thomas Koshi" <tkoshi@dvc.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2004 1:35 PM
Subject: Files #642 CAD Drawings—Responsibility/Signing

The CAD User Committee has discussed the potential problem of alteration of digital drawings and files without our knowledge or approval after release to client or other users. In order to maintain "liability" security of digital form drawings that are issued, it is important to take precautions to ensure that if the recipient of the digital files makes revisions to the files, that the firm will not inadvertently be held responsible. As such, the following procedure is put forward.

Do not "digitize" professional engineer's stamp into the file. Besides being illegal from the PEO's point of view, it can also cause loss of control of when and how the stamp is used. Instead, the following procedure should be used;

Place a note on all drawing files as follows:

"Only those copies of this drawing that have a signed Professional Engineer's stamp affixed are considered official reproductions of this document. All other reproductions should be considered unofficial, incomplete, review prints, or revised by other than the original designer."

The stamps should then be put on final plots and signed, this giving complete control to the firm.

Handout 3

Find synonyms in the text for the following words:

- change (noun)
- responsibility for work
- to be very careful
- to make a computer image of an engineer's stamp
- change (verb)
- engineer's seal
- attached
- computer files
- one who receives
- drawings generated by computer and plotter

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

Answer Key to Handout 3

Find synonyms in the text for the following words:

- change (noun) - alteration
- responsibility for work - liability
- to be very careful - to take precautions
- to make a computer image of an engineer's stamp - to digitize
- change (verb) - to revise
- engineer's seal - engineer's stamp
- attached - affixed
- computer files - digital files
- one who receives - recipient
- drawings generated by computer and plotter - plots

Handout 4

From:
To:
Cc:
Sent:
Subject: