**Learning Activity**
~ Problem-based Learning (PBL) Design Tool ~

**Activity Title:** Technical writing exercise

**Author:** Janis (Emily) Brown - Fremont High school, Fremont, Nebraska

**Focus/Goals/Objectives:**
1. Student will be able to compare literature to technical writing
2. Student will be able to list the four processes of technical writing
3. Student will be able to list the five considerations used in technical writing
4. Student will be able to give oral and written directions that are sequenced and detailed enough to complete a task.

**What type of course(s) would this activity be best suited for:** Best suited for Business English or school-to-career classes

**What concepts could be incorporated from Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic knowledge of writing clear, succinct technical related directions to complete a task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre-requisite Knowledge:**
1. Knowledge of sequence
2. Knowledge of attention to detail
3. Knowledge of differences of literature and tech. writing
4. Knowledge of differences in intended audiences
5. Knowledge of Communication techniques

**Time Required:** 90 minutes

**Materials:**
1. Poster of five considerations on technical writing
2. Poster of four concepts needed for all technical writing
3. Example of poem, essay; example of one machine maintenance page from Airlite Plastics to compare
4. Review sheet for homework
5. Overhead transparency of incomplete outline of knowledge taught
Knowledge-Skills-Attitudes (KSA) of the PBL Activity:

Knowledge: Student will gain the following knowledge:
   1. Comparison of literature and tech writing
   2. Sequential order
   3. Attention to detail
   4. Ability to trouble-shoot and anticipate
   5. Ability to match illustrations to text
   6. Ability to assess a specific audience’s needs

Skills: Student will be able to write clear direction succinctly; be able to gauge their writing to their audience; and be able to prepare for different levels of prior experience.

Attitudes:

Resources for the KSAs: Resources involve online sites for technical writing skills. I have also prepared the literature versus technical writing manual experience at the beginning of the class to promote understanding of the differences. I have prepared charts and posters illustrating the four concepts and five considerations of all technical writing.
Assessment Strategies: Students will write a journal entry assessing their personal skills as technical writers. What are their strengths and weaknesses? Students can also evaluate each other in the following activity: break into pairs; each kid is to orally direct their partner to Wal-mart from their desk. Second kid is to direct the kid at Wal-Mart to the Louis E May Museum. Prior knowledge and specific, sequenced directions will be evaluated. Kids will provide a critique for each other on their performance. A review sheet will be provided at the end in preparation for a quiz the following day.

Reflection and Debriefing: Debriefing will occur as the kids critique each other on their oral direction to Wal-Mart and May Museum. Reflection will also be provided by the journal entry experience. The two posters of concerns/considerations will add focus to the classroom.

Evaluation of the Activity and the KSAs: An overhead learning activity will take place at the end. This will appear in outline form; the class will help fill in the missing links of the outline. Each student will also receive a review sheet of major concepts taught. A quiz the following day will provide feedback on retention.

References: Materials are gathered from the internet source: www.techwritertoolkit.com/exercises
Literature teachers are also a source for comparing the two forms of writing.