

Minutes from the STC Program, November 7, 2001

On November 7, 2001, Jillian Kemper spoke to Dr. Susan Katz's English 512 class and members of STC@NCState about the technical writing profession.

The main focus of her talk was building a professional portfolio. She also stressed a solid academic foundation is the best way to start a Technical Communication career. She believes it is the individual's responsibility to build personal skills and offered some suggestions to do so.

- * Talk to friends/experts in the industry to stay current
- * Read technical/trade magazines and books on current topics
- * Read want ads to see what skills employers require
- * Learn how to interview people quickly and efficiently to extract information
- * Learn to read some code such as C, C++, and Visual Basic

The portfolio strategies she presented include:

- * Invest a nice leather-bound zippered portfolio with a three-ring binder.
- * Purchase sheet protectors and pockets to protect documents
- * Tailor the portfolio according to the job
- * Carry a stack of resumes to keep in the front pocket of the portfolio
- * Never leave samples of work
- * Obtain permission to show documents
- * Use numbered tabs to separate sections
- * Include a Table of Contents

Ms. Kemper emphasized that a portfolio is a way to show versatility by including documents that may demonstrate various skills, such as graphic talents. To present website work, she suggested carrying a CD with your work, providing a URL, or carrying a laptop to demonstrate your work.

Overall, Ms. Kemper emphasized flexibility and openness as two important characteristics of a technical communicator since there are opportunities in practically every field of business.