I entered the MATC program at Boise State University with the goal to improve my writing skills and understanding of technology. I did not feel I had a strong enough background to achieve my professional goals, despite my undergraduate degree in English with an emphasis in writing.

While I was an undergraduate, I never thought to pursue technical communication. I've always had a passion for writing, and I've always felt strongly about the importance of clear communication in any form. It wasn't until I entered my professional career that I realized technical communication aligned perfectly with my goals.

The MATC program afforded me the opportunity to not only learn how to communicate clearly through writing, but also through the integration of visual rhetoric, visual design, and editing. The formal training and education I received has given me a strong foundation for writing effective technical content. It has also not only given me an understanding of visual rhetoric and design, but the ability to apply that knowledge to create better, clearer documents.

I selected the following five documents to include in my MATC portfolio because I believe that each one represents an example of the application of one or more techniques for effective technical communication. As a whole, the set is representative of the broad scope of experience and skill I gained throughout the MATC program. This portfolio serves as a cumulative representation of the communication skills, writing and editing skills, visual rhetoric skills, and visual design skills I have gained through both academic and professional efforts during my time in the MATC program.

**Plain-Language Document**
This assignment introduced me to plain language and usability testing. It also afforded me the opportunity to work with real clients to develop a product that met their needs. The size and content restrictions pushed me to focus closely on layout, white space, and word choice in the document.

This assignment was my favorite within the MATC program. I enjoyed performing the research and fitting each piece into the document. The usability testing presented surprising results and helped me improve my document. I learned a great deal about the importance of plain language, how to write in plain language, how to improve readability through design, and the process and benefits of usability testing.

**Instructions**
My assignment for this project was to create a set of instructions for using Slide Master in PowerPoint 2010. The benefits of this assignment were two-fold. I gained a new skillset in PowerPoint 2010, as I did not previously know how to use Slide Master. I also learned how to write instructions, including the appropriate use of warnings, chunking, and extra-textual material. I became familiar with the parts of a
set of instructions, including system responses and graphic representation of a step. I also learned how to use alignment, repetition, and contrast to create an effective document.

This was my first project in the MATC that involved the integration of graphics and layout decisions. This assignment very effectively taught me time management and project planning.

**Brochure**
This assignment was particularly significant because it required me to use Adobe InDesign and Adobe Photoshop without the benefit and convenience of any formal training in either program. I understand the importance of having a broad set of software and hardware knowledge in the field of technical communication, and I was pleased with the opportunity to self-teach and develop these skills. I used the visual rhetoric skills I learned in previous courses to redesign the brochure, and rewrite the brochure to improve clarity and ease of navigation. The result of my effort was a much improved, easy-to-read, digital brochure, and a new skill set.

**Contract**
I created this contract for my employer, CNS, Inc. They were in need of a contract for web design services for a DBA of CNS, Inc., Crow Web Services. The contract needed to include specific elements, including fees, copyright information, a satisfaction guarantee, the necessary legal information, and the expectations and roles of the client and Crow Web Services. This contract required me to conduct research including common contract content, contract layouts, and legal information necessary for web design contracts. The contract needed to fit within a restricted content area, and the creation of this document afforded me the opportunity to become familiar with contract layout and content, including a focus ethical writing and presentation, as well as clarity and professionalism.

**Handbook**
This project is significant because the level of challenge it provided me. I have written handbooks on a smaller scale in the past, but only on topics I was familiar with. I was asked to edit and rewrite this document by the Boise State Athletics Academic Advising program. This afforded me the opportunity to challenge myself by creating a document of significant length on a topic completely out of my comfort zone. I was able to practice my editing skills on a large scale, and practice making a style guide to improve parallelism and continuity throughout the document. I used Microsoft Word styles to format the handbook, and improve the professionalism of the document.