Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication

2025 Conference Abstracts
October 23-24, 2025
Texas Tech University; Lubbock, TX

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

CPTSC Executive Committee

President: Jenn Mallette, Boise State University

Vice President: Jason Tham, Texas Tech University

Secretary: Chalice Randazzo, Utah Tech University

Treasurer: Flourice Richardson, North Carolina A&T State University

Diversity Committee Representative: Nora Rivera, Texas Tech University

Past President: Tharon Howard, Clemson University

Members at Large:

Meghalee Das, James Madison University

Christopher J. Morris, York University (Canada)

Krista Speicher Sarraf, California Polytechnic State University

Programmatic Perspectives Co-Editors:

Russell Kirkscey, Penn State Harrisburg

Rhonda Stanton, Missouri State University

Program Co-Chairs

Meghalee Das, James Madison University

Christopher J. Morris, York University (Canada)

Krista Speicher Sarraf, California Polytechnic State University

Local Host

Jason Tham, Texas Tech University

MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION

Chalice Randazzo, Utah Tech University

Sponsorship Chair

Christopher J. Morris, York University (Canada)

Call For Proposals

Christopher J. Morris, York University (Canada)

Abstract Editors

Special thanks to Dr. Teena Carnegie and the Eastern Washington University students of *TCOM 409: Editing in Technical Communication* for type coding, copy editing, proofreading, and producing the abstract collection.

Charly Fetzer, editor, Eastern Washington University

Sean San Pedro, editor, Eastern Washington University

Program Reviewers

Thank you to our volunteer reviewers, who provided a thorough and timely blind peer-review process for panel, paper, and workshop proposals

Rebekka Andersen, UC-Davis | Lora Anderson, University of Cincinnati | Codi Renee Blackmon, Johns Hopkins University | Rachel Bryson, University of Utah | Justiss Wilder Burry, James Madison University | Teena A. M. Carnegie, Eastern Washington University | Meghalee Das, James Madison University | Chris Dayley, Texas State University | James Dubinsky, Virginia Tech | Priyanka Ganguly, Texas Tech University | Claire Oldham Griffith, Michigan State University | Jessica Griffith, Jacksonville State University | Kathleen Hardesty, Florida Polytechnic University | Lacy Hope, Utah Tech University | Tharon Howard, Clemson University | Paul Hunter, Longwood University | Liz Hutter, University of Dayton | Russell Kirkscey, Penn State Harrisburg | Makayla Kocher, Boise State University | Xiaoli Li, University of Dayton | Soyeon Lee, University of Texas-El Paso | Jung-Hsien Lin, UC-Irvine | Shiva Mainaly, University of Memphis | Jenn Mallette, Boise State University | Heidi McKee, Miami University | Lisa Melonçon, Clemson University | Olga Menagarishvili, Georgia Tech | Christopher J. Morris, York University | Laura Palmer, Kennesaw State University | Madiha Patel, Texas Tech University | Shankar Paudel, University of Texas–El Paso | Beau Pihlaja, Texas Tech University | Timothy Ponce, Texas State University | Kristopher Purzycki, UW-Green Bay | Chalice Randazzo, Utah Tech University | Nupoor Ranade, Carnegie Mellon University | Michael Salvo, Purdue University | Chris Scheidler, Weber State University | Beth Shirley, Montana State University | Elijah Simmons, Sussex County Community College | Rhonda Stanton, Missouri State University | Sonia Stephens, University of Central Florida | Janine Tobeck, University of Wisconsin–Whitewater | Jazzie Terrell, University of Arizona | Laura Vernon, Radford University | Hua Wang, Cornell University | Han Yu, Kansas State University

Virtual Editors' Roundtable

Held on October 13, 2025, the virtual Editors' Roundtable aimed to provide emerging and established scholars useful information that can enhance the field's writing, research, and editorial processes.

Hosted by Meghalee Das, the Roundtable featured editors below who discussed their journal's scope, recent scholarship, and unique contributions to the field.

Recording of the 2025 session can be accessed here: https://cptsc.org/blog/2025/10/13/virtual-editors-roundtable

Participating Editors & Journals:

- Timothy Amidon, Communication Design Quarterly
- Craig Baehr, IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication
- Lucia Dura, Technical Communication & Social Justice
- Timothy Ponce, Technical Communication Quarterly
- Rhonda Stanton & Russell Kirkscey, Programmatic Perspectives
- Jason Tham, Computers and Composition

Workshops

Industry-Academia Resource Development: Structured Authoring

Carlos Evia, Virginia Tech

Rebekka Andersen, University of California, Davis

Emily Gresbrink, Minnesota State University, Mankato

Structured authoring is a critical skill for today's technical communication professionals, yet many academic programs are still working to find the best ways to introduce it into their curricula. The ACM-SIGDOC Structured Authoring Committee is helping bridge that gap by creating open-access resources that connect academic teaching and industry practice.

In this interactive workshop, participants got an inside look at the committee's work sample course materials, curriculum development guides, and teaching resources that support the integration of structured authoring into technical communication assignments and courses. After a short overview, participants dove into a hands-on activity exploring two essential structured authoring approaches: DITA (an open standard for structuring technical documentation) and Markdown (a lightweight, flexible format widely used across industries). Facilitators guided attendees through practical workflows that combined these approaches using open-source or low-cost software, demonstrating strategies that instructors and trainers can adapt to their own contexts.

This workshop was designed for anyone interested in teaching or learning about structured authoring, including technical communication faculty, new and experienced program administrators, graduate students, early-career instructors, and industry professionals engaged in curriculum or training development. No prior experience with structured authoring was necessary, just curiosity and a willingness to experiment.

By the end of the session, attendees left with new skills, adaptable resources, and ideas for building structured authoring into academic courses and professional workshops.

Summary

This workshop introduced participants to the fundamentals of structured authoring through a hands-on, modular experience. Structured authoring, the practice of organizing content based on consistent, reusable structures, is critical for scalable technical communication workflows and recommended for reducing generative AI hallucinations. However, it often remains underrepresented in academic curricula. This workshop familiarized faculty, graduate students, and program administrators with two widely used approaches to structured authoring (DITA and Markdown), explored accessible tools, and guided participants through practical activities to prepare content for multichannel publishing.

The workshop was divided into four modules:

Module One: Introduction to DITA. Participants began with a high-level overview of the Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA) standard, an XML-based framework for structured technical content. Facilitators introduced key concepts such as topic, concept, task, reference, and map, along with foundational principles for content reuse and filtering. Participants viewed examples of DITA files and discussed how modular, semantically rich authoring enables content scalability and adaptability across different platforms and audiences.

Module Two: Introduction to Markdown and Lightweight DITA. The second module introduced Markdown, a lightweight markup language commonly used for web content and technical documentation. Participants explored how Markdown relates to structured authoring principles and learned about Lightweight DITA (LwDITA), an open standard that bridges Markdown and DITA XML. A hands-on exercise gave participants experience writing simple content in Markdown while applying structured authoring thinking.

Module Three: Structured Authoring Workflows with Open-Source or Low-Cost Tools. Participants explored practical workflows for creating, managing, and transforming structured content without the need for expensive software. This module introduced tools such as Oxygen Web Author, XML Mind, GitHub, and free DITA Open Toolkit builds. Participants practiced simple authoring and building activities using freely available tools, gaining insights into how these workflows can be implemented in classrooms or training settings.

Module Four: Multichannel Publishing of Structured Technical Content. In the final module, facilitators demonstrated how structured content authored in DITA and Markdown can be published into multiple output formats such as HTML and PDF. Participants discussed the advantages of multichannel publishing and experiment with generating outputs from provided content sets. This module emphasized how structured authoring enhances content reuse and delivery flexibility across diverse audiences and platforms.

Throughout the workshop, participants engaged in guided exercises, collaborative discussions, and Q&A sessions. They left with sample content files, templates, and a resource guide to support future implementation in their own teaching or professional contexts.

Supporting Scholars in an Era of Restrictive Laws

Chalice Randazzo, Utah Tech University

This workshop built upon one that journal editors and national organization committee representatives are holding at ATTW 2025. The goal was to provide CPTSC members a space to explore ways that editors and organizers can support scholars when the U.S. is restricting terminology and research that TPC values. A national conversation is necessary because scholars experience these restrictions differently based on their location and positionality (Walton, Moore, & Jones, 2019). In addition to federal constraints, over ten states have adopted laws such as Florida's HB 999, Texas' HB 1006, Iowa's SF2345, and Utah's HB 261. There are a patchwork of restrictions: some block funding for certain research projects, and some restrict faculty from using contested words (notice, for example, certain words purposely missing from this proposal).

These laws could threaten at least terminology, if not practice, that TPC worked for decades to solidify (Haas, 2012; Jones, Moore, & Walton, 2016). But scholarship can shift more quickly than institutions or systems, as Duncan pointed out in 2023 (Agboka et al., 2023). So, the workshop considers these questions:

- How do scholars' positionalities affect their experiences of these laws?
- What are their concerns about the laws?
- How might our field prevent a weakening of important concepts that these laws attempt to suppress?
- Can TPC journal editors and national organizations do anything to support faculty who are affected by these laws? How can we navigate barriers to publishing or participation that these laws might affect (Stevens, 2024)?

References

Agboka, G., Duncan, M., Durá, L., Gonzales, L., Savage, J., & Trauth, E. (2023). Fostering Change and Doing 'Heavy Lifting': A Dialogue with Technical Communication & Social Justice Co-Founders, Co-Editors, and Editorial Board Members. *Technical Communication and Social Justice*, 1(2), 97–109.

Haas, A. M. (2012). Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: A Case Study of Decolonial Technical Communication Theory, Methodology, and Pedagogy. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 26(3), 277–310. https://doi.org/10.1177/1050651912439539

Jones, N. N., Moore, K. R., & Walton, R. (2016). Disrupting the Past to Disrupt the Future: An Antenarrative of Technical Communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 25(4), 211–229. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2016.1224655

Stevens, H. (2024). *Dismantling Barriers to Publishing: Identifying Types of Negative Review Experiences and Strategies for Mitigating Them* [Dissertation, Utah State University]. https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd2023/203

Walton, R., Moore, K., & Jones, N. (2019). *Technical Communication After the Social Justice Turn: Building Coalitions for Action.* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Building a UX Textbook for TPC: Pillars, Principles, and Practices

Joseph Bartolotta, Hofstra University

Julianne Newmark, University of New Mexico

Derek Ross, Auburn University

This panel presentation was organized by the authors and editors of the upcoming book UX+You: The Technical and Professional Communication Student's Introduction to Usability and User Experience in the 21st Century to discuss the principles, challenges, and possibilities of a textbook on UX written for a TPC audience. The panel discussed how the text differs from prior books on UX and usability, how values in TPC shaped the text, and how the text works to connect TPC theory to the practice-level challenges faced by UX professionals. The text introduced students to theoretical and practical considerations in user experience, underpinned by three guiding logics which we call our Pillars of TPC-informed approaches to UX: 1) a TPC and rhetorical focus on UX; 2) an emphasis on ethics and social justice; and 3) a comprehensive representation of research methods in UX that are rooted in practice-level challenges faced by UX practitioners. Since the text will still be in draft form at this point the authors and editors want to solicit feedback from the audience to make sure the text responds to the exigencies TPC instructors face in the classroom.

Summary of each presenter's topic

Speaker 1: Speaker one, one of the coauthors of the book, discussed how the project started, discussing what they were seeing in classrooms teaching UX and Technical Communication and what sort of resources they would have liked to have had. They discussed the first two pillars that support the book's focus: the emphasis on TPC and Rhetroic, and the emphasis on ethics and social justice. The speaker discussed how these pillars are made manifest in the text and can be extended to teaching while also opening broader conversations about the intersection of research and design ethics. The speaker also discussed the decision to add a section to the book about self care for UX researchers.

Speaker 2: Speaker two, the second coauthor of the book, discussed logic 3, the research methods and practice-level matters in the book, including arguing for using ISO 9241-210 (Human-centred design for interactive systems) as the organizing principle for that section. This speaker also addressed how Lean, Agile, and Design Thinking fit into the scope of the work and classes that are organized around those approaches.

Speaker 3: Glitches expose fault lines between system promises and user realities, pushing technical communicators to recognize breakdowns not as failures, but as critical UX moments. This presentation explored how glitch-centered pedagogy can challenge students to design ethically, critically, and humanely, acknowledging that no interface can ever fully erase struggle. The presentation repositioned

glitches as necessary and valuable elements of user experience, instead of mere obstacles to the design of frictionless systems.

Speaker 4: When we wrote the updated description for the SUNY series, we wanted to make sure that we made room for diverse and alternative viewpoints, and specifically noted that we seek work that is not only methodologically rigorous, but might also question both methodology and rigor. Here, we discussed what this questioning might mean, and thought about how we might apply productive questioning to approaches (such as UX) in TPC.

Navigating the (ever-changing) DEI Landscape Under New Federal Administration

Franny Howes, Oregon Institute of Technology

Laura Palmer, Kennesaw State University

Recent federal changes to DEI require universities to navigate a complex landscape of policy, public opinion, and community expectations while striving to uphold their commitments to diversity and inclusion. This panel aimed to address the myriad challenges universities face as they strive to uphold their commitments to DEI amidst evolving policies and community expectations. By presenting diverse perspectives from two distinct institutions, each representing different educational contexts and challenges, we collectively explored strategies for navigating this complex terrain.

Presenters 1 & 2: The first presenters shared insights from an Oregon state university, focusing on the intersection of state laws and federal mandates regarding DEI. This university recently received a program development grant funded by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and Department of Justice, specifically aimed at serving priority populations (ORS 660.300) in alignment with DEI goals. The HECC's Equity Lens states, we intentionally place racial equity at the forefront to counterbalance and dismantle racist policies and practices that perpetuate inequities. The presenters discussed the challenges of aligning programmatic objectives with both state legislation and new federal mandates, emphasizing strategies as to not disrupt funding while still ensuring compliance with state DEI initiates. Key points included: an overview of the grant's objectives and target populations; the challenges faced due to conflicting state laws and federal mandates; and strategies for effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders to navigate these complexities.

Presenter 3: This presentation examined how DEI policies have been reshaped in Georgia, focusing on an R2 institution located north of Atlanta. Following political shifts mirroring Florida's high-profile rollback of DEI initiatives, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (BOR-USG), under Chancellor Sonny Perdue, issued 2023 directives banning diversity statements and ideological affirmations in admissions, hiring, and orientation. In response, institutions were required to refocus curriculum around foundational civics documents and revise courses, syllabi, and campus practices to align with a ""neutral"" political stance. This presentation provided a narrative of these changes, with particular attention to the dismantling and restructuring of DEI efforts within the R2 context.

As universities continue to navigate the complexities of DEI amidst changing federal landscapes and community expectations, it is imperative that we come together to share insights and strategies. Following the individual presentations, the panel will facilitate an interactive discussion with attendees. The discussions aimed to provide valuable perspectives and foster a collaborative environment for addressing the challenges of diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. Panel facilitators encouraged participants to share their experiences, challenges, and strategies related to DEI initiatives at their own institutions. Key

discussion points included collective brainstorming on overcoming barriers to effective DEI implementation; sharing best practices and tools for navigating federal and state policy landscapes; and developing collaborative networks among institutions to support DEI efforts.

Session 1

Pedagogy and Its Turns in Technical and Professional Communication: A History

Tracy Bridgeford, University of Nebraska Omaha

Since its emergence as a formal field in the mid-20th century, technical and professional communication (TPC) has experienced a series of pedagogical "turns," reorientations in values, methods, and instructional priorities shaped by broader shifts in theory, technology, and society. These turns, which include the social constructionist (e.g., Thralls & Blyler, 1992), social justice (e.g., Walton, Moore, & Jones, 2019), narrative (e.g., Perkins & Blyler, 1999), cultural theory (e.g., Scott, Longo, & Willis 2006), and design thinking (e.g., Tham, 2021) turns, reflect moments when educators reimagined what it means to teach technical communication and why it matters.

Rather than displacing earlier models, each turn builds upon the last, forming an evolving, layered pedagogical history that mirrors TPC's interdisciplinary nature. The social turn emphasized rhetorical context and discourse communities. The social justice turn invited reflection on power, privilege, and equity. The narrative turn foregrounded storytelling as a tool for engaging identity and lived experience. The design thinking turn promoted creativity, iteration, and user-centered problem solving. And the critical theory turn sharpened attention to institutional critique and ideological structures.

This presentation introduced the broader spectrum of pedagogical history in TPC but focuses on 2-3 specific turns to examine their lasting impacts. The aim was to encourage discussion about how these shifts have shaped curricular design, instructional goals, and classroom practices, and how they continue to inform our responses to new demands, diverse learners, and changing professional landscapes. By tracing these influential movements, we can better understand how pedagogical innovation in TPC emerges not from rupture, but from sustained reflection, critique, and adaptation across time.

References

Perkins, E. & Blyler, N. (1999). *Narrative and technical communication*. Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Scott, J. B., Longo, B., & Wills, K. V. (2006). *Critical power tools: Technical communication and cultural studies*. State University of New York Press.

Tham, J. (2021). *Design thinking in technical communication*. Routledge.

Thralls, C., & Blyler, N. (1992).*Professional communication: The social perspective*. Sage Publications.

Walton, R., Moore, K., & Jones, N. (2019). *Technical communication after the social justice turn*. Routledge.

UK-Based Editing and Publishing Programs: Growing the Discipline at Home and Abroad

Holly Baker, Brigham Young University

Many universities have courses designed to teach students how to edit, both within technical and professional communication (TPC) programs and without. While there are a growing number of editing and publishing (E & P) programs being established or expanded throughout the US, E & P programs in the UK have a lot to teach us about growing an E & P program designed to prepare students for the dynamic, challenging, and ever-changing publishing industry. By assessing the history, makeup, design, and objectives of E & P programs in the UK, E & P researchers and TPC program administrators in the US may be able to gain insights into implementing, sustaining, and growing E & P programs here at home.

In this study, I conducted interviews with program administrators from E & P master's programs at eleven institutions in the UK to answer three broad questions: (1) What common learning objectives do UK E & P programs consider when designing editing or publishing courses? (2) What is the relationship between UK E & P programs and the UK publishing industry, and how does that relationship impact curricular offerings and course design? And (3) How do UK E & P programs recruit students, why do students choose to enroll in UK E & P programs, and what are students' career expectations? This research helped identify the gaps between UK and US-based programs, inform TPC program administration and relations with industry in the US, and point to further research and international collaboration to bridge that gap.

Ideating Through Differential Conscientization: Lessons from a Transnational User Experience Project on MCC and Nepal

Asmita Ghimire, University of Minnesota Twin Cites

User experience (UX) research in international and intercultural technical communication has produced valuable heuristics and methodological frameworks for examining the values and habits of users across global contexts. Foundational concepts such as "cultural usability" (Sun, 2020), "context of use", "participatory localization" (Agboka, 2013), "critical contextualization," and understanding power dynamics at local sites (Agbozo, 2022) have significantly shaped this field. Scholars have urged that when investigating user experiences in non-Western contexts, it is essential to attend to dynamic cultural, sociopolitical, and intersectional factors that impact both users and non-users (Acharya, 2018; Dorpenyo, 2016).

This presentation builds upon these contributions by sharing findings from a pedagogical and research project titled Designing a Problem-Solving Artifact: Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and Nepal, developed for a business and professional writing course. The project focused on the underexplored case of the MCC's development funding in Nepal, an initiative that intended to promote poverty alleviation but instead sparked years of protest and public resistance before ratification in 2022. International narratives largely framed this resistance as a result of miscommunication and misinformation, yet local protests highlighted deeper concerns related to sovereignty and geopolitics.

In this classroom project, students were tasked with designing "problem-solving artifacts" aimed at helping Nepali publics navigate the funding controversy and the associated information environment. Most students framed the issue narrowly as a misinformation/disinformation problem; only one group identified the broader geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and China. This finding reveals an important challenge: designers, particularly in the West, often gravitate toward familiar sources and narratives, unintentionally overlooking the lived experiences and political realities of distant users.

Building from this experience and informed by "teaching for justice" frameworks and collaborative autoethnography, this presentation proposes a new heuristic for the ideation phase: ideating in/through differential conscientization. This approach encourages designers to remain open to redefining problems from the standpoint of marginalized users, fostering both empathetic engagement and liberation. Differential conscientization demands that design processes transfer problem-defining agency to users and non-users themselves, particularly in transnational contexts where sociopolitical stakes are high. Without such an approach, design risks reinforcing inequities rather than dismantling them.

Through this case study and theoretical framing, the presentation invites UX researchers, instructors, and practitioners to critically reimagine ideation practices in intercultural and international design projects, particularly those aimed at justice-centered outcomes.

References

Acharya, K. R. (2018). Usability for user empowerment: Promoting social justice and human rights through localized UX design. *Proceedings of the 36th ACM International Conference on the Design of Communication, 6*, 1–, 7. https://doi.org/10.1145/3233756.3233960

Agboka, G. Y. (2013). Participatory localization: A social justice approach to navigating unen-franchised/disenfranchised cultural sites. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 22(1), 28–, 49. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2013.730966

Agbozo, G. E. (2022). Localization at users' sites is not enough: GhanaPostGPS and power reticulations in the postcolony. *Technical Communication*, 69(2), 7–17.

Dorpenyo, I. (2016). "Unblackboxing" technology through the rhetoric of technical communication: Biometric technology and Ghana's 2012 Election. [Doctor of Philosophy in Rhetoric, Theory and Culture, Michigan Technological University]. https://doi.org/10.37099/mtu.dc.etdr/125

Sun, H. (2020). *Global social media design: Bridging differences across cultures* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press New York. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190845582.001.0001

Storytelling and Performance for Career Building in Technical and Professional Communication Programs

Emma Rose, University of Washington Tacoma

In the field of user experience and technical communication, storytelling has been identified as a key skill (Dahlström, 2019; Quesenbery & Brooks, 2010; Rose et al., 2020; Small, 2017; Vealey & Gerding, 2021). However, what storytelling is in practice and how to teach it is less clear, especially given the elastic nature of storytelling (MacDonald et al., 2024). Using storytelling skills is especially crucial for communicating across interdisciplinary teams with engineers (Lloyd, 2000; Song et al., 2003) and while job seeking (Smart & DiMaria, 2018). Given the turn to artificial intelligence in programs and workplaces, investing in and cultivating human skills, like storytelling, is a key differentiator for students in our programs. In this presentation, we discussed strategies drawn from pedagogy in theatre and performance coupled with strategies from design coursework and explore how they can be incorporated into technical and professional courses and programs. Including the strategy of story games, which takes inspiration from improvisation in theatre. Improv in non-theatre, also called applied improv (Sawyer, 2007), has been used in various disciplines, including medical education (Fu, 2019). In this example, story games helped students generate examples or stories from their lives that connect to their academic coursework.

References

Dahlström, A. (2019). *Storytelling in Design: Defining, Designing, and Selling Multidevice Products*. O'Reilly Media.

Lloyd, P. (2000). Storytelling and the development of discourse in the engineering design process. *Design Studies, 21*(4), 357–373. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0142-694X(00)00007-7

MacDonald, C. M., Putnam, C., Rose, E. J., & Zapata, R. (2024). The Elasticity of Storytelling: An Unsolved Challenge in HCI Education. *Proceedings of the 6th Annual Symposium on HCI Education.* https://-doi.org/10.1145/3658619.3658630

Fu, B. (2019). Common ground: frameworks for teaching improvisational ability in medical education. *Teaching and learning in medicine, 31*(3), 342-355. https://-doi.org/10.1080/10401334.2018.1537880

Quesenbery, W., & Brooks, K. (2010). *Storytelling for User experience: Crafting Stories for Better Design*. Rosenfeld Media.

Rose, E. J., Putnam, C., & MacDonald, C. M. (2020). Preparing future UX professionals: Human skills, technical skills, and dispositions. *SIGDOC 2020 - Proceedings of the 38th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication*. https://doi.org/10.1145/3380851.3416774

Rose, E. J., Putnam, C., & MacDonald, C. M. (2025). The Multifaceted Purposes of Storytelling in User Experience Design Practice. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 00472816251384274.

Small, N. (2017). (Re)Kindle: On the Value of Storytelling to Technical Communication. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication, 47*(2), 234–253. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047281617692069

Sawyer, K. (2007). Improvisation and teaching. Critical Studies in Improvisation/Études critiques en improvisation, 3(2). https://doi.org/10.21083/csieci.v3i2.380

Smart, K. L., & DiMaria, J. (2018). Using Storytelling as a Job-Search Strategy. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly, 81*(2), 185–198.

Song, S., Dong, A., & Agogino, A. M. (2003, August 19). Time Variation of Design "Story Telling" in Engineering Design Teams. *International Conference On Engineering Design*, Stockholm.

Vealey, K. P., & Gerding, J. M. (2021). *Introduction to the Special Issue: "The Work of Storytelling in Technical Communication."* 68(4).

Technical Communication and Creative-Critical Pedagogies: Interdisciplinarity, Collaboration, and Creative Problem-Solving in the Tech Comm Classroom

Claire Oldham Griffith, Michigan State University

Creative-critical pedagogies (Schwittay, 2021; Capous-Desyllas & Papouli, 2025), are pedagogical practices that utilize arts-based methodologies to center student knowledges and engage in experiential and collaborative learning. This presentation argued that, as an inherently interdisciplinary practice, creative-critical pedagogies offer necessary insight into how we prepare students for the future of technical communication. By promoting empathy, creative play, risk-taking, and experiential learning, instructors are able to facilitate students' individual expertise in the classroom through an emphasis on creative problem-solving and critical thinking across different audiences, disciplinary contexts, and collaborative partnerships. This presentation offered discussion and questions of how instructors and students respond to the ever-changing landscape of AI through a reflection on the speaker's own experiences implementing creative-critical pedagogies in a technical communication course.

References

Capous-Desyllas, M., & Papouli, E. (Eds.). (2025). *Creative critical pedagogies using arts-based approaches for online and in-person learning*. Cognella.

Schwittay, A. (2021). *Creative universities: Reimagining education for global challenges and alternative futures*. Bristol University Press.

Using the Accident Report to Teach Risk Communication in TPC

Chris Morris, York University

Risk communication, as an essential aspect of technical and professional writing, often provides a useful analytic with which to evaluate a document's usability and real-world impact (Grabill & Simmons; Lancaster). Risk communication carries with it significant ethical implications for writers, especially when readers rely on written evaluations of risk pertaining to marginalized communities (Dragga and Gong), hazardous technologies (Mirel), public health (Green; Bishop et al.), and the environment (Pflugfelder et al.).

While technical and professional writers often navigate risk and ethics in the workplace and/or in community engagement, student writers also confront risk and ethics. Beyond choices related to plagiarism, students confront risks and ethical dimensions related to style (Kreuter) as well as to language, identities, and cultures (Bell). Given (1) the growing demand for technical and professional writing skills and (2) the emergence of broader risk-based exigencies in technology, culture, and climate, how can composition instructors further promote ethical awareness and ethical approaches to risk communication among student writers?

To begin answering this question, I presented an autoethnography of my efforts to develop and implement curriculum, assignments, and assessments for a second-year level course in ethics for professional writers. Specifically, I sought to build on previous composition-related research into the accident report genre (Dombrowksi; Sauer) and explore the challenges and affordances, successes and failures of using the accident report to work with students to better understand writers' roles in navigating risk, power, and communication both in and beyond the classroom.

References

Bell, S. R. (2021). "Your grammar as all over the place": Translingual close reading, anti-blackness, and racial literacy among multilingual student writers in first year writing. *Forum - Conference on College Composition and Communication, 47*.

Bishop, T., Capan, E., Larsen, B., Preston, R., & Sparby, D. M. (2021) Tactical risk communication: Observations from teaching and learning about crisis communication during COVID-19. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 31*(2), 175–189. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2021.2008509

Dombrowski, P. M. (2006). The two shuttle accident reports: Context and culture in technical communication. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication, 36*(3), 231–252. https://-doi.org/10.2190/0A9H-WN06-BQE2-W1EX

Dragga, S., & Gong, G. (2014). Dangerous neighbors: Erasive rhetoric and communities at risk. *Technical Communication, 61*(2), 76– 94. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26464389

Grabill, J. T., & Simmons, W. M. (1998). Toward a critical rhetoric of risk communication: Producing citizens and the role of technical communicators. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 7*(4), 415–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572259809364640

Kreuter, N. (2013). The ethics of clarity and/or obscuration. Composition Forum, 27.

Lancaster, A. (2018). Identifying risk communication deficiencies: Merging distributed usability, integrated scope, and ethics of care. *Technical Communication, 65*(3), 247–264.

Mirel, B. (1994). Debating nuclear energy: Theories of risk and purposes of communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 3*(1), 41–65. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572259409364557

Pflugfelder, E. H., Amidon, T. R., Sackey, D. J., & Richards, D. P. (2023). Expanding the scope and scale of risk in TPC: Water access and the Colorado River Basin. Technical Communication Quarterly, 32 (3), 224–241. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2023.2210194

Sauer, B. (1994). Fatal grammar: The rhetoric of disasters. *Technical Communication, 41*(1), 154–159. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43090939

Technical Communication and the Technocognition of Misinformation

Amy Koerber, Texas Tech University

Kristin Bivens, University of Bern

Our presentation invited discussion of technical communicators' contributions to understanding the technocognition of misinformation (Lewandowsky, Ecker, & Cook, 2017, p. 353). As a starting place, we presented some recent situations in which public figures used social media to build bridges across the epistemic islands that constitute this technocognition (Lewandowsky, Ecker, & Cook, p. 362). For example, Pete Buttigieg recently made headlines for his first foray into the podcast manosphere (Nguyen, 2025). During his three-hour appearance, he engaged with an expansive bro media audience. In so doing, he inserted fact-checking in a non-confrontational way, thus avoiding the continued-influence (Lewandowsky et al., 2012, p. 106) and backfire (Nyhan, 2021, p. 1) effects that have been noted as reasons why traditional fact-checking methods are often unsuccessful.

To frame our discussion, we extended Koerber and Al-Shawaf's (2025) discussion of phronesis, as theorized by Mehlenbacher (2022). Defined as practical wisdom, and capacity for moral reasoning constrained by historical, social, and cultural conditions (p. 4), Mehlenbacher's phronesis is the element of expertise that explains why trust in experts is declining. Restoring trust, according to Mehlenbacher, requires experts attend to the practical and relational moral qualities of expertise and expert status as a kind of enactment of practical knowledge (p. 145). Informed by this theorization of phronesis, along with some recent popular media examples, we invited discussion about creative ways to restore trust in expert information while employing anti-racist approaches to interrogate intersectional considerations such as race, sex, and disability (Grzanka et al., 2023).

References

Grzanka, P. R., Brian, J. D., & Bhatia, R. (2023). Intersectionality and science and technology Studies. *Science, Technology, & Human Values, 50*(4), 713–743. https://-doi.org/10.1177/01622439231201707

Koerber, A., & Al-Shawaf, T. (2025). "What's crazy is look how better I got": Rethinking ethos in the crisis of perpetual stasis. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly,* 55(3), 263–276. https://-doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2025.2484972

Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K. H., Seifert, C. M., Schwarz, N., & Cook, J. (2012). Misinformation and its correction: Continued influence and successful debiasing. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest,* 13(3), 106–-131.

Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K. H., & Cook, J. (2017). Beyond misinformation: Understanding and coping with the post-truth era. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 6(4), 353–369.

Mehlenbacher, A. R. (2022). *On expertise: Cultivating character, goodwill, and practical wisdom.* Penn State Press. https://doi.org/10.5325/j.ctv31r2n9g

Nguyen, T. (2025, April 23). *Pete Buttigieg makes his first foray into the podcast manosphere*. The Verge. https://www.theverge.com/internet-culture/654543/pete-buttigieg-flagrant-podcast

Nyhan, B. (2021). Why the backfire effect does not explain the durability of political misperceptions. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,* 118(15). https://-doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1912440117

(Re)Making Common Learning Materials for Neurodivergent Access in Online TPC Courses

Leah Heilig, University of Rhode Island

This presentation discussed how common needs and institutional demands for the online, asynchronous technical and professional communication (TPC) service course are often in conflict with access needs for neurodivergent faculty and students. While addressing accessibility concerns with online course delivery is well-established in our field (e.g. Oswal & Melonçon, 2014 & 2017), this presentation offered insight into how ubiquitous TPC instructional elements like team collaboration, scaffolded projects, and asynchronous communication can be reimagined for better access for neurodivergent populations specifically, as well as how common learning materials can be designed for better access and facilitation. The presenter, the lead instructor and sole common learning materials developer for their department's TPC service course, evaluated asynchronous service course design for two user groups: 1) students participating in the course and 2) faculty needing to teach the course from common learning materials such as established LMS shells, assignment materials, and assessment measures. Drawing from student and faculty feedback through a variety of channels, personal experience (and personal failures) with developing and facilitating the asynchronous TPC service course, and strategies from both TPC (e.g. Hitt, 2018; Ortiz, 2020) and education for neurodivergent learning (e.g. Brown & Melcher, 2021; Dolmage, 2017; Le Cunff et al., 2024), the presenter identified how access could be improved starting from common learning materials development and course design. In particular, the presenter focused on remote team facilitation, scaffolded work, presentations, and asynchronous communication for a variety of audiences (including external industry partners).

References

Brown, E., & Melcher, M. (2021). The upside of disrupted teaching for neurodiverse and disabled students: 10 ways to disrupt pedagogical practices that disregard the importance of accessibility. *Critical Studies on Security*, 9(2), 179–182. https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2021.1978643

Dolmage, J. T. (2017). *Academic ableism: Disability and higher education*. University of Michigan Press.

Hitt, A. (2018). Foregrounding accessibility through (inclusive) universal design in professional communication curricula. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 81(1), 52–65. https://doi.org/10.1177/2329490617739884

Le Cunff, A. L., Giampietro, V., & Dommett, E. (2024). Neurodiversity and cognitive load in online learning: A systematic review with narrative synthesis. *Educational Research Review*, 43(100604).

Ortiz, L. A. (2020). Reframing neurodiversity as competitive advantage: Opportunities, challenges, and resources for business and professional communication educators. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 83(3), 261–284. https://doi.org/10.1177/2329490620944456

Oswal, S. K., & Melonçon, L. (2014). Paying attention to accessibility when designing online courses in technical and professional communication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 28 (3), 271–300. https://doi.org/10.1177/1050651914524780

Oswal, S. K., & Melonçon, L. (2017). Saying No to the Checklist: Shifting from an Ideology of Normalcy to an Ideology of Inclusion in Online Writing Instruction. *WPA: Writing Program Administration-Journal of the Council of Writing Program Administrators*, 40(3).

Accessible ≠ Inclusive: Rethinking How We Design for Accessibility and Inclusion in Digital Platforms

Patricia Mensah, Texas Tech University

In this digital world, creating inclusive and accessible platforms is important for both designers and users.While inclusive and accessible are often used side by side, they don't always mean the same thing. This presentation argued that designing for inclusion doesn't automatically mean we're designing for accessibility. In fact, when we focus on inclusion without centering on accessibility from the start, we risk leaving people with disabilities behind. The World Health Organization estimates that over one billion people, which is 15% of the world's population, live with some form of disability. In the United States, businesses are estimated to lose more than $6.9 billion annually due to inaccessible digital platforms (Wettemann & White, 2019). These numbers reveal a serious gap between the intent to serve diverse users and the actual usability of digital experiences for people with disabilities.

Additionally, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act legally mandates all U.S. federal agencies to have accessible digital platforms, but most of these agencies are not complying with this standard. To illustrate this gap, this research analyzed five public universities and government websites using automated tools such as WAVE and Lighthouse to evaluate their compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). This research contributed to ongoing discussions in technical communication, user experience, design thinking, and social justice. Attendees had a clear understanding of the difference between inclusion and accessibility as foundational design concepts and also learn about the WCAG and other practical strategies for designing accessible digital platforms.

References

Wettemann, R., & White, T. (2019). The internet is unavailable. *Nucleus Research*. https://-nucleusresearch.com/research/single/the-internet-is-unavailable/

World Health Organization; World Bank. (2011). World report on disability. *World Health Organization*. https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/44575

U.S. General Services Administration. (2018). *Section 508 standards for electronic and information technology*. https://www.section508.gov/manage/laws-and-policies/

Sickle Cell Disease and Social Justice: Using Community Engaged Pedagogy to Teach Plain Language Principles

Stuart Deets, University of Minnesota

This presentation examined a community-engaged pedagogical approach implemented in a technical & professional writing course that connects plain language principles with social justice issues surrounding sickle cell disease. Working in collaboration with a sickle cell patient advocate, students created accessible definitions of complex medical terminology related to sickle cell disease.

The project addressed two critical gaps: health disparities and information access barriers that disproportionately affect sickle cell patients, who are predominantly from marginalized communities (Lee et al., 2019). Using a community-driven, individual partner model, in this case by bringing a patient advocate into the classroom, students gained firsthand understanding of how technical communication practices impact real people's health outcomes and decision-making capabilities (Carnegie, 2018).

The assessment of the unit focused on the development of students' plain language skills. Simultaneously, there were also shifts in their awareness of sickle cell disease as a social justice issue. Students learned to analyze rhetorical situations with particular attention to audience needs, developing audience personas based on the advocate's insights rather than assumptions.

This presentation demonstrated how engaging real-world issues transforms students' understanding of technical communication as a practice with profound ethical implications (Simmons & Grabill, 2007). The findings suggested that community-engaged pedagogy offers a powerful framework for technical communication programs seeking to integrate social justice principles with practical skill development. By connecting classroom learning with lived experiences, programs can prepare future technical communicators who recognize their role in either perpetuating or dismantling inequitable information systems.

References

Carnegie, T. A. M. (2018). Sustaining service learning in the service course. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 10(1), 110–141.

Lee, L., Smith-Whitley, K., Banks, S., & Puckrein, G. (2019). Reducing health care disparities in sickle cell disease: A review. *Public Health Reports*, 134(6), 599–607. https://-doi.org/10.1177/0033354919881438

Simmons, W. M., & Grabill, J. T. (2007). Toward a civic rhetoric for technologically and scientifically complex places: Invention, performance, and participation. *College Composition and Communication*, 58(3), 419–448.

Understanding and Developing Programmatic Support for Doctoral Students

Michelle Eble, East Carolina University

This presentation shared findings from a study exploring how doctoral programs in technical and professional communication (TPC) signal support to prospective students. Drawing on survey responses from 29 program directors and faculty members across TPC and adjacent fields, we examined how programs represent structures related to mentoring, professional development, research opportunities, and student community.

Building on existing work that highlights mentoring cultures (Melonçon, 2014), the importance of program visibility (Romberger, 2024), and tensions between academic and industry preparation (Hayes, 2023), we offered insights into how programs articulate fit and how that articulation might influence student decision-making. Our data suggested that while many programs offer robust forms of support, there remains room to reflect on how those supports are communicated and how they are understood by applicants navigating the complexities of disciplinary boundaries and professional goals.

Rather than prescribing solutions, we hoped to contribute to ongoing conversations about how programs across the field might consider transparency, mentorship, and adaptability in relation to recruitment and retention. We also shared a short resource of guiding questions developed through this study that programs might use or adapt in thinking about how they signal support.

References

Hayes, R. (2023). Preparing for industry technical writing: Examining graduate curriculum at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock [Dissertation prospectus]. University of Memphis.

Melonçon, L. (2014). Curricular challenges of emphasis degrees in technical and professional communication. In T. Bridgeford, K. S. Kitalong, & B. Williamson (Eds.), *Sharing our intellectual traces* (pp. 179–200). Baywood.

Romberger, J. (2024). Community building at the programmatic level: Arguing for the implementation of the PARS model in a distance learning graduate program. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 15(2).

Technical Communication and the Humanities: (Re-)E-Examining Historical Tensions in a Public Humanities Graduate Program

Michael Knievel, University of Wyoming

The rise of the public humanities stirs memories of past debates in technical communication's disciplinary history, which centered on the field's vexed relationship to both the humanities, more generally defined, and its typical disciplinary home, the English department (Miller, 1979; Moore, 2006; Rutter, 1985).

In Fall 2024, the presenter's home department (English) launched a doctoral program in the public humanities, the mission statement for which describes, a dynamic degree designed to prepare students for publicly engaged careers, aiming to engage the public in conversations that inform contemporary debates, magnify community perspectives, preserve local cultures, and expand educational access. While not a programmatic emphasis, faculty size, funding, and program design invite aspects of technical communication into its execution.

One site of such integration in the program is the required technical communication pedagogy course for students teaching the undergraduate service course as part of their assistantship duties. Taken during the first semester in the program, the course functions as a test site for engaging questions of alignment between technical communication and the public humanities scope, mission, and values. This presentation explored points of contact between technical communication and the public humanities as they manifest in the course, focusing, in particular, on student backgrounds and expectations for the public humanities as a generative site for testing assumptions about disciplinary relationship with technical communication.

The presentation offered opportunity for audience members to consider technical communication's role in a modern humanities vision and how institutional locations like English departments engage with contemporary technical communication curriculum.

References

Miller, C. R. (1979). A humanistic rationale for technical writing. *College English*, 40(6), 610–617. https://doi.org/10.2307/375964

Moore, P. (2006). From monologue to dialog to chorus: the place of instrumental discourse in English studies and technical communication. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 36(4), 383–412. https://doi.org/10.2190/4480-0652-HL37-77G7

Rutter, R. (1985). Poetry, imagination, and technical writing. *College English*, 47(7), 698–712. https://doi.org/10.2307/376975

Bridging the Gap: Technical Communication's Role in Industry-Focused Higher Education

Timothy Ponce, Texas State University

Chris Dayley, Texas State University

This presentation explored how technical and professional writing (TPW) faculty played a pivotal role in reshaping a proposal for an applied humanities PhD program at a R1 aspirational HSI university. As part of an initiative to achieve R1 status, the college of liberal arts at our university decided to propose a new PhD program in applied humanities. Connecting new degree programs with potential employment opportunities outside of academia is a high priority for our relatively new president and provost.

Initially, the administrative leadership of the college (all of whom were researchers in humanities and liberal arts) struggled to connect the proposal with industry and job placement priorities. As time went on and the proposal began to lose traction with the provost, it became clear that the college administrators who wrote the initial proposal lacked the expertise to make a compelling case for how graduates would secure jobs in industry. TPW faculty stepped in, leveraging their deep understanding of industry expectations and workforce development to realign the proposal with state and federal funding priorities related to job placement.

This experience highlighted a larger issue: many humanities and liberal arts programs struggle to articulate clear career pathways for students (Benton, 2009; Jang & Lee, 2025; Nicholas, 2018). At the same time, technical communication programs, whether housed in humanities, liberal arts, or STEM colleges are uniquely positioned to bridge this gap due to their long standing industry ties (Bridgeford & Amant, 2017; Cleary, 2023; Smith, 2024). Recent scholarship has shown how TPW programs are already partnering with industry to create programs that produce graduates who are prepared for a competitive job market (Lawrence et al., 2023; Walkup et al., 2023). As state and federal funding increasingly prioritizes job placement and workforce alignment, TPW scholars must actively leverage this strength in conversations with upper administration to secure program support and resources, consequently garnering greater stability and recognition for our own programs.

After presenting our own experience and conclusions from that experience, we sparked discussion (a hallmark of the CPTSC conference presentation) with the following questions:

- How has the increasing focus on job placement and workforce alignment affected your program?
    - Have you faced pressure from administration or external stakeholders to make this a priority?
    - If so, how have you responded, and what challenges have you encountered?

- How has the focus on workforce development influenced the structure of graduate programs in your institution?
    - Have there been changes in curriculum, internship requirements, or funding priorities?
    - Are there lessons learned from new programs that are explicitly industry-oriented?
- What opportunities or risks do you see in this shift toward job placement-focused graduate programs?
    - Does it create tensions between traditional research expectations and industry needs?
    - How can TPW programs best advocate for their value in this changing landscape?

References

Benton, T. H. (2009). Graduate school in the humanities: Just don't go. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 30.

Bridgeford, T., & Amant, K. S. (2017). *Academy-industry relationships and partnerships*. Routledge.

Cleary, Y. (2021). *The profession and practice of technical communication*. Routledge.

Jang, J. H., & Lee, S. Y. (2025). Exploring perception types of humanities job seekers in employment preparation: implications for career guidance. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(2), 151. https://-doi.org/10.3390/bs15020151

Lawrence, H., Fernandez, L., Shafer, L., Joyner, V., Lussos, R. G., Bonem, M., & Eyman, D. (2023). Sustainable Industry-University Partnerships: Accountability as a Model for Program Development. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 14(1), 41–71

Nicholas, J. M. (2018). Marketable selves: Making sense of employability as a liberal arts undergraduate. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 109, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.09.001

Smith, A. W. (2024, July). Bridging the classroom and workplace: The high-impact practices of a technical and professional communication studio course. In 2024 *IEEE International Professional Communication Conference (ProComm)* (pp. 186–193)

Walkup, K., Sagheb, S., & Smith, R. A. (2022). Connectivity, expectations, and expertise: Co-creation as a model for program development. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 13(2), 104–129.

Session 2

The Good, the Bad, and the Paywalled: Mentoring Early-Career Researchers in Publishing Outlets

Michael Salvo, Purdue University

This session initiated a conversation about the role and significance of emergent publishing venues within the academic publishing ecosystem, emphasizing the responsibility of senior scholars in mentoring junior colleagues through the process of selecting the most impactful outlets.

As traditional journals becoming increasingly selective, early-career scholars may struggle to determine where their work will gain recognition and have lasting impact and count towards tenure and promotion. Despite the proliferation of digital and emergent journals, many outlets remain overlooked due to a lack of programmatic articulation regarding their value.

Position: Senior scholars play a vital role in helping junior faculty understand the evolving publishing landscape, weigh the benefits of electronic versus traditional publishing, and strategically position their work for success.

Action item: To ensure our tenure and promotion documents accurately reflect the publishing ecosystem of 2025, they must be revised.

The discussion aimed to articulate how academic programs and administrators can establish standards that balance traditional journal publishing with emergent digital platforms, ensuring that younger scholars receive guidance in making informed choices. It also examined the challenges faced by university presses and commercial publishers, as well as the ways faculty mentorship can mitigate publishing uncertainties.

By engaging both junior and senior scholars, this session fostered a collaborative discussion on best practices for navigating the current publishing climate. It highlighted the importance of mentorship in strengthening scholarly impact and advancing careers while addressing how emergent publishing venues can shape the future of research dissemination.

Immersive Lab Training: A User Experience (UX) and Chemistry Virtual Reality (VR) Collaboration

Amii LaPointe, Milwaukee School of Engineering

As technical communication evolves alongside emerging technologies, designing immersive media, like virtual reality (VR), is becoming an essential skill for future professionals. This presentation explored how the User Experience (UX) Program and Chemistry Department at Milwaukee School of Engineering collaborated to create 360 degree VR videos to replace existing Laboratory Management Plan (LMP) training.

The impetus for this partnership arose from chemistry faculty seeking a more engaging alternative to their traditional 15-minute voice-over PowerPoint video. As a result, UX students and chemistry faculty worked together to create five student-focused VR video modules to tour the lab and cover safety, conduct, chemical handling, and emergency procedures. Students applied user-centered design and storytelling principles, using Insta360 cameras for capture, Adobe Premiere for editing, and YouTube for distribution.

Additionally, this project supported [redacted] broader mission to integrate Extended Reality (XR) technologies into authentic learning environments, while also aligning with CPTSC's focus on adapting technical communication curricula and fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration.

This session shared project structure insights, lessons learned, and strategies for integrating XR into technical communication courses. Attendees gained practical approaches to stakeholder coordination, curriculum innovation, and enhancing technical documentation through immersive, user-centered design, equipping students with future-ready skills in XR content design, interdisciplinary teamwork, and visual communication.

References

Zicker, C., Truman, B., & Dodds, H. (2021). Cross reality (XR): Challenges and opportunities across the spectrum. In J. Ryoo & K. Winkelmann (Eds.), *Innovative learning environments in STEM higher education: Opportunities, challenges, and looking forward* (pp. 55–77). Springer. https://-doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-58948-6_4

Díaz, M. J., Mantell, C., Caro, I., de Ory, I., Sánchez, J., & Portela, J. R. (2022). Creation of immersive resources based on virtual reality for dissemination and teaching in chemical engineering. *Education Sciences*. 12(8), 572. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12080572

Protagoras and Prometheus Walk into a Bar: Reflections on Team-Teaching Classical Mythology with a Professional Writing Focus

Joy Santee, University of Southern Indiana

This presentation reflected on team-teaching a lower-level general education course in classical mythology to generate discussion of creative interdisciplinary collaborations.

In 2022, I successfully proposed the Liberal Arts Team-Teaching Experience (LATTE) award to create opportunities for enhanced student learning through synthesis of different perspectives (Neumann, et al., 2006; Leavitt, 2006), student engagement (Colburn, Sullivan, & Fox, 2012) and mentorship opportunities (Crawford & Jenkins, 2018). A colleague and I received the award to teach classical mythology in Spring 2025.

Given my rudimentary knowledge of mythology, my contribution to course design focused on project-based learning that developed students' professional communication skills. The first project instructed students to select a character and create a catalog of items to be marketed on behalf of that character. Students developed skills in descriptive writing, audience analysis, persuasion, and document design for particular audiences while demonstrating knowledge of their character. In another project students identified a theme connecting classical mythology to their majors and created a Google My Map describing several points, promoting students' interdisciplinary thinking and visual communication skills. Samples of students' work and results of a survey of students' perceptions of their development of key professional communication skills were included in the presentation. Through course projects, students were exposed to the field of professional and technical writing, developing their intellectual and professional skills while also creating a recruiting opportunity for our program.

At the end of this presentation, audience members were invited to consider collaborative approaches to teaching across disciplinary contexts in their own institutions. While team-teaching opportunities may be limited, pedagogical exchanges, including collaborative creation of assignments or co-teaching smaller units, may be possible. With emphasis on professional and technical writing's broad application across disciplines, I asked audience members to consider how interdisciplinary collaboration can promote professional and technical writing in their institutional contexts.

References

Colburn, M., Sullivan, D., & Fox, D. E. (2012). An examination of the impact of team teaching on student learning outcomes and student satisfaction in undergraduate business capstone courses. *American Journal of Business Education,* 5(2), 149–158.

Crawford, R., & Jenkins, L. (2018). Making pedagogy tangible: Developing skills and knowledge using a team teaching and blended learning approach. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education,* 43(1), 127–142.

Leavitt, M. (2006). Team teaching: Benefits and challenges. *Tomorrow's Professor*, 16(1). https://tom-prof.stanford.edu/posting/767

Neumann, M., Browning, S., Clarke, J., Harrison, D. M., Ing, K., Kutas, C., Pitre, J., Serbanescu, R., Wall, M., & Wilson, R. (2006). *Team teaching: A survey of 50 courses in the Faculty of Arts and Science at the University of Toronto with more than one instructor.* University of Toronto Faculty Learning Community.

Rethinking TPC Program Websites in Light of Industry Needs

Timothy Ponce, Texas State University

Technical and professional communication (TPC) has long grappled with how to balance theoretical depth and practical skill-building in its pedagogy. Scholars have emphasized the necessity of teaching both conceptual frameworks and technological competencies (Hovde & Renguette, 2017; Cargile Cook, 2002), noting that students must be prepared to adapt to rapidly shifting industry expectations. While this conversation has shaped curriculum and instructional practice, our study suggested that the outward-facing representations of TPC programs, especially university websites, have not kept pace.

This poster presented findings from a comparative content analysis of 100 entry-level technical writing job postings and 50 public-facing TPC program descriptions on university websites. The job postings revealed wide variation in required software knowledge, contrasting rhetorical tone across company types, and frequent demands for security clearance and adaptability. Meanwhile, the website analysis showed that many TPC programs emphasize course sequences without mapping those courses to specific, transferable skills. Skills are often implied rather than named, and many sites suffer from significant usability issues that undermine clarity, credibility, and user experience.

These findings raised questions about how effectively TPC programs are communicating their relevance to prospective students, employers, and institutional stakeholders. Our poster invited discussion around how programs might adopt a skills-first rhetorical approach that aligns with current job market demands. We also explored the practical constraints TPC programs face, such as staffing and labor conditions that limit the upkeep of these public-facing materials. We framed this work as a call for both rhetorical reframing and administrative support, aligned with the conference's emphasis on preparing programs and students for the future of technical communication.

References

Cargile Cook, K. (2002). Layered literacies: A theoretical frame for technical communication pedagogy. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 11(1), 5–29. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15427625tcq1101_1

Hovde, M. R., & Renguette, C. (2017). Preparing students for industry: Academic programs, curricula, and partnerships. *Technical Communication*, 64(1), 44–59.

Practical Strategies for Assessing Intercultural Competence in Technical and Professional Communication Classrooms

Meghalee Das, James Madison University

As technical communication increasingly demands cross-cultural collaboration and engagement with global audiences, developing students' intercultural competence is essential for professional success. However, programs often lack practical models and resources for embedding and assessing these competencies. Responding to this need, scholars have explored various strategies for integrating intercultural communication into the curriculum. Research highlights challenges such as limited time, materials, and teacher training (Mateeva, 2008) and emphasizes embedding intercultural skills across the curriculum rather than isolating them in single courses (Cleary, 2017). Other approaches include heuristics for online cultural analysis (St. Amant, 2018), collaborative projects with ESL students (Thrush & Thevenot, 2017), portfolio assessments (Melton, 2017), and internships emphasizing contextual reading skills (Gattis, 2017).

Building on this existing scholarship, my work focused on developing practical, adaptable assessment strategies that instructors can easily integrate into undergraduate technical communication courses. Specifically, this presentation shared an applied classroom model piloted in an undergraduate intercultural professional communication course. Drawing on Han Yu's (2012) review of nine intercultural competence assessment methods, I focused on three adaptable assessment strategies: cultural awareness tests, observations, and group paper and presentations. Additionally, I shared findings from pre/post intercultural knowledge assessments.

I also discussed how these tools, adapted from sources such as Purdue University's Center for Instructional Excellence and my own research, can be combined and modified to fit different classroom needs. Attendees left with concrete ideas for designing activities, informal assessments, and course structures that foster students' intercultural competence in technical and professional communication contexts.

References

Cleary, Y. (2011). An integrated framework for teaching international communication. In B. Thatcher, K. St. Amant, & Sides, C. (Eds.), *Teaching intercultural rhetoric and technical communication: Theories, curriculum, pedagogies, and practices* (pp. 15–29). Routledge.

Gattis, L. F. (2011). Between the lines: Reading contextually in the international internship. In B. Thatcher, K. St. Amant, & Sides, C. (Eds.), *Teaching intercultural rhetoric and technical communication: Theories, curriculum, pedagogies, and practices* (pp. 193–216). Routledge.

Matveeva, N. (2008). Teaching intercultural communication in a basic technical writing course: A survey of our current practices and methods. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 38(4), 387–410. https://doi.org/10.2190/TW.38.4.e

Melton, J. (2011). Global revisions: (Re)Thinking the future of technical and professional communication competencies. In B. Thatcher, K. St. Amant, & Sides, C. (Eds.), *Teaching intercultural rhetoric and technical communication: Theories, curriculum, pedagogies, and practices* (pp. 131–157). Routledge.

St. Amant, K. (2018). Teaching international and intercultural technical communication: A comparative online credibility approach. In T. Bridgeford (Ed.), *Teaching professional and technical communication* (pp. 222–236). Utah State University Press.

Thrush, E. A., & Thevenot, A. (2011). Globalizing the technical communication classroom: Killing two birds with one stone. In B. Thatcher, K. St. Amant, & Sides, C. (Eds.), T*eaching intercultural rhetoric and technical communication: Theories, curriculum, pedagogies, and practices* (pp. 65–86). Routledge.

Yu, H. (2012). Intercultural competence in technical communication: A working definition and review of assessment methods*. Technical Communication Quarterly, 21*(2), 168–186. https://-doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2012.643443

Intercultural Technical Communication and Diverse, Under-utilized Native Ecotypic Seed for Climate-smart Grasslands

Therese Pennell, Prairie View A&M University

The agronomy-focused project drew me because of its far-reaching social justice objectives. The project gave visibility to native flora, climate change, climate change effects on farmers, underrepresented groups, and advocated for climate-smart crops. The research focused on the use of native grass seeds for climate-smart grasslands in the southeastern USA. The project established that because of the small-scale nature of the amounts produced and the specialized, labor-intensive techniques, farmers are unable to grow their own seeds. So, it aimed to resolve these problems by bringing together agronomists, farmers, seed companies, and end-users (market).

Using an intercultural technical communication lens, I was tasked with building the audience profile, that is, of farmers from diverse backgrounds, at various stages of experience: established growers, new farmers, farmers who want to diversify income and those with limited land/income/resources, and, most importantly, are located in our region. Such a profile determined the language and content then allow us to identify social media platforms to disseminate content.

Notwithstanding the nature of the project, cross-disciplinary collaborations are challenging. Developing and fostering these collaborations requires work. The project scope was large, covering 3 regions: North-central Texas/Southern Oklahoma; Northern Louisiana/East Texas; Northern Alabama and Mississippi; 4+ co-PIs, and a limited award. Once the proposal was accepted the funders asked us to scale back 10% across-board. My limited ask had to be reduced even though my portion was already the smallest.

This presentation highlighted the opportunities of these collaborations, but also, the problems and sought feedback about establishing boundaries in interdisciplinary collaborations.

IC and emerging technologies in TPC: Designing & testing AI assignments in IC instruction

Brandi Fuglsby, Austin Peay State University

Chakrika Veeramoothoo, University of Houston-Downtown

Since intercultural communication (IC) has been a staple in many technical & professional communication (TPC) programs and classrooms, we need to consider how emerging technologies, like artificial intelligence (AI), can support IC instruction productively and ethically. When people think of IC and AI, they often think of translation. However, we want to leverage the power of AI to teach students to think about culture more deeply and AI more critically.

TPC scholars have studied how IC (Tham et al., 2021) and emerging technologies (Duin and Pedersen, 2021) are woven throughout our daily lives. Within IC, AI can be productively used for translation (Carradini, 2024). In linguistics, Hua et al. (2024) note bias and stereotypes in current AI models, which are harmful to IC and culture. TPC needs to study further the overlap between IC and AI.

For this presentation, we designed and tested an assignment where students use AI to learn about culture in support of IC development. Based on strategies and examples TPC instructors have used with designing assignments, we developed an assignment where we ask students to use X AI to research a specific culture. The goal of the assignment was twofold: 1) students engage with the nuances of a particular culture and 2) think critically about what AI can and cannot do. We presented our experiences of testing out the assignment, the first phase of a longer study where we eventually plan to implement the assignment in our classrooms. We concluded with inviting the audience to discuss their strategies of using AI to support IC instruction.

References

Carradini, S. (2024). On the current moment in AI: Introduction to special issue on effects of artificial intelligence tools in technical communication pedagogy, practice, and research, part 1. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 38(3), 187–198. https://doi.org/10.1177/10506519241239638

Duin, A. H., & Pedersen, I. (2021). *Writing futures: Collaborative, algorithmic, autonomous.* Switzerland: Springer Cham. 978-3-030-70927-3

Hua, Z., Dai, D., Brandt, A., Chen, G., Ferri, G., Hazel, S., Jenks, C., Jones, R., O'Regan, J. & Suzuki, S. (2025). Exploring AI for intercultural communication: open conversation. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 16 (2), 809–824. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2024-0186

Tham, J., Duin, A. H., Veeramoothoo, S., & Fuglsby, B. (2021) Connectivism for writing pedagogy: Strategic networked approaches to promote international collaborations and intercultural learning. *Computers and Composition*, 60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2021.102643

Minor Conveniences: Assessing Curricula for Technical Communication Minors

Shelton Weech, Utah Valley University

Nearly five years ago, Steiner, McCracken, and Moeller (2020) discussed the importance and influence of minor degrees of study in TPC programs. Minors in technical communication offer logical sites to articulate value and substance to undergraduate students, university administrators, and community and industry partners (p. 107). Through minors, TPC administrators and instructors can cultivate relationships across the curriculum and outside of the university. And minors create opportunities for focused learning.

That said, there is little literature suggesting curricula for technical communication minors. Building from a study that Melonçon (2012) conducted about TPC certificates, Melonçon and Henschel (2013) suggest the value of researching and articulating common curricula and objectives across degree programs in technical communication and do so by looking specifically at majors. And in the years since, others have taken up this work in comparing program curricula with job requirements (Stanton, 2017), with UX (Cosgrove, 2023), and, most recently, in editing and publishing (Baker et al., 2024). As yet, there have been no systematic investigations into curricula for technical communication minors.

In this presentation, I presented preliminary findings of our own investigation into core curricula across technical communication minors. We gathered and coded descriptions of required and elective courses from a selection of technical communication minor programs across the United States. We noted important themes across courses such as document design, UX, and collaboration, and we concluded by synthesizing our findings into a recommended curriculum that technical communication programs might adopt for their own minors.

References

Baker, H., Rawlins, J., & Pierson, A. (2024). In search of a core curriculum: Assessment of editing and publishing programs in higher education. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 15(2), 51–83.

Cosgrove, S. J. (2023). Finding the gap: A comparison of UX industry practices and UX course outcomes in TPC programs. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 66(4), 356–365.

Melonçon, L. (2012). Current overview of academic certificates in technical and professional communication in the United States. *Technical Communication*, 59(3), 207–222.

Melonçon, L., & Henschel, S. (2013). Current state of U.S. undergraduate degree programs in technical and professional communication. *Technical Communication*, 60(1), 45–64.

Stanton, R. (2017). Do technical/professional writing (TPW) programs offer what students need for their start in the workplace? A comparison of requirements in program curricula and job ads in industry. *Technical Communication*, 64(3), 223–236.

Steiner, L., McCracken, C., & Moeller, M. (2020) The minor is major: An adhocratic, relationship-based view of TPC curriculum and curriculum revision. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 11(2), 94–109.

Data Concepts for Programmatic Decision Making Under Uncertainty

Jason Swarts, North Carolina State University

In time of shrinking faculty, diminishing enrollments, and general economic strain, program administrators must frequently make consequential decisions under uncertainty. These decisions address resource allocation, hiring, and teaching assignments, and they must be made with a reasonable expectation for positive outcomes. Such expectations ought to be informed by data that reduces uncertainty by articulating clear risks, regrets, rewards, preferences, and utilities of any given decision, but what are those data, how are they put together, and how are they sourced? Often, the available data is inadequate or unknown.

The scenario sketched above is not specific to technical and professional writing programs but to academic programs more broadly. It is, however, a problem that can be addressed with effective technical communication. The problem is one of identifying data needs and articulating "data concepts" that have referential validity (i.e., they measure actual things and have arithmetical utility) and have sensible usability (i.e., they "mean" something at a given time and in a given institutional setting). Creating effective data concepts enables decision makers to reduce uncertainty, but decision makers often must become skilled at creating data concepts from raw materials.

This presentation drew on my experience as a technical communicator serving as the head of an English department and my attempts to conceptualize the data concept needs to address issues of uncertainty that are commonplace in programmatic decision making. I addressed skills and proficiencies that I believed would benefit other program administrators.

Making Technical and Professional Communication Visible: Student-Centered Strategies for Recruitment

Luke Thominet, Florida International University

Recruitment is an ongoing challenge for technical and professional communication (TPC) programs, particularly as institutions warn of a coming enrollment cliff. While our field has discussed recruitment challenges since at least 1975 (Russell, 2024, p. 26), recent scholarship continues to emphasize challenges with visibility and clarity. For example, Leslie and Northcut (2013) found students had little knowledge of TPC programs on campus, while Chong and Roundtree (2020) found students wanted recruitment materials to clarify what makes the program technical or scientific (p. 15). Other scholars have outlined effective recruitment strategies for increasing diversity in TPC programs. (Anabire, 2023; Dayley, 2023; Roundtree, 2016).

In this presentation, I discussed our updated recruitment strategies and materials for undergraduate and graduate programs at a very large, urban R1 university with a minority-majority student population. I advocated for a user-centered approach that pairs student-focused language with clear, accessible illustrations of TPC work. First, I described how our physical marketing materials offer compelling field definitions and showcase our students' community-engaged projects. Next, I shared our approach to social media, where we center student work and experiences to create a relatable digital presence. Finally, I discussed our use of online and in-person events where alumni and current students demystify the field for prospective students. I closed by reflecting on the successes and limitations of our strategies and sharing our plans the future.

Following the presentation, I invited attendees to share their own recruitment strategies and experiences, aiming to build a conversation about sustainable, student-centered recruitment practices.

References

Anabire, D. A. (2023). Inclusive recruitment strategies for recruiting international graduate students. *2023 IEEE International Professional Communication Conference (ProComm)*, 183–187. https://-doi.org/10.1109/ProComm57838.2023.00028

Chong, F., & Roundtree, A. K. (2020). Student recruitment in technical and professional communication programs. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 30(1), 1–18. https://-doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2020.1774660

Dayley, C. (2021). Combatting Embedded Racism in TPC Academic Programs: Recruiting for Diversity Using Student-Informed Practices. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 12(1), 5–38. https://cptsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Issue-12.1.pdf#page=6

Leslie, T., & Northcut, K. (2013). A Survey of Awareness about Technical Communication Programs on Campus. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 5(2), 29–45. https://cptsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/vol5-2.pdf

Roundtree, A. K. (2016). Program recruitment. CPTSC White Paper. https://cptsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Recruiting-Roundtree-2016.pdf

Russell, L. (2024). TPC program administration in small US institutions: Recruitment and assessment. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 15(1). https://-programmaticperspectives.cptsc.org/index.php/jpp/article/view/72

Narratives of Belonging: Communities of Practice in TPC

Rhonda Stanton, Missouri State University

Many students say that in their first weeks of graduate school, they didn't understand how to participate effectively or how to belong. Becoming a member of the graduate student community (or any specialized community) is important to one's success within that community. Much of what we know about belonging in graduate school is tacit knowledge, which is difficult to describe and quantify (Spinuzzi, 2005). Some of the processes of becoming part of a specialized community can be defined and disseminated, but much of the process of acquiring that identity happens simply by participating.

We planned to investigate narratives of those who have graduated and learn how they became part of their communities by overcoming the initial obstacles of learning the rules, language(s), and practice(s) of graduate school.

Teaching and learning technical communication among a community of learners was mentioned by Carolyn Miller years ago (1979), and these communities are ubiquitous in graduate programs and workplace environments. We planned to triangulate Miller's foundational comments with Etienne Wenger's (1998) theory of communities of practice (CoP), and Lev Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) in learning.

We believed understanding these elements would allow us to propose a narrative-rich approach to graduate instruction, specifically, genre awareness and collaborative learning (Miller 1979), identity formation through legitimate peripheral participation (Wenger, 1998), and Vygotsky's (1978) scaffolded cognitive growth. At the intersection of these elements, there is a pedagogy model foundational to the future of technical communication learning and teaching.

References

Miller, C. R. (1979). A humanistic rationale for technical writing. *College English*, 40(6), 610–617. https://-doi.org/10.2307/375964

Spinuzzi, C. (2005). The methodology of participatory design. *Technical Communication*, 52(2), 163–174.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes* (M. Cole, V. Jolm-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Harvard University Press. https://-doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjf9vz4.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Narratives on Faith and Functionality: Period Tracking for Muslim Women

Munira Mutmainna, St. John's University

For practicing Muslim women, menstrual tracking can serve purposes beyond health monitoring—it is directly tied to their religious obligations. Islamic guidelines exempt women from certain religious practices during their menstruation cycle, including daily prayers and fasting (Ibrahim et al., 2024). While research in different fields address period tracking, technical communication scholarship has yet to explore how Muslim women adapt, interpret and navigate technical interfaces not designed with their needs in mind. This research addressed this by focusing on how religious requirements function as accessibility needs that current interfaces often fail to address. By investigating the strategies Muslim women employ to navigate these issues, this research contributed to broader conversations about accessible design and the ethics of designing for diverse users. In technical communication scholarship, Kimball's (2017) notion of tactical technical communication and Jones et al.'s work (2016) show how users adapt technologies not designed for their needs and how marginalized users develop workarounds when mainstream designs fail them. Among studies on period tracking, Ibrahim et al. (2024) is the only recent research that highlights this Muslim women experience. Their study document Muslim women's experiences with menstrual tracking applications, revealing the intimate connection between tracking and religious practices. While their work provides valuable insights into user experiences, my goal in this research was to adopt a technical communication approach and listen to narratives (Charon, 2006) of Muslim women to explore what they reveal about strategies they adopt to track their period, and how design processes might be improved to account for their unique needs and an inclusive way forward. It also addressed how privacy concerns regarding period tracking or relevant applications can disproportionately affect Muslim women using these apps. This qualitative study was conducted through narrative-based surveys and interviews of practicing Muslim women in the U.S. who track their menstrual cycles using various means for religious purposes. Participants were recruited through online screening questionnaire distributed via community connections. Aligning with one of the themes of the CPTSC conference, "ethics and social justice in technical communication" as well as UX design, this research aimed to offer valuable insights into how current designs for period tracking may lack inclusivity, leading to marginalization of specific user groups, and exploring more inclusive approaches to address their needs.

References

Charon, R. (2006). *Narrative medicine: Honoring the stories of illness.* Oxford University Press.

Ibrahim, Z., Panchpor, P., Nurain, N., & Clawson, J. (2024). "Islamically, I am no longer on my period": A study of menstrual tracking in Muslim women in the US. *Proceedings of CHI '24: Proceedings of the 2024 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, USA, 686, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1145/3613904.3642006*

Jones, N. N., Moore, K. R., & Walton, R. (2016). Disrupting the past to disrupt the future: An antenarrative of technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly,* 25(4), 211–229. https://-doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2016.1224655

Kimball, M. A. (2017). The golden age of technical communication. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication,* 47(3), 330–358. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047281616641927

Community-Engaged Research at Scale: Empowering Community Partners as Researchers

Amber Hedquist, Arizona State University

Claire Lauer, Arizona State University

Technical and professional communication (TPC) researchers increasingly conduct community-engaged research (CER)(Allison et al., 2023; Amidon et al., 2023; Itchuaqiyaq et al., 2023), and recent scholarship has explored how researchers approach both the opportunities and challenges that emerge when working with a single research site (Grant, 2022; Shah, 2020). While this work is important, our project exploreed how multi-site initiatives, particularly those involving communities with distinct cultural histories, geographies, and values, create opportunities for developing flexible, site-specific structures for collaboration. This presentation shared insights from a cross-disciplinary, statewide research project that partnered with several tribal and rural communities across Arizona. Our team adopted a participatory approach that involved community members as researchers, though the ways they participated varied based on local needs and place-based systems of collaboration.

Rather than exclusively asking partners to recruit participants or collect data using academic norms or procedures, we worked to create space for them to lean into their site-specific knowledge, relationships, and goals. Empowerment, in this context, meant allowing each community partner to define their own role, whether as interviewer, local facilitator, storyteller, or something else entirely. This flexible, trust-based approach reflects a broader vision of technical communication that values participatory design (Oswal, 2014; Spinuzzi, 2005), cultural humility (Itchuaqiyaq et al., 2023), and multiple ways of knowing (Canagarajah, 2002; Carlson & Caretta, 2021).

By theorizing empowerment across place, this work contributes to TPC's ongoing efforts to center equity, ethics, and local expertise in research and practice. A forthcoming publication will extend this work by analyzing how different empowerment models influenced long-term collaboration and data translation.

References

Allison, L., Maggio, C., Kalim, S., & Schoettler, M. (2023). Making graduate student CER practices visible: Navigating the double-binds of identities, space, and time. *Communication Design Quarterly Review, 11*(2), 38–43. https://doi.org/10.1145/3592356.3592361

Amidon, T., Moore, K. R., & Simmons, M. (2023). Community engaged researchers and designers: How we work and what we need. *Communication Design Quarterly Review*, 2(11), 5–9. https://-doi.org/10.1145/3592356.3592357

Canagarajah, S. (2002). Reconstructing local knowledge. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education, 1*(4), 243–259. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327701JLIE0104_1

Carlson, E. B., & Caretta, M. A. (2021). Legitimizing situated knowledge in rural communities through storytelling around gas pipelines and environmental risk. *Technical Communication*, 68(4), 40–55.

Grant, C. (2022). Collaborative tactics for equitable community partnerships toward social justice impact. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 65(1), 151–163. https://-doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2022.3141227

Itchuaqiyaq, C. U., Lindgren, C. A., & Kramer, C. Q. (2023). Decolonizing community-engaged research: Designing CER with cultural humility as a foundational value. *Communication Design Quarterly Review*, 11(3), 12–20. https://doi.org/10.1145/3592367.3592369

Oswal, S. K. (2014). Participatory design: Barriers and possibilities. *Communication Design Quarterly Review*, 2(3), 14–19. https://doi.org/10.1145/2644448.2644452

Shah, R. W. (2020). "What is It that's going on here?": Community partner frames for engagement. *Community Literacy Journal*, 14(2), 72–92. https://dx.doi.org/10.25148/14.2.009037

Spinuzzi, C. (2005). The methodology of participatory design. *Technical Communication*, 52(2), 163–174.

Research as Resistance: A Process of Conducting Ethical Social Justice Studies Under Restrictive Laws

Mitski Avalox, Utah Tech University

Utah's H.B. 261 joins a growing wave of state laws that dismantle DEI offices and restrict identity-based outreach in public universities. These laws recalibrate what research is possible, what language is allowed, and what technical communication looks like under legal constraint. This project asked: How can social justice research adapt in institutions where DEI is no longer a protected framework?

From February through April 2025, I conducted a study on how H.B. 261 affected student belonging at a Utah institution. Rather than reporting findings, this presentation reflected on the experience of conducting DEI-foregrounded research (e.g., Haas, 2012; Jones, Moore, & Walton, 2016; Rose & Walton, 2019) in a climate of compliance and surveillance. Recruitment was fragile, support was unofficial, and ethical questions were persistent. The research process itself became a rhetorical artifact, shaped by procedural ambiguity and institutional disengagement.

This project built on a growing body of TPC scholarship that frames DEI as foundational, not supplementary. Bay (2022) calls for embedding DEI as core to curriculum design, while Bennett (2023) applies disability justice and TPC theory to challenge exclusionary recruitment practices. Extending their insights into research methodology, this presentation modeled adaptive, justice-informed approaches for working within legally hostile environments.

This presentation benefited CPTSC members invested in ethical, justice-centered inquiry under legal constraint. It shared practical lessons on design, participant protection, and institutional risk while considering how research processes might actively resist broader systems of misinformation and ideological erasure.

References

Bay, J. (2022). Fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in the technical and professional communication service course. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 65(1), 213–225. https://-doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2021.3137708

Bennett, K. C. (2023). How "well" are we DEI-ing? Applying technical and professional communication theory and disability justice to challenge intersectional ableism in job advertisements through coalitional recruitment. *Technical Communication*, 70(3), 77–96.

Haas, A. M. (2012). Race, rhetoric, and technology: A case study of decolonial technical communication theory, methodology, and pedagogy. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication,* 26(3), 277–310. https://doi.org/10.1177/1050651912439539

Jones, N. N., Moore, K. R., & Walton, R. (2016). Disrupting the past to disrupt the future: An antiracist approach to technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly,* 25(4), 211–229. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2016.1224655

Rose, E. J., & Walton, R. (2019). From the margins to the center: Reimagining usability as a tool for justice. In R. Walton, K. R. Moore, & N. N. Jones (Eds.), *Technical communication after the social justice turn: Building coalitions for action* (pp. 21–36). Routledge.

Systematic Revisions of an Engineering Technical Communication Micro-Curriculum

Emily Gresbrink, Minnesota State University, Mankato

Technical communication scholars have long been teaching and adapting composition, rhetoric, and communication lessons for the engineering classroom (Walker, 2000; Ford, 2004; Davis, 2010; Harichandran et al., 2014; Mallette 2024, 2024b). Regarding industry, engineering disciplines such as software engineering and industrial engineering are anticipated to hit 12-18 percent growth rates in the next 8-10 years (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). Thus, communicating the work as an engineer remains a crucial skill for job requirements such as technical presentations, code reviews, and report writing (Kowalski, 1994), and thus becomes an important skill to learn.

This pilot study aimed to investigate programmatic and pedagogical insights into an existing technical communication micro-curriculum in an engineering and computer science program. Like Sageev & Romanowski's investigation into student engineer insights regarding curriculum and development (2013), along with inspiration from investigating technical communication's pedagogical relationship to engineering (Wolfe, 2009), this study asked participants who are going through or have gone through a technical communication micro-curriculum to suggest improvements to their learning experience. Using surveys, interviews, and corpus analysis methods guided by rhetorical listening (Ratcliffe 1999, 2005; Carradini & Swarts, 2023), this study utilized surveys and interviews to gather student insight regarding their experience with the curriculum. Using these insights with literature in engineering education and programmatic work aims address how instructors might successfully, appropriately, or efficiently teach technical communication to students under tight micro-curriculum constraints to prepare them for the challenges of working as engineers and computer scientists.

References

Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024). Field of degree: Engineering. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/field-of-degree/engineering/engineering-field-of-degree.html

Carradini, S., & Swarts, J. (2023). *Text at scale: corpus analysis in technical communication*. The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/TPC-B.2023.2104

Davis, M. (2010). Assessing technical communication within engineering contexts tutorial. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 53(1), 33–45. https://-doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2009.2038736

Ford, J. D. (2004). Knowledge transfer across disciplines: Tracking rhetorical strategies from a technical communication classroom to an engineering classroom. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 47(4), 301–315. https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2004.840486

Harichandran, R. S., Adams, D. J., Collura, M., Erdil, N. O., Harding, D., Nocito-Gobel, J., & Thompson, A. (2014). An integrated approach to developing technical communication skills in engineering students. *Engineering and Applied Science Education Faculty Publications*, 2, https://digitalcommons.newhaven.edu/sgiengineering-facpubs/2

Kowalski, D. (1994). *Communicating as an engineer*. The WAC Clearinghouse; Colorado State University. https://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=84

Mallette, J.C. (2024). Engineering an inclusive integrated writing course. In H. M. Falconer, & L. McClary (Eds.), *Inclusive STEM: transforming disciplinary writing instruction for a socially just future (pp. 173–199).* The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/ATD-B.2024.2364

Mallette, J. C. (2024b). Listening, reflecting, and learning: A methodology for engineering communication research. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 1–14. https://-doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2024.2407486

Ratcliffe, K. (1999). Rhetorical listening: A trope for interpretive invention and a "code of cross-cultural conduct." College Composition and Communication, 51(2), 195–224. https://-doi.org/10.2307/359039

Ratcliffe, K. (2005). *Rhetorical listening: Identification, gender, whiteness*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Sageev, P. and Romanowski, C.J. (2001). A message from recent engineering graduates in the workplace: Results of a survey on technical communication skills. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 90(4) 685–693. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2168-9830.2001.tb00660.x

Walker, K. (2000). Integrating writing instruction into engineering courses: A writing center model. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 89(3), 369-375.

Wolfe, J. (2009). How technical communication textbooks fail engineering students. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 18(4), 351–375. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572250903149662

Applying equilibriUX to (Re)Envision Technical and Professional Writing Curriculum

Kristin Bennett, University of Oklahoma

This brief presentation demonstrated how technical and professional communication (TPC) programs can equip students and instructors to apply user-experience methods to facilitate more accessible and socially just understandings of professionalism in classroom and workplace contexts. When teaching TPC, instructors often draw from understandings of professionalism as involving sets of seemingly neutral skills like logical decision-making and audience-centered communication (Reamer, 2012; Bourelle, 2014). However, such skills often condition individuals to align with a white, [male], heteronormative, ableist perspective (Moeller, 2018, p. 461). Previous scholarship has examined the social justice implications of standard professionalism on marginalized identities in contexts like professional dress (Hull et al., 2020), job advertisements (Bennett, 2024) and workplace behaviors. Such scholarship has traced the violent effects of professional norms for marginalized identities such as people of color, individuals with disabilities, women, and nonbinary individuals.

TPC's social justice turn (Walton et al., 2019) calls for instructors to engage pedagogical practices that challenge and move beyond such dominant norms. In this presentation, I demonstrated how I applied and modeled equilibriUX (Lancaster & King, 2024) in my graduate Teaching Technical Writing course to facilitate more socially just understandings of professionalism in TPC pedagogies. EquilibriUX can allow instructors and students to grapple with diverse and conflicting opinions and experiences (p. 7) and to amplify perspectives silenced by standard norms. Drawing from surveys, reflections, and class deliverables, I demonstrated how equilibriUX may function as a pedagogical practice to help students and instructors collaboratively to critique and re-envision dominant professional norms to promote social justice.

References

Bennett, K. C. (2024). (Dis) ability Deconditioning: Challenging Ableist Articulations of Professionalism in University Career Centers. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 33*(3), 309-326.

Bourelle, T. (2014). Adapting service-learning into the online technical communication classroom: A framework and model. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 23*(4), 247–264. https://-doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2014.941782

King, C. S., & Lancaster, A. (2024). Introduction: EquilibriUX: Designing for Balance and User Experience. In *Amplifying Voices in UX: Balancing Design and User Needs in Technical Communication* (pp. 1-18). State University of New York Press.

Moeller, M. E., (2018). Advocacy engagement, medical rhetoric and expediency: Teaching technical aommunication in the age of altruism." In: *Key Theoretical Frameworks: Teaching Technical*

Communication in the Twenty-First Century. Eds. Angela M. Haas and Michelle F. Eble. University of Colorado Press.

Reamer, F. G. (2012). *Essential ethics education in social work field instruction: A blueprint for field educators*.

Walton, R., Moore, K., & Jones, N. (2019). *Technical communication after the social justice turn: Building coalitions for action.* Routledge.

Five Learning Outcomes for Teamwork in Team Based Projects

Richard Mangum, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

At a small southwestern university in the United States, engineering capstone courses are team-taught by engineering and technical communication faculty. We work closely together as we engage in cross-disciplinary collaboration. In our capstone courses, teamwork plays a critical role in getting student teams across the two-semester capstone finish line. As important as teamwork is, we have found that most students never receive formalized training or instruction in how to work effectively in team environments. Additionally, we have learned that many teamwork assessment and evaluation tools often fail to diagnose or misdiagnose why some teams fail and others thrive. Drawing from industry practices and priorities, we developed a peer evaluation tool that invites students to reflect on peer performance in five key areas, which we call Five Learning Outcomes for Teamwork, including:

- Create psychologically safe environment
- Demonstrate dependability contributing to team tasks and supporting others' work
- Provide structure and clarity
- Create meaning, define and pursue a purpose, individually and as a team
- Communicate impact to inspire/encourage teammates

Each of the five learning outcomes has corresponding standards that help coach students in meeting the learning outcomes. After implementing this tool for the last two years, we feel confident we have identified a comprehensive peer evaluation instrument that identifies team dynamic issues while there is still time in the semester to course correct student behaviors that left untreated could potentially derail a team’s success. Additionally, we employ a variety of assessment tools to measure students’ progress in achieving these learning outcomes.

Building Bridges with AI - Textual, Technological and AI Literacies for Student Success

Katrina Hinson, Tarleton State University

The trickle of generative AI (GAI) into higher education has become a more steady, stable torrent of available technologies across multiple disciplines. Whether that is wise or not is a still-unfolding narrative. Much like Miller and Shepherd thought about blogs in 2004, GAI has also emerged quickly from new technological conditions and affordances (Miller, 2017). GAI exceeded the previous pace of platform adoption by accomplishing in a matter of days what had taken 2.5 months for Instagram when the platform reached over one million viewers (Miller, 2017) and everyone, from colleges and universities to employers are trying to catch, keep up, utilize, and understand a still evolving software platform. As noted by Dobrin (2023) the classroom is likely to be the primary site for understanding GenAI. Through our presentation, we hoped to demonstrate how technical and professional communication (TPC) faculty can help students grapple with AI as a complex tool while also helping faculty understand that human oversight doesn't disappear with AI. Instead, human oversight is more essential than ever. AI runs on bits and bytes of data, not on critically thinking its way through a maze of thoughts to know if the artifact produced is stylistically, rhetorically, and ethically sound. Gen Z and Generation Alpha students come into our spaces with a spectrum of perceived technological skills and deficiencies. Again, AI can only be beneficial if one first understands what it means to be technologically, digitally, and AI literate. These literacies are fundamental if students are to be literate in their chosen disciplines. GAI tools can bridge the textual and the technological, and in doing so, strengthen critical thinking skills through questioning what it means to use AI ethically and strengthen core writing and research skills through evaluating and critiquing AI-generated text for genre, stylistic, and rhetorical effectiveness.

References

Dobrin, S. I. (2023). *AI and writing*. Broadview Press.

Miller, C. R., & Kelly, A. R. (Eds.). (2017). *Emerging genres in new media environments*. Springer International Publishing.

Session 3

Integrating AI Literacy into the Technical and Professional Communication Capstone Course

Tiffany Craft Portewig, University of Arizona

The role of the capstone course in technical and professional communication programs has been studied and theorized by several scholars (Ballingall & Lucas, 2021; Johnson et al., 2004; Meloncon & Schreiber, 2018). As part of their study of capstone courses across the field, Meloncon and Schreiber (2018) argued the following:

The capstone is an ideal place to explore programmatic sustainability because more than any other course in the curriculum, the capstone brings together theories and practices of the academic field and the workplace. In fact, it is likely impossible to pursue a sustainable program without rethinking the capstone course. (p. 322)

If we want to continually rethink the capstone course to ensure sustainability in our technical and professional communication programs, we must consider the role of AI literacy in the capstone course. The study by Cardon et al. (2023) reveals that students will need to develop AI literacy to be successful in the workplace, and at the recent 2025 Teaching Tech Comm and AI Symposium, Vance, Sauer, and Getto assert that understanding AI is essential for educators, practitioners, and researchers in technical communication.

This presentation sought to promote a discussion of how AI literacy can be integrated into the capstone course. I first expanded on the review of research of AI in technical communication by Reeves and Sylvia (2024) and contributed an overview of how AI literacy is being implemented into technical and professional communication courses. Scholarship has not addressed the role of AI literacy in the capstone course, so this presentation also posed the question of whether incorporating AI literacy is a good strategy and if so, what it might look like in practice. Ultimately, this presentation sought to encourage a discussion of the theoretical, ethical, pedagogical, and programmatic implications that surround integrating AI literacy into the technical and professional communication capstone course.

References

Ballingall, T., & Lucas, B. (2021). Are we overlooking (and underselling) the writing capstone course? *Composition Studies,* 49(3), 16–36.

Cardon, P., Fleischmann, C., Aritz, J., Logemann, M., & Heidewald, J. (2023). The challenges and opportunities of AI-assisted writing: Developing AI literacy for the AI age. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 86(3), 257–295. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294906231176517

Johnson, R., Kynell-Hunt , T., & Savage, G. J. (2004). (Deeply) sustainable programs, sustainable cultures, sustainable selves: Essaying growth in technical communication. *In Power and legitimacy in technical communication, Volume II: Strategies for professional status* (pp. 101–119). Baywood.

Melonçon, L., & Schreiber, J. (2018). Advocating for sustainability: A report on and critique of the undergraduate capstone course. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 27(4), 322–335. https://-doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2018.1515407

Reeves, C., & Sylvia, J. J. (2024). Generative AI in technical communication: A review of research from 2023 to 2024. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 54(4), 439-462. https://-doi.org/10.1177/00472816241260043 (Original work published 2024)

Vance, B., G. Sauer, & G. Getto.(2025, April 22). Demystifying AI: Foundations, training, and professional impact for technical communicators [Video]. YouTube. https://y-outu.be/ztpyQ8DiwTA?feature=shared

From Creation to Coordination: Toward a Content Design, Management, and Strategy Pedagogy

Chris Scheidler, Weber State University

Marisa Yerace, Weber State University

Christine Masters-Wheeler, Francis Marion University

The landscape of technical and professional writing has evolved. In particular, industries and consumers have turned toward viewing our work as content, not merely writing. This content creation and management demands new attention across emergent and traditional PTW careers, with little indication that generative AI will slow this down (Shalamova, Rice-Bailey, and Wikoff 2019; Card, 2025). As stakeholders in higher education programs, we aim to formalize courses that teach content design, management, and strategy as core skills for modern professionals (Clark, 2016; Bridgeford, 2020). This panel presented snapshots of an emergent approach to Content Pedagogy.

Featuring collaborators from two institutions, Weber State University and Francis Marion University, we highlighted two snapshots of curriculum in undergraduate courses on content creation and strategy. These snapshots demonstrated an introduction and capstone to content pedagogy curricula. We planned to engage the audience with the following questions: What frameworks best support students in learning to plan, design, and manage meaningful content across platforms? What rhetorical, ethical, and technical dispositions should such programs cultivate? How can we draw on existing institutional resources (courses, technologies, and collaborations) to facilitate effective content pedagogy?

Speaker 1: Background

Speaker one discussed the work of shifting programs in PTW to make a programmatic identity focused on content, to resonate further with students and employers. Careers in PTW are shifting for many reasons whether it is technological advancements such as AI or workforce readiness requiring content-specific knowledge. As such, we see opportunities for PTW programs in the direction of content creation, as they are well equipped to foster skills and knowledge that can more directly help students navigate the shifting professional landscape.

Speaker 2: Snapshot "Content Audit & Redesign"

Speaker two presented a lower division course featuring a major assignment sequence called the Content Audit & Redesign. In this project, students inventory and assess the content of a website or platform. Students categorize material by tone, purpose, accessibility, and functionality and conduct UX testing, evaluate information architecture, and identify areas for redesign. This assignment built critical foundations in analysis, audience awareness, and ethical content design.

Speaker 3: Snapshot "Content Strategy & Governance"

Speaker three outlined an upper division course sequence and presented a capstone assignment: Content Strategy & Governance. Combining user research, design, management planning, and design systems into a single professional project, students create editorial calendars, workflows, and content governance on real-world projects. By synthesizing research, creation, and planning, the capstone prepares students to enter digital content roles with strategic vision and technical fluency.

Speaker 4: Future visions

Speaker four outlined programmatic sequencing, objectives, and partnerships. We invited discussion on how applied, integrative projects define curriculum in content pedagogy, especially toward graduates who don't just fill out templates but design content infrastructures and ecologies. Finally, we positioned a content design pedagogy that extends beyond the classroom to industry conferences and scholarly reflection.

References

Bridgeford, T. (Ed.). (2020). *Teaching content management in technical and professional communication*. Routledge.

Card, D. (2025). The Future of Ethics in Industry: Generative AI and the Production of Technical Content. In D. G. Ross (Ed), *The Routledge Handbook of Ethics in Technical and Professional Communication* (pp. 472-480). Routledge.

Clark, D. (2016). Content Strategy: An Integrative Literature Review. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 59(1), 7-23. doi: 10.1109/TPC.2016.2537080.

Shalamova, N., Rice-Bailey, T., & Wikoff, K. (2019). Evolving skill sets and job pathways of technical communicators. *Communication Design Quarterly Review. 6*(3) 14-24. https://-doi.org/10.1145/3309578.3309580"

How Code Comments Can Inform TC Pedagogy

Jenn Mallette, Boise State University

Amelia Hill, Boise State University

As a site for communication, software code provides an area of analysis for technical communication scholars (Brock, 2016; Brock & Mehlenbacher, 2018; Vee, 2012). In particular, code comments allow developers to communicate information about functions and processes with others on a development team. As such, code comments offer technical communicators an opportunity to discuss shared approaches to communication. While technical communication courses focus on analyzing audiences for documentation of technology such as software, these courses may focus less on the writing practices of the SMEs that technical communicators collaborate with. Additionally, these courses may not allow students to identify and connect with these communication practices, though understanding the range of communication occurring within an organization may benefit individual communicators through improved communication and collaboration.

In this presentation, we shared the results of a small study of how developers use code comments as technical communication. One finding was that these developers used similar composing and writing processes as technical communicators, which creates potentials for increasing trust between developer and communicator. Here, we focused on applying the findings from this study to the technical communication classroom. For one of the researchers, a practicing technical communicator working in a software development setting, these findings revealed how technical communication goes far beyond documentation and UX code comments are also a form of communicating technical details and notes. Presenters explored the impacts of examining real world applications of technical communication viewed outside TC settings, particularly in coding contexts. This presentation concluded with applications for TC curriculum and pedagogy to help novice technical communicators tap into these other forms of communication to better collaborate with and support developers or other SMEs.

References

Brock, K. (2016). The FizzBuzz Programming Test: A Case-Based Exploration of Rhetorical Style in Code. *Computational Culture 5*. http://computationalculture.net/the-fizzbuzz-programming-test-a-case-based-exploration-of-rhetorical-style-in-code/.

Brock, K. & Mehlenbacher, A.R. (2018). Rhetorical genres in code. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*. 48(4), 383-411. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047281617726278.

Vee, A. (2012). Text, speech, machine: Metaphors for computer code in law. *Computational Culture 2*. http://computationalculture.net/text-speech-machine-metaphors-for-computer-code-in-the-law/.

Training Translators and Technical Writers of the Future: Legal-Tech Communication at the Crossroads of AI, Law, and Global Ethics

Zhuo Yang, East China University of Political Science and Law

As AI technologies reshape industries globally, regulatory frameworks like the EU Machine Regulation are becoming more intricate, prompting a shift in the role of technical communicators. This presentation explored how legal and technical communication programs must evolve to prepare students and faculty for the challenges posed by AI governance, international regulations, and ethical complexities.

This study examined the unique challenges of legal and technical communication through the lens of Chinese case studies, highlighting how E-C translation strategies can bridge the gap between complex legal texts and diverse audiences. Drawing from real-world experiences with the EU Machine Regulation and its translation into Chinese, the paper delved into the specific difficulties faced when translating legal-tech content across linguistic, cultural, and regulatory boundaries.

Additionally, strategies for ethical translation practices, plain-language adaptation, and multimodal documentation will be discussed, with an emphasis on the role of localization in the global exchange of legal knowledge.

By integrating Chinese case studies and E-C strategies, the paper proposed ways to incorporate these competencies into curriculum redesign, empowering students and faculty to design ethically sound and globally relevant technical documentation.

Reimagining Technical Communication: Subaltern Design Sites and the Ethics of Anthropomorphism

Damilola Faidat Adebayo, Texas Tech University

This proposal explored the intersection of anthropomorphism and ethics in technical communication, emphasizing that the human-like features assigned to technologies such as voice, accent, gender, and affect are not neutral but socially and politically constructed. These design choices shape how users interact with global technologies and crucially influence whose identities are made visible or invisible.

Positioned within the framework of subaltern design sites, spaces where marginalized voices generate alternative ways of knowing, this work asked, following Gayatri Spivak (1988): Can the subaltern design? When technologies are anthropomorphized, who gets to be coded as human, and who remains othered? Design defaults, such as feminized voices for service roles or American-accented English as the neutral voice of authority, are not incidental; they encode dominant ideologies that privilege certain worldviews while erasing others.

Drawing on Jiang's (2024) work on anthropomorphic AI, which shows how emotional connection fosters trust but also heightens privacy risks, this proposal argued for grounding anthropomorphic design in subaltern epistemologies and participatory frameworks. Doing so can resist extractive logic, counter disinformation, and co-create technologies that reflect a plurality of human experiences.

Ultimately, this work reframes technical communication not as a neutral conduit but as a contested site of power, where design decisions either reinforce or resist global hierarchies. It calls for ethical practices that move beyond default anthropomorphisms and actively build more equitable technological futures. This presentation focused on recognizing anthropomorphism as political, centering subaltern design practices, resisting extractive structures, and reframing technical communication as a space of resistance.

References

Jiang, Z. Z. (2024). *Self-Disclosure to AI: The Paradox of Trust and Vulnerability in Human-Machine Interactions*. *arXiv*:2412.20564.

Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271–313). University of Illinois Press.

Training the Future Tech Communicators: AI Tools, Ethics, and Pedagogy

Shankar Paudel, University of Texas at El Paso

AI has become a major complement in our everyday lives, be it in the form of technology such as mobile applications, health tracker apps, or university-wide teaching and learning platforms. In this age of AI invasion, tech communicators and educators must move toward cultivating critical, rhetorical, and ethical literacies (Selber, 2004).

This presentation introduced an integrated pedagogical approach to using AI as a technical skill with rhetorical and ethical practice in tech-communication classrooms. Building on Noble's (2018) criticism of algorithm bias and systemic oppression, I argued that AI technologies must be introduced in such classrooms as contested sites of power because AI-generated content circulates, mutates, and accumulates new meanings in the digital writing process (Gallagher, 2020) and demands careful navigation and negotiation by tech communicators.

With three main areas of focus, algorithmic bias, shifting ideas of authorship, and ethical classroom practices, I proposed strategies for building AI literacy that promotes both technical fluency and critical thinking skills. Students, as tech communicators, must be able to challenge how AI tools generate, organize, and sometimes obscure knowledge (Noble, 2018) and how their use challenges traditional authorship and rhetorical agency (Spinuzzi, 2003; Jones and Hafner, 2021). I also presented assignment models and assessment practices that treat AI tools as subjects of analysis, not just tools for use, helping students engage with and shape AI-driven communication spaces in thoughtful and responsible ways.

References

Gallagher, J. R. (2020). *Update culture and the afterlife of digital writing*. Utah State University Press.

Jones, R. H., & Hafner, C. A. (2021). *Understanding digital literacies: A practical introduction* (2nd ed., vol.1). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003177647

Noble, S. U. (2018). *Algorithms of oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*. NYU Press.

Selber, S. A. (2004). *Multiliteracies for a digital age*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Spinuzzi, C. (2003). *Tracing genres through organizations: A sociocultural approach to information design*. MIT Press.

Artificial Intelligence and the "New Grammar" of Technical Communication

Raj Kumar Baral, University of Texas at El Paso

As artificial intelligence (AI) transforms the landscape of communication, technical communication programs must respond to an emerging "new grammar," a reconfiguration of how content is created, structured, and consumed. This presentation explored that grammar through the lens of AI-mediated authorship, multimodal content generation, and machine-oriented writing practices. From predictive text to generative design, tools like ChatGPT do not simply assist writers, they reshape the rhetorical process itself.

From an administrative standpoint, AI integration raises some curricular concerns: What literacies do students need to ethically and effectively write for machines (e.g., prompt engineering, metadata tagging)? How do we incorporate AI without negotiating the discipline's core values: clarity, accessibility, and ethical accountability?

Drawing on the work of Drucker (2014), who argues that digital environments reframe authorship and knowledge production into performative, collaborative acts, and Selber (2004), whose framework engages with critical awareness of context, power, and ethics technology use, my presentation critiqued some assumptions embedded in AI-driven communication. These ideas helped technical communication administrators and educators question what it means to write responsibly in increasingly hybrid human-machine environments.

At this backdrop, this presentation shared some strategies and course designs aimed at preparing students for AI-mediated professional contexts. It advocated for a technical communication curriculum that adapts to AI and critically engages with it to empower students to co-shape the evolving grammar of digital knowledge production with both rhetorical sensitivity and technological fluency.

References

Drucker, J. (2014). *Graphesis: Visual forms of knowledge production*. Harvard University Press.

Selber, S. A. (2004). *Multiliteracies for a digital age*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Lessons Learned from Creating and Documenting a Community-based Tutoring Program

Timothy Elliott, DePaul University

My individual presentation shared lessons I learned co-creating and documenting a college admissions essay workshop program over the span of five years. During the partnership, I revised and archived programmatic documentation so my collaborating community partner could eventually run the entire program.

In 2019, I created a tutoring program partnership between my university and a local Latinx-focused nonprofit. I used several small college grants to produce flexible, tutee-focused curriculum and administrative materials in collaboration with writing majors and nonprofit administrators. Over several years, we built a living archive using accessible resources like Google folders, YouTube videos, and a simple WordPress site.

Our team created and revised programmatic documents based on dialogues with administrators and tutees about their priorities, intended outcomes, and motivations for the project, drawing from Kimme Hea & Wendler Shah (2016). As the program progressed, we incorporated partner and tutee perspectives into materials through tutor entrance and exit interviews, partner meetings, and tutee surveys, an approach discussed in-depth by Holmes (2009). Echoing King's (2012) call for a more fluid and flexible (p. 16) approach to archival study, I discussed how community-focused living archives can use technical writing to empower communities' programming.

Attendees learned more about administrative best practices for creating and evolving a living archive, which can sustain a community-focused writing programming. As part of the short presentation, I touched on the partnership's process for creating a user-friendly website and tutoring materials, adapting materials for online tutoring, and documenting the tutor training process.

References

Holmes, A. J. (2009). Advancing campus-community partnerships: Standpoint theory and course redesign. Reflections: *A Journal of Community Engaged Writing and Rhetoric* (8.3), 76-98. https://reflectionsjournal.net/2019/10/advancing-campus-community-partnerships-standpoint-theory-and-course-re-design-by-ashley-j-holmes/

Kimme Hea, A. C., & Wendler Shah, R. (2016). Silent partners: Developing a critical understanding of community partners in technical communication service-learning pedagogies. *Technical Communication Quarterly,* 25(1), 48-66. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10572252.2016.1113727

King, M. T. (2012). Working with/in the archives. In S. Gunn & L. Faire (Eds.) *Research Methods for History,* (pp. 13-29). Edinburgh University Press. https://www.academia.edu/72952733/Working_With_In_the_Archive"

When Writing Can No Longer Be Just Writing : Active Service-Learning to Increase Campus Awareness of TPC

Beth Shirley, Montana State University

With the ubiquity of AI writing tools, TPC departments and classes are at risk of being deemed irrelevant if we do not find a way to adapt and better explain what our students are learning. This presentation shared one possible strategy to address both adaptation and explanation. I detailed a service-learning project in collaboration with a Food, Family, and Nutrition faculty in which students generated much-needed digital content about food preservation and learned and did the food preservation themselves. This hands-on, layered literacies (Eble & Gaillet, 2004), out-of-the-classroom activity attracted the university photography team and news service and increased our on-campus exposure at a critical time for our department. Through adapting expectations of the skillsets students need to learn, the skills of digital rhetorical analysis could be applied in a new way, and by combining the skill of critical thinking and content creation with a new (to the students, ancient to humankind) skill of food preservation, we also taught our students more about the relevance of their own skillsets. Students in this service-learning project not only increased their sense of ethical engagement and confidence with content and document creation, they also learned that their unique skills in TPC can be applied in a variety of ways to improve digital communications, better than AI could. They learned that they can become expert-enough to create engaging content about anything, and that by partnering with actual experts, they can also ensure the content they create is safe, accurate, and ethical.

References

Eble, M. F., & Gaillet, L. L. (2004). Educating"" community intellectuals"": Rhetoric, moral philosophy, and civic engagement. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 13(3), 341–354.

Navigating Programmatic TPC Sustainability in a Rural University Context: A Technical Problem

Katrina Hinson, Tarleton State University

Generally, scholars within rhetorical studies understand TPC as an acronym for technical and professional communication. As a professional practice, TPC uses writing and communication to move audiences to action and places an emphasis on application and practice as fundamental to the work of TPC. Assignments in the TPC classroom typically include problem-based scenarios (Melonçon, 2018) similar to what students may encounter in the workplace. We agree with scholars who claim that TPC is tied to the future of the service course, and that outcomes are paramount to success (see e.g., Knievel, 2007; Schreiber et al., 2018; Griffith et al., 2024); however, what happens when both administrators and students resist the courses due to their perceptions of what constitutes technical?

In this co-authored presentation, we directly asked how we can facilitate an examination of the challenges and opportunities in fostering interdisciplinary communication between technical experts, communicators, and other stakeholders, when the word technical becomes nebulous. At our institution in rural Texas, we had to find a discursive way to clarify our programmatic identity and strengthen our programmatic integrity. What we were seeing and hearing were students who heard the word technical and immediately jumped to technology, computers, engineering, heavily STEM oriented and often could not see themselves in those roles, so technical writing wasn't ‘necessary’ for them even when required by their program of study. They asked, "What do I need this class for?" Our goal in this presentation was to ask about naming TPC courses and programs that take into account the lack of technical that the students and interdisciplinary collaborators we interact with are resistant to.

A Clinician-Focused Study for the Development of Utah Tech's Master of Athletic Training Electronic Medical Record Student Support Materials

Lea Hopkinson, Utah Tech University

The presentation explored conducting user-centered design (UCD) research in collaboration with the medical field. It drew on my graduate project's focus on student clinician experience with electronic medical records (EMRs). I utilized medical simulations with a fake patient, EMR usability testing, and interviews. The aim was to develop EMR support materials based on where students need the most help. This project was in collaboration with the Utah Tech University Master of Athletic Training program and the Utah Tech Athletic Training Student Clinic.

Informing this presentation was scholarship about fostering interdisciplinary collaboration from Campbell (2018), who advised integrating the rhetoric of health and medicine into already accepted methods in medical pedagogy, specifically clinical simulations. Simulations contextualize patient-centered care into realistic, complex, and diverse scenarios (Campbell, 2018). For scholarship on the user experience of EMRs, Smelcer et al. (2009) established EMR usability testing as an effective method of studying and improving clinician use of EMRs, stating: By applying user-centered design in this complex environment, usability professionals can contribute significantly to improving EMR usability (p. 82).

Key takeaways are how UCD research methods and interdisciplinary collaboration between fields of science and communication were instrumental in achieving the research goals of enhancing students' experience with the EMR. I shared the value of UCD research methods in defining problems in a contextual way that is efficient and effective because it served the most critical needs first and provided the data to point to solutions people will adopt and appreciate.

References

Campbell, L. (2018). The rhetoric of health and medicine as a teaching subject : Lessons from the medical humanities and simulation pedagogy. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 27(1), 7–20. https://-doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2018.1401348

Smelcer, J. B., Miller-Jacobs, H., Kantrovich, L. (2009) Usability of electronic medical records. JUX *Journal of User Experience*, 4(2), 70-84. https://uxpajournal.org/usability-of-electronic-medical-records/

Examining Assignments Within the TPC Service Course

Jessica Griffith, Jacksonville State University

Katherine Mavridou, University of South Florida

Tanya Zarlengo, University of South Florida

Lisa Melonçon, Clemson University

The technical and professional communication (TPC) service course prepares students to adapt] emergent knowledge to specific workplace or community-based contexts (Scott, 2008, p. 382). In many cases, this course operates as an introduction to TPC for non-majors, who are located in various departments and programs on campus (Melonçon and England, 2011). We chose to focus on the service course to address the call to critically reflect on these courses as a place to build programmatic research (Schreiber et al., 2018), Our goal is to add to this work, while also addressing the scholarly concern that this course has not been studied over diverse institutional contexts (Read & Michaud, 2018).

We are not alone in centering the service course as a place for research. For example there are some who focus on the courses sustainability (Carnegie, 2018; Schreiber et al., 2018; St. Amant, 2018). Other scholars have examined a wide variety of topics, such as teacher feedback in the service course (Doan, 2019); grading contracts (Medina & Walker, 2018); teaching genres (Boettger, 2014); course design for specialized audiences (Arduser, 2018); and outcome use (Newark & Bartolotta, 2021). However, even though the TPC service course serves thousands of students a year, the field has few insights into assignments and their efficacy for achieving the overall goal of the service course.

We chose to focus on assignments because it is through engagement with assignments, that students acquire the skills and knowledge needed for their professional lives (Zarlengo, 2019). One way that TPC has prepared students for their professional lives is an engagement with client-based projects (Balzotti & Rawlins, 2016; Burnett et al., 2022; Robles & Baker, 2019), and service-learning projects (e.g., Baniya et al., 2022). This focus on service learning and client-based projects gives insight into what the field values. However, in order to encourage the use of both theory and practice to transfer knowledge to professional situations, we must consider all assignments taught in the service course. In a very real way, the analysis of assignments illuminates disciplinary identity (Zarlengo, 2019).

Our intent with this presentation was to offer a field-wide snapshot of assignments in the service course from a diverse range of institutions. Thus, our presentation offered some preliminary answers to the question: If we gathered information on assignments students were asked to complete from a diverse range of institutions across the US, would a set of common field-wide assignments emerge?

Key takeaways

Using field-wide service course data from 90 institutions, we presented our findings on the types of assignments in the TPC service course. We also shared some insights gleaned from our study, including recommendations for fewer assignments, writing student-focused expectations using transparent terminology, and ways to focus on assignment design. We hoped these field-wide insights can assist TPC program administrators (PAs) and faculty in considering the kinds of assignments that should be included in their own service courses.

Overall, this presentation provided attendees with a look at the types of assignments within the field of TPC to provide a baseline for the field and to offer possibilities of how we can strengthen assignments to better meet students where they are.

References

Arduser, L. (2018) Specialized technical writing service courses as a program sustainability tool? *Programmatic Perspectives*, 10(1), 12–43.

Balzotti, J., & Rawlins, J. D. (2016). Client-Based Pedagogy Meets Workplace Simulation: Developing Social Processes in the Arisoph Case Study. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 59 (2), 140–152. doi: 10.1109/TPC.2016.2561082.

Baniya, S., Edwards, J., Sano-Franchini, J., & Walwema, J. (2022). Revisiting SL in TPC Through Social Justice and Intercultural Frameworks: Findings From Survey Research. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 65(3), 353–369.doi: 10.1109/TPC.2022.3177083.

Boettger, R. K. (2014). Explicitly Teaching Five Technical Genres to English First-Language Adults in a Multi-Major Technical Writing Course. *Journal of Writing Research*, 6(1), 29–59. doi:10.17239/-jowr-2014.06.01.2.

Burnett, R. E., Frazee, A., Girard, A. K., Hutter, L., Lawrence, H., & Menagarishvili, O. (2022). Sustainable collaboration: A co-taught, client-based course sequence integrating computer science and technical communication. *Programmatic Perspectives, 13*(2), 11-51.

Carnegie, T. A. M. (2018). Sustaining service learning in the service course. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 10(1), 110–141.

Doan, S. (2019). Contradictory comments: Feedback in professional communication service courses. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 62(2), 115-129.

Medina, C., & Walker, K. (2018). Validating the Consequences of a Social Justice Pedagogy: Explicit Values in Course-Based Grading Contracts. In A. M. Haas & M. F. Eble (Eds.), *Key Theoretical Frameworks: Teaching Technical Communication in the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 46–67). University Press of Colorado

Melonçon L., & England P. (2011). The current status of contingent faculty in technical and professional communication. *College English*, 73(4), 396–408.

Newmark, J., & Bartolotta, J. (2021). Creating the "through-line" by engaging industry certification standards in SLO redesign for a core curriculum technical writing course. In M. J. Klein (Ed.), *Effective teaching of technical communication: Theory, practice, and application* (pp. 147–165).

Read, S., & Michaud, M. (2018). Hidden in plain sight: findings from a survey on the multi-major professional writing course. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 27(3), 227–248. doi: 10.1080/10572252.2018.1479590.

Robles, V. D., & Baker, M. J. (2019). Using Case-Method Pedagogy to Facilitate Audience Awareness. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 62(2), 192–207. doi: 10.1109/TPC.2019.2893464.

Schreiber, J., Carrion, M., & Lauer, J. (2018). Afterword: Service courses as an extension of technical and professional communication disciplinary identity. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 10(1), 231–242.

Schreiber, J., Carrion, M., & Lauer, J. (2018). Guest editors' introduction: Revisiting the service course to map out the future of the field. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 10(1), 1–11.

Scott, J. B. (2008). The practice of usability: teaching user engagement through service-learning. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 17(4), 381. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572250802324929

St. Amant, K. (2018). Contextualizing the Technical Communication Service Course: A Research Approach to Reviewing, Re-thinking, and Revising the Service Course. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 10(1), 142–171.

Zarlengo, T. (2019). *No One Wants to Read What You Read What You Write: A Contextualized Analysis of Service Course Assignments.* University of South Florida.

Preparing Students as Content Professionals: Curricular Strategies for a Digitally Transformed Industry

Rebekka Andersen, University of California, Davis

Carlos Evia, Virginia Tech

Digital transformation and AI-integrated workflows are redefining the content industry and, with it, the field of technical communication. While these changes have rapidly taken hold in industry, undergraduate programs in technical communication have often lagged behind, offering few structured pathways to prepare students for evolving content roles.

This presentation drew from extensive qualitative research, including interviews with content industry leaders, alumni, and program administrators, as well as survey data from managers and recruiters of content professionals. We reported on the skills, competencies, and qualities that research participants identified as necessary for performing knowledge work in the discipline of content, and we expanded on an oft-cited explanatory matrix of conceptual and practical skills (Henschell & Meloncon, 2014) to map with the competencies that entry-level content professionals need to not only land content-focused positions but also meaningfully contribute to the content initiatives of their organizations.

We concluded by identifying persistent curricular gaps and offering actionable suggestions for innovation in undergraduate technical communication programs. Our goal was to support institutions in rethinking content education to connect academic preparation with the workforce realities of content professionals.

References

Henschel, S. & Melonçon, L. (2014). Of horseman and layered literacies: Assessment instruments for aligning technical and professional communication undergraduate curricula with professional expectations. *Programmatic Perspectives,* 6(1), 3–26.

Re-envisioning a Cross-Disciplinary English Professionalization Course to Support Current Student Needs

Sonia Stephens, University of Central Florida

JD Applen, University of Central Florida

University of Central Florida's English Department has three interrelated major tracks (literature, technical communication, and creative writing) with a shared core curriculum and upper-division track-specific coursework. In this presentation, we described how we updated the curriculum of a shared elective professionalization course, [course name], to incorporate more technical and professional communication (TPC) applied skills.

Curricular changes were made in response to feedback from our program's seven-year external review, which prompted us to assess existing course objectives and structure and modify it based on current student enrollment, industry trends, and best practices for professionalization demonstrated in TPC courses. This course already carries a university integrative learning distinction, requiring students to connect skills learned in the major to real-world and civic contexts (Huber & Hutchings, 2004), and our goal was to emphasize key elements from TPC professionalization contexts that would be helpful for students in all tracks.

We discussed the structure and identified limitations of the previous version of the course, detailed steps we took in assessing its content, and described changes in course objectives and assignments. For example, we modified the resume-writing assignment to include a critical AI literacy activity on how algorithm-driven resume keyword-matching works in corporate contexts (Ding, 2024) and integrated training from University of Central Florida's Career Services on interview skills and negotiating job offers (Seawright & Stanton, 2024). For conference attendees, the presentation led to discussion of how TPC can contribute meaningfully to the success of students in other English disciplines in multidisciplinary programs with general professionalization courses.

References

Ding, H. (2024, October 20). AI life cycle as a methodology to open the black box of automated resume screening: Teaching resume 2.0 with job posting analytics, resume analytics, and computational corpus-driven job-resume matching [Workshop]. ACM SIGDOC 2024 Conference, Arlington, VA, United States.

Huber, M. T., & Hutchings, P. (2004). *Integrative learning: Mapping the terrain*. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Seawright, L. & Stanton, R. (2024). You accepted what?: The impact of location, education, and negotiation on technical communication graduates' salaries. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 54(3), 304–323.

Collective Identity in Technical and Professional Communication: A Content Analysis of Program Websites

Teresa Williams, Michigan State University

A recurring and critical conversation in TPC scholarship is defining who and what we are as a discipline. Scholars such as Sullivan and Porter (1993) and Hart-Davidson and Peeple (2012) use mapping our curricular geography to articulate the disciplinary identity through the space we occupy and relationships to other disciplines, while Rude (2009) suggests orienting our disciplinary identity around the research we ask. Melonçon and Schreiber (2022) propose another framework for considering disciplinarity: collective identity. According to them, collective identityis a form of assemblage that is continually coming into being, stabilizing and re-stabilizing, as the field shifts and changes, offering a body of knowledge from which to draw definitions and make claims (p. 7). Their claim is that TPC is a field made up of a wide-range of components (their term) that are constantly in flux, with new areas emerging and others changing.

This paper explored the findings of a content analysis of public-facing websites of 12 TPC programs, I sought to answer a few key questions:

- What value do these professional writing programs claim they provide for their students, academic institutions, and society more broadly?
- What knowledge and skills do these programs say students will leave their program with?
- What extracurricular experiences do these programs offer students?
- What careers do they prepare students for?

I intended to sketch out the collective identity this set of programs creates across their similarities and differences. The findings from this presentation provided a moment of pedagogical reflection for scholars in professional writing and related programs.

References

Melonçon, L. & Schreiber, J. (2022). Introduction: Promoting a sustainable collective identity for technical and professional communication. In L. Melonçon & J. Schreiber (Eds), *Assembling Critical Components: A Framework for Sustaining Technical and Professional Communication* pp. 3-16. WAC Clearinghouse. https://doi.org/10.37514/TPC-B.2022.1381.1.3

Peeple, T., and Hart-Davidson, W. (2012). Remapping professional writing: Articulating the state of the art and composition studies. In K. Ritter & P.K. Matsuda (Eds.), *Exploring Composition Studies* pp. 52-72. Utah State University Press.

Rude, C.D. (2009). Mapping the research questions in technical communication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 23(2), 174–215. https://doi.org/10.1177/1050651908329562

Sullivan, P.A., and Porter, J. (1993). Remapping curricular geography: Professional Writing in/and English. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 7 (4), 389-422.

The Challenges of Technical Communication Student Interns from 2020-25

Samantha Cosgrove, University of North Texas

Kim Campbell, University of North Texas

Maia Pacini, University of North Texas

We proposed a conference presentation to advance the topic of Preparing Students and Faculty for the Future of Technical Communication. In particular, we described the experiences and identified the key challenges faced by a sample of students who completed internships during the past five years.

Technical communication educators have a long history of attending to internships (Bay et al., 2022; Bloch, 2011; Gaitens, 1990; Munger, 2006; Savage & Seible, 2010; Tovey, 2001). Not surprisingly, Meloncon & Henschel (2013) found 51% of the 65 undergraduate programs in technical and professional communication they analyzed required students to complete an internship.

Many sources offer experience reports for managing internships as part of academic degree programs (e.g., Katz, 2015; Munger, 2006; Sides, 2021; Tovey, 2001). A few have identified the challenges of internships for technical communication students. For example, after an analysis of internship reports submitted by students, Bloch (2011) concluded with suggestions for overcoming challenges faced by all stakeholders: student interns, intern employers, and program faculty.

We continued this line of work by analyzing 57 student intern presentations captured on video. Our sample came from 20 undergraduate and 37 masters students who described their internship roles (e.g., technical writer, content designer, etc.) in a range of industries. In addition, they described how they obtained their internship, their job duties, the tools used to perform them, and their challenges. Our results from aggregating the content of these presentations informed academic programs about the trends and challenges of technical communication student interns.

References

Bay, J., Fillenwarth, G. M., & Masters-Wheeler, C. (2022). Remote TPC internships: Infrastructures for success. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 52(4), 386–410. https://doi.org/10.1177/00472816211041315

Bloch, J. (2011). Glorified grammarian or versatile value adder? What internship reports reveal about the professionalization of technical communication. *Technical Communication*, 58(4).

Gaitens, J. (1990). Lessons from the field: Socialization issues in writing and editing internships. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 63(1), 64–76.

Katz, S. M. (2015). Making the most of your internship program. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 7(1), 43–66.

Melonçon, L., & Henschel, S. (2013). Current state of U.S. undergraduate degree programs in technical and professional communication. *Technical Communication*, 60(1), 45–64.

Munger, R. (2006). Participating in a technical communication internship. *Technical Communication*, 53 (3), 326–338.

Savage, G. J., & Seible, M. K. (2010). Technical communication internship requirements in the academic economy: How we compare among ourselves and across other applied fields. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 40(1), 51–75. https://doi.org/10.2190/TW.40.1.d

Sides, C. H. (2021). Internships in a pandemic. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 1(1), 1–21.

Tovey, J. (2001). Building connections between industry and university: Implementing an internship program at a regional university. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 10(2), 225–239.

Creating Tools for Community-Engaged User Experience in Technical and Professional Communication

Krista Speicher Sarraf, California Polytechnic State University

This presentation shared findings from a 2024 CPTSC Research Grant-supported project to develop materials for Community-Engaged User Experience (CEUX) partnerships in technical and professional communication (TPC) programs. CEUX is a pedagogical approach that centers empathetic, user-focused design in nonprofits (Lee, Turner, & Rose, 2023). Although CEUX benefits students and communities, TPC programs often face institutional barriers that make it difficult to implement CEUX initiatives. Administrators aiming to establish CEUX partnerships encounter specific obstacles, including varied definitions of UX, resource limitations, and disciplinary territoriality (Sarraf, 2024). This presentation shared the results of focus groups with academics that identified the need for practical support, such as "translation documents to share with nonprofits about UX, teaching cases and examples, intake forms to help define collaboration scope, and documentation to support continuous partnerships"(Sarraf, 2024, p. 52). This project responded to these needs by developing CEUX resources and documentation that can aid TPC administrators in integrating CEUX programming into various institutional settings. Particularly, this CEUX program illustrates an approach to UX that draws on interdisciplinary collaboration between faculty in TPC, statistics, and graphic communication. The presentation highlighted a website portal for CEUX partnerships at the presenter's institution and the results of usability testing to refine the website. It concluded by sharing a toolkit for TPC administrators, providing documentation, visuals, sample project timelines, templates, and best practices for implementing CEUX programming into TPC.

References

Lee, S., Turner, H. N., & Rose, E. J. (2023). Community-engaged user experience pedagogy: Stories, emergent strategy, and possibilities. *Communication Design Quarterly Review*, 11(3), 28–41. https://doi.org/10.1145/3589310.3589326

Sarraf, K. S. (2024). Bridging the gap: Exploring barriers and opportunities of collaboration in user experience partnerships between nonprofits and technical and professional communication academics. *IEEE International Professional Communication Conference (ProComm)*. https://doi.org/10.1109/ProComm61427.2024.00016

Community Outreach as Discipline Advocacy: A Strategic Model for Expanding Technical Communication

Erin Friess, University of North Texas

Launched in Fall 2023, the Technical Communication and Community Outreach (TACO) Lab at the University of North Texas responds to a central challenge to those of us who teach technical communication in higher ed: students cannot pursue a field they've never heard of. While many programs focus outreach on current students, the TACO Lab takes a broader, community-facing approach, building partnerships with industry, non-profits, and especially high schools to raise awareness of technical communication and drive students into the field.

This presentation argued that community engagement is not simply an enhancement to technical communication pedagogy: it is an essential act of disciplinary advocacy and sustainability. If we want our programs to grow and thrive, we must look beyond our own classrooms and create deliberate pathways that connect our field to future students, parents, and local communities.

I shared the current structure and goals of the TACO Lab, and then I discussed with the group ideas for of projects designed specifically for high school audiences and strategies for building partnerships that benefit both the community and the field. As a group, we also discussed the challenges of sustaining this work, from managing expectations to demonstrating value to university leadership.

Ultimately, the TACO Lab offers one model for how technical communication programs can extend their reach, amplify their relevance, and make the case for the social and professional value of our discipline beyond campus boundaries.

Session 4

Coalition in Transnational Technical Communication: Power Assemblages and Strategic Negotiations in Global Development Spaces

Asmita Ghimire, University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Dr. Priyanka (Priya) Ganguly, Texas Tech University

This presentation examined how power dynamics shape transnational technical communication through two case studies of international development initiatives. Drawing from rhetorical analysis of technical documents and interviews, we investigated how strategic collaborations between Western institutions and local partners often mask underlying tensions and uneven power dynamics, thus retreating our existing understanding and goals for solidarity building in the field of TPC (Walton et al., 2019). The first case analyzed five Memoranda of Understanding between the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Government of Nepal, revealing how Nepalese officials strategically responded to U.S. foreign policy directives while asserting sovereignty. Rather than functioning as mere administrative paperwork, these MOUs document evolving power negotiations that complicate narratives of apolitical development aid. The second case examined USAID's Advancing Nutrition project, demonstrating how power assemblages, historical, political, and socio-cultural forces, influenced maternal nutrition indicator design. Despite intentions to address women's nutritional needs through community engagement, institutional agendas and local constraints led to divergent implementations (Ding, 2013).

Together, these studies challenged idealized notions of coalition building and/or synonymous terms like transnational assemblages in technical communication (Baniya, 2024; Walton et al., 2019) by revealing how transnational tensions create “critical coalition,” collaborations marked by uneven power dynamics and strategic negotiation. We proposed alternative frameworks for critically examining these power dynamics, acknowledging the limitations of Western-centric approaches, and preparing students to recognize when apparent coalitions mask fundamental conflicts of interest and sovereignty. This research addressed the conference's focus on cross-disciplinary collaboration by unpacking tensions when science, policy, and communication intersect in global contexts, ultimately preparing future professionals to navigate the ethical complexities of increasingly globalized technical communication environments.

References

Baniya, Sweta. (2024). Transnational Assemblages: Social Justice and Crisis Communication during Disaster. *National Council of Teachers of English; The WAC Clearinghouse.* https://wac.colostate.edu/books/swr/assemblages/

Ding, H. (2013). Transcultural risk communication and viral discourses: Grassroots movements to manage global risks of H1N1 flu pandemic. *Technical Communication Quarterly,* 22(2), 126–149. https://doi-org.ezp1.lib.umn.edu/10.1080/10572252.2013.746628

Walton, R. W., Moore, K. R., & Jones, N. N. (2019). *Technical communication after the social justice turn: Building coalitions for action.* Routledge.

Resisting Mis/Disinformation: Ethical and Social Justice Strategies for Technical Communicators

Ambir Khadka, University of Texas at El Paso

The rapid proliferation of misinformation and disinformation in digital spaces poses significant threats to public trust and equity, especially for marginalized and global communities. As technical communicators, we are uniquely positioned at the intersection of specialized knowledge and diverse audiences, making our ethical responsibilities more urgent than ever. This presentation explored how technical communicators can help resist misinformation and disinformation by centering ethics and social justice in our processes and products.

Drawing on recent case studies, e.g. local/global information campaigns, I illustrated how misinformation disproportionately harms vulnerable groups, often intensifying existing inequities. I argued that technical communication is not a neutral act; rather, it is imbued with values that can either reinforce or resist systems of oppression.

The presentation introduced practical and actionable strategies for combating misinformation through:

- Inclusive design that ensures accessibility and cultural relevance for global audiences
- Community collaboration to co-create trustworthy information with those most affected
- Ethical frameworks that guide decision-making beyond mere accuracy, prioritizing transparency, equity, and justice
- Technological interventions, such as AI-powered verification tools, implemented with an awareness of their own ethical implications.

Participants left with a toolkit for integrating social justice principles into their work, enabling them to identify and disrupt oppressive practices embedded in technical communication. By fostering coalition-building and critical reflection, this presentation invited technical communicators to become proactive agents of change, resisting the spread of misinformation and advancing equity in an increasingly complex information landscape.

Translingually Reimagining User-Centered Communication in TPC Pedagogies for Linguistic Equity

Ifeanyi Mordi, New Mexico State University

This study was situated within the ethical conversation in Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) that demands consideration of the different literacies students bring to the classroom from their diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds. Drawing on translingual scholarship within and outside TPC (Canagarajah, 2013; Gonzales, 2024), this study responded to recent calls for more inclusive technical communication practices (Haas & Eble, 2018; Jones, Moore, & Walton, 2016; Walton, Moore, & Jones, 2019) by centering marginalized knowledge, demonstrating how Nigerian Pidgin English's (NPE) translingual strategies can inform equity-driven pedagogy.

In developing this inquiry, I utilized Norman Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the approach to analyze the sociolinguistic strategies of NPE. The analysis yielded three areas of value: Radical Accessibility, which emphasizes prioritizing clarity through the use of less complicated syntax; Cultural Metaphorization, which highlights framing technical concepts with hyper-local, cultural, conceptual resonances and analogies; and Participatory Co-Construction, which encourages a dialogic mode of communicating that is responsive to context.

I aimed to present these valuable findings, which can serve as a critical tool for TPC instructors to promote clarity as an affirmative process of justice, globalized and localized inclusivity, and engaged communicational design through collaboration. Rather than integrating NPE into the curriculum, I proposed we recognize the translingual values of students from diverse cultures and creatively imagine how to transpose those values into TPC's pedagogical practices. I presented a blueprint for implementation by showcasing the values within a marginal literate practice.

References

Canagarajah, A. S. (Ed.). (2013). *Literacy as translingual practice: Between communities and classrooms*. Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.

Gonzales, L. (2022). *Designing multilingual experiences in technical communication*. Utah State University Press.

Haas, A. M., & Eble, M. F. (Eds.). (2018). *Key theoretical frameworks: Teaching technical communication in the twenty-first century*. University Press of Colorado.

Jones, N. N., Moore, K. R., & Walton, R. (2016). Disrupting the past to disrupt the future: An antenarrative of technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 25(4), 211–229. https://-doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2016.1224655

Walton, R., Moore, K., & Jones, N. (2019). *Technical communication after the social justice turn: Building coalitions for action*. Routledge.

Ethical and Authentic Representation for Social Inclusion: A Case Study of Khabar Lahariya

Kartavi Upadhyay, University of Melbourne

Technical communication plays a pivotal role in shaping knowledge pathways, empowering users to navigate complex information landscapes (Barnum & Carliner, 1993; Markel, 1996; Shelton, 1994). With the proliferation of digital media, communication has evolved from passive consumption to dynamic interaction, fostering participatory knowledge-making and community-building. Yet, despite technological advances, systemic inequalities rooted in language, geography, caste, race, and gender continue to delimit access and representation (Schmidt & Cohen, 2013; Lister et al, 2009).

This presentation argued that authentic and ethical practices in technical communication are crucial for advancing social inclusion, particularly for marginalized communities. Rather than viewing digital access as a panacea, it is essential to interrogate how deep-seated power structures mediate whose voices are amplified and whose are silenced (Alm & Guttormsen, 2023).

Through the case study of Khabar Lahariya, hyperlocal, feminist, multilingual media collective based in rural India, will demonstrate how community-driven storytelling, linguistic inclusivity, and cultural embeddedness can serve as models for resisting tokenism and fostering meaningful representation (Qureshi, Bhatt, & Shaikh, 2025).

Moreover, in an era increasingly shaped by algorithmic moderation and the pervasive spread of misinformation, ethical technical communication must proactively confront the risks of disinformation and epistemic injustice (Neumann, De-Arteaga, & Fazelpour, 2022).

Ultimately, I proposed that technical communicators, by centering marginalized voices authentically, can catalyze structural transformation, linking communication practices to broader movements for social justice and democratic renewal.

References:

Alm, K., & Guttormsen, D. S. A. (2023). Enabling the voices of marginalized groups of people in theoretical business ethics research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 182(2), 303–320. https://-doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04973-3

Barnum, C. M., & Carliner, S. (1993). Understanding readers. In Techniques for Technical Communicators (pp. 18-41). Allyn and Bacon.

Lister, M., Dovey, J., Giddings, S., Grant, I., & Kelly, K. (2009). New Media: A Critical Introduction (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203884829.

Markel, M. (1996). *Technical communication.* Bedford/St. Martin's.

Neumann, T., De-Arteaga, M., & Fazelpour, S. (2022, June). Justice in misinformation detection systems: An analysis of algorithms, stakeholders, and potential harms. In Proceedings of the 2022 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (pp. 1504-1515). arXiv. https://arxiv.org/abs/2204.13568

Schmidt, E., & Cohen, J. (2013). *The new digital age: Reshaping the future of people, nations, and business.* Alfred A. Knopf.

Shelton, D. L. (1994). *Technical writing and communication: An introduction*. Wadsworth Publishing.

Qureshi, I., Bhatt, B., & Shaikh, S. (2025). Empowering marginalized communities: A framework for social inclusion. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 26*(4), 1197-1221.

Moving Program Reviews Into the Future: Strategically Positioning Technical and Professional Communication

Tharon Howard, Clemson University

Teena Carnegie, Eastern Washington University

Sean Williams, Arizona State University

Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch, University of Minnesota

In proposing the inaugural meeting of what would later become CPTSC, Thomas Pearsall noted that the some 20 programs in technical communication (TC) (Pearsall, 1974) that existed in the US shared a number of problems and challenges. At the top of his list was the question: what elements make up a successful TC program? (Pearsall, 1984). In many ways, CPTSC was created to answer this question. Its purpose focused on promoting technical and scientific communication (TSC) programs, on research in TSC, on the exchange of information, and on assisting the development of new programs (CPTSC, 1977). In 1987, to address this need, Patrick Kelley proposed the creation of an advisory board made up of past presidents of CPTSC, who would serve as consultants who would be responsible for coordinating evaluation, upon request, of proposed, new, and established programs in technical and scientific communication (CPTSC, 1987). Half a century later, CPTSC continues to revise the process by which it supports members in the external review of their programs, including the creation of the ExPRT Taskforce whose creating of a new CPTSC External Review Service was approved by the Executive Committee in the Spring of 2025.

Over the years, external program reviews can be confused or conflated with assessment. They work together but have different purposes. The purpose of this presentation was to clarify the value of external program review and disambiguate external program review from assessment and show how they work together. To do this, the presentation had four parts. In the first part, Teena Carnegie shared with participants an overview of the work CPTSC has done over the past 50 years. Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch discussed scholarship on program review and assessment, tracking the simultaneous proliferation and how sometimes the distinctions between program review and program assessment became blurred. Sean Williams discussed a sample case study of a program review to illustrate one approach to the process. And finally, Tharon Howard discussed an FAQ developed by the Taskforce which addressed common questions. His discussion focused on questions such as:

- Why would you want to have an external program review?
- Why conduct a self-study in the first place (what are the benefits/risks)? What would you want to achieve?
- What kinds of data do you want to collect or what kinds of things do you want to investigate?

- How do you want to use the information you gather in a self-study (what arguments do you want to make with the info)?

In sum, this presentation explored the process, models, values, and benefits of external program review.

The audience for this presentation was program administrators who were interested in the external review process and how it could best serve their programs.

References

CPTSC (1977). *Constitution*. The Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication Proceedings. https://cptsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/1977.pdf

CPTSC. (1987). *Business meeting minutes*. The Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication Proceedings.

Kelley, P. (1984). *From the president: CPTSC at present*. The Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication Proceedings. https://cptsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/1984.pdf

Pearsall, T. (1984) *Faith without words is dead*. The Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication Proceedings. https://cptsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/1984.pdf

Pearsall, T. (1974, March 21-23). *Introductory summary* [Conference session]. Conference of the Directors of Technical Communication Programs, Saint Paul, Minnesota, United States. https://cptsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/1974.pdf

What Do We Talk About When We Talk About AI Literacy?: Tensions and Questions in Current AI Pedagogical Frameworks, and a Reflective Future

Jason Tham, Texas Tech University

Katlynne Davis, University of St. Thomas

Gustav Verhulsdonck, Central Michigan University

As generative AI tools rapidly enter writing and communication classrooms, programs in technical and professional communication (TPC) are grappling with how to define, teach, and support what is often called ""AI literacy."" But what do we really mean when we use that term? This panel presented findings from a thematic analysis of current AI literacy frameworks, with particular attention to writing, communication, and design pedagogies. We examined how different institutions and educators interpret AI literacy, as a technical skillset, as a critical disposition, or as a mix of both, and how these interpretations shape programmatic approaches.

Our aim was to interrogate the assumptions embedded in emerging frameworks: Who is AI literacy for? What values are being prioritized? What pedagogical tensions emerge when institutions emphasize efficiency and productivity, while instructors advocate for deliberation and justice? Drawing on case studies from multiple institutions, we showed how programs are navigating this landscape, sometimes in alignment, sometimes in tension, with broader institutional and social goals.

Panelists shared challenges and strategies from their own teaching and administrative experiences, offering both critical perspectives and practical considerations. The audience was invited to engage in conversations about institutional constraints, instructor responsibilities, and other pragmatic concerns. We concluded with a call for a more reflective and responsible approach to AI literacy, one that centers student agency, values justice, and slows the rush toward automation.

This panel benefited program administrators, curriculum developers, and educators seeking to better understand the stakes and possibilities of integrating AI into TPC programs in ways that are thoughtful, critical, and pedagogically sound.

Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration in Technical Communication

April O'Brien, Sam Houston State University

Carroll Nardone, Sam Houston State University

Xiaobo Belle Wang, Sam Houston State University

Yingying Tang, Sam Houston State University

This panel explored the dynamic intersection of technical communication with science, engineering, nursing, and public health and focuses on the critical role of interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing today's complex global challenges. We examined the opportunities and obstacles that arise when technical professionals, communicators, and broader stakeholders work together. It is not uncommon for barriers to arise as technical communicators work with other disciplines, so we addressed strategies to overcome these concerns to work towards translating technical knowledge into accessible, actionable information. In our panel discussion, we shared real-world examples in climate science, public health, and legal assistance. The panel also considered how institutional structures, professional norms, and training programs can support or hinder cross-disciplinary dialogue. Panel attendees gained insight into best practices for fostering mutual understanding and building trust among collaborators with different expertise.

Each presenter highlighted a different interdisciplinary partnership that spans several different disciplines. Presenter One focused on a multi-year grant with the Gulf Scholars Program. Along with a steering committee in geography, engineering technology, biology, and other disciplines, Presenter One's work on the grant focused on equipping undergraduate students to address critical environmental, health, energy, and infrastructure issues in the Gulf region. During this presentation, Presenter One shared experiences during the grant-writing process and beyond.

Presenter Two shared a professional development workshop with our Osteopathic Medicine and Health Sciences students that was supported by institutional grant funding. This workshop cultivated and improved our students' technical and professional communication competence in working with multilingual patients in a post COVID, traumatic, and multicultural environment in the state of Texas. In the workshop, we highlighted the importance of a patient-centered, multilingual User Experience approach backed by recent empirical research on the Spanish speaking patients in Texas.

Presenter Three detailed a partnership with the School of Nursing where graduate-level, technical communication (TCOM) practicum/internship students experience content clinicals. Among the benefits of such a partnership is the ability for TCOM students to create content in specific health communication situations. The benefits for the nursing program are professional-level writing support for grants, manuscripts, and web communication, to name a few. Ultimately, however, it is the symbiotic relationship that provides invaluable, yet often intangible, benefits for students in both programs.

Presenter Four shared findings from an interdisciplinary research project examining the use of AI in legal assistance through a case study of Legal Navigator, a platform developed by Microsoft and the Legal Services Corporation. Grounded in user-centered methods, including interviews, surveys, usability testing, and participatory visual research, this study investigated how resource-constrained individuals navigate AI-supported legal tools and what barriers they face. The project introduced the CARE Model, a community-driven approach to designing legal technologies that emphasizes co-creation, integration of existing support systems, and targeted outreach. This presentation highlighted how technical communicators can contribute to cross-sector collaborations by applying UX, accessibility, and ethical design principles to public-interest technologies that serve vulnerable communities.

Communicating Big Science: Strategizing Public Engagement for Major Research Facilities

Mahedi Hasan, Texas Tech University

Kerk F. Kee, Texas Tech University

Traditional science communication often emphasizes issues with immediate public impact, personalized to target audiences, such as climate change, public health crises, or environmental threats. However, communicating "Big Science" presents a unique set of challenges. Conducted by Major Facilities (MFs) and Mid-Scale Research Infrastructures (MSRIs), Big Science is characterized by large-scale, long-term research and reliance on public funding. Many discoveries, such as the direct detection of gravitational waves, the discovery of the Higgs Boson, and the imaging of a black hole, do not have clear, immediate effects on everyday life. Yet, these projects depend on continued public support.

This case study examined CI Compass (https://ci-compass.org/), a National Science Foundation (NSF) Cyberinfrastructure Center of Excellence headquartered at the University of Southern California and created through collaboration with five other U.S. universities. CI Compass addresses this communication gap and serves as a case study in interdisciplinary collaboration, bringing together technical experts, engineers, communication scholars, and organizational leaders to bridge scientific complexity and public understanding. Its strategies included hosting workshops and conferences, maintaining a social media presence, organizing webinars, publishing accessible technical notes, and offering an online seminar series introducing undergraduates to Big Science, Major Facilities, and cyberinfrastructure.

Drawing on institutional examples and emerging partnerships, this work examined how Big Science organizations are strategizing communication to demonstrate societal value, emphasized innovation, and fostered broader public trust. It highlighted the critical role of interdisciplinary collaboration in reshaping science communication and offered insights for advancing public engagement and support for major research initiatives.

Session 5

From Creation to Coordination: Toward a Content Design, Management, and Strategy Pedagogy

Chris Scheidler, Weber State University

Marisa Yerace, Weber State University

Christine Masters-Wheeler, Francis Marion University

The landscape of technical and professional writing has evolved. In particular, industries and consumers have turned toward viewing our work as content, not merely writing. This content creation and management demands new attention across emergent and traditional PTW careers, with little indication that generative AI will slow this down (Shalamova, Rice-Bailey, and Wikoff 2019; Card, 2025). As stakeholders in higher education programs, we aim to formalize courses that teach content design, management, and strategy as core skills for modern professionals (Clark, 2016; Bridgeford, 2020). This panel presented snapshots of an emergent approach to Content Pedagogy.

Featuring collaborators from two institutions, Weber State University and Francis Marion University, we highlighted two snapshots of curriculum in undergraduate courses on content creation and strategy. These snapshots demonstrated an introduction and capstone to content pedagogy curricula. We planned to engage the audience with the following questions: What frameworks best support students in learning to plan, design, and manage meaningful content across platforms? What rhetorical, ethical, and technical dispositions should such programs cultivate? How can we draw on existing institutional resources (courses, technologies, and collaborations) to facilitate effective content pedagogy?

Speaker 1: Background

Speaker one discussed the work of shifting programs in PTW to make a programmatic identity focused on content, to resonate further with students and employers. Careers in PTW are shifting for many reasons whether it is technological advancements such as AI or workforce readiness requiring content-specific knowledge. As such, we see opportunities for PTW programs in the direction of content creation, as they are well equipped to foster skills and knowledge that can more directly help students navigate the shifting professional landscape.

Speaker 2: Snapshot "Content Audit & Redesign"

Speaker two presented a lower division course featuring a major assignment sequence called the Content Audit & Redesign. In this project, students inventory and assess the content of a website or platform. Students categorize material by tone, purpose, accessibility, and functionality and conduct UX testing, evaluate information architecture, and identify areas for redesign. This assignment built critical foundations in analysis, audience awareness, and ethical content design.

Speaker 3: Snapshot "Content Strategy & Governance"

Speaker three outlined an upper division course sequence and presented a capstone assignment: Content Strategy & Governance. Combining user research, design, management planning, and design systems into a single professional project, students create editorial calendars, workflows, and content governance on real-world projects. By synthesizing research, creation, and planning, the capstone prepares students to enter digital content roles with strategic vision and technical fluency.

Speaker 4: Future visions

Speaker four outlined programmatic sequencing, objectives, and partnerships. We invited discussion on how applied, integrative projects define curriculum in content pedagogy, especially toward graduates who don't just fill out templates but design content infrastructures and ecologies. Finally, we positioned a content design pedagogy that extends beyond the classroom to industry conferences and scholarly reflection.

References

Bridgeford, T. (Ed.). (2020). *Teaching content management in technical and professional communication*. Routledge.

Card, D. (2025). The Future of Ethics in Industry: Generative AI and the Production of Technical Content. In D. G. Ross (Ed), *The Routledge Handbook of Ethics in Technical and Professional Communication* (pp. 472-480). Routledge.

Clark, D. (2016). Content Strategy: An Integrative Literature Review. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 59(1), 7-23. doi: 10.1109/TPC.2016.2537080.

Shalamova, N., Rice-Bailey, T., & Wikoff, K. (2019). Evolving skill sets and job pathways of technical communicators. *Communication Design Quarterly Review. 6*(3) 14-24. https://-doi.org/10.1145/3309578.3309580"

Precarious Futures: International Scholars in Technical Communication and Anti-DEI Policies

Amy Hodges, University of Texas at Arlington

Ashleigh Petts, University of Houston-Downtown

Xiaoli Li, University of Dayton

This panel took a global approach to address how the field of technical and professional communication has been impacted by recent legislation and political action in the US, particularly bans on DEI and CRT programs, heightened scrutiny of university curriculum and federally funded research projects, sudden visa cancellations of international students and faculty, restrictions on protests and freedom of speech, and an increase in anti-immigrant and xenophobic rhetoric. Amid the precarity of international students' and scholars' future in US institutions, the presenters on this panel examined how these challenges have manifested in their individual contexts. Collaboratively, they explored strategies for maintaining global engagement and inclusivity in the face of these policies.

We envisioned this panel contributing to the conference theme, Ethics and Social Justice in technical tom-munication, by highlighting the profound impacts these policies have had on international students and scholars, and by encouraging conference participants to consider concrete actions and advocacy strategies that promote social justice and equity for international members of our technical com-munication community.

Presenter 1 examined selections of global, national, state, and local responses to Palestinian rights protests on university campuses, offering insights into our understanding of technical communication's role in citizenship and advocacy (Agboka and Matveeva, 2018).

Presenter 2 presented strategies for maintaining international partnerships and promoting virtual exchange in an era of heightened nationalism. Virtual exchange encourages intercultural competence, which, as Yu (2012) argues, is essential for students and practitioners. Indeed, because of the current environment, intercultural competence is perhaps more important than ever. This presentation provided practical insights for program administrators interested in cultivating students' intercultural competence through international collaboration.

Presenter 3 shared the ripple effect of the Ohio Senate Bill I on the visiting scholar program and student exchange programs between the [institution redacted] and a few Chinese universities.

References

Agboka, G.Y. & N. Matveeva. (2018). *Citizenship and Advocacy in Technical Communication: Scholarly and Pedagogical Perspectives.* Routledge.

Yu, H. (2012). Intercultural competence in technical communication: A working definition and review of assessment methods. *Technical Communication Quarterly,* 21(2), 168–186. https://-doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2012.643443"

Collaborating with Indigenous Interpreters to Innovate Possibilities for Generative AI Technologies

Nora K. Rivera, Texas Tech University

Laura Gonzales, University of Florida

Victor Del Hierro, University of Florida

This panel explored generative AI technologies in the context of Indigenous languages through critical analyses and a series of participatory activities with Indigenous interpreters to innovate possibilities for ethical generative AI tools. Presenter 1 drew on rhetorical mediation theories to emphasize the predetermined factors influencing AI outputs, such as the designer's background and the quality of the training data. The presentation included collaborative activities with Indigenous language users, examining AI's linguistic capabilities, biases, and benefits. Presenter 2 discussed a participatory activity where Indigenous language interpreters used AI tools to generate images and text related to court interpretation practices, followed by a low-tech activity to create more accurate representations. Presenter 3 addressed the benefits and risks of using generative AI in Indigenous language contexts, highlighting discussions with Indigenous interpreters about AI's potential and concerns, such as increased surveillance and lack of community input. The presentation underscored the need for a critical examination of AI processes and the development of AI tools that support Indigenous language speakers, engaging with questions about ethics and social justice in technical communication.

AI and Rhetorical Language Mediation: The Impact of LLMs on Minoritized Languages

Drawing on theories that analyze the rhetorical mediation interface that Indigenous languages users navigate (Gonzales, 2022; Rivera, 2024), presenter 1 emphasized that the output of generative AI technologies depends not only on the user's prompt but on a series of factors already predetermined before the prompt is even written, like the designer's background, the type of training given to the AI model, and the quality and diversity of the database. Presenter 1 also provided an overview of Gartner's hype cycle of technologies (Zimmerli, 2025), addressing how fear of new technologies has always been present, from the invention of writing technologies to the printing press to calculators to the internet and mobile phones (Plate et al., 2025). The presentation focused on describing and examining several collaborative activities with Indigenous language users, designed to critically analyze the linguistic capabilities, biases, and benefits of generative AI technologies.

In the first activity, Indigenous language users described their attitudes toward generative AI technologies, highlighting mixed reactions. In the second activity, Indigenous participants used various generative AI technologies using zero-shot prompting to create short stories in different Indigenous languages and to translate the stories to Spanish and/or English. This activity tested 1) AI's abilities in Indigenous languages, 2) AI,s translation abilities to and from Indigenous languages, and 3) biases embedded in generative AI technologies when working with minoritized languages. Using zero-shot prompting

revealed abilities in some Indigenous languages and explicit biases that stereotyped users of Indigenous languages and users of other minoritized languages, like Spanglish speakers. The participants also tested the research abilities of AI technologies on topics related to Indigenous languages in Mexico. Participants used few-shot prompting with iterations in this second exercise, revealing limitations and identifying opportunities for Indigenous language speakers. Some information AI technologies generated was helpful and informative, while some was fabricated. Participants learned to use AI technologies through a critical lens, prompting discussions on the benefits and risks of building databases in Indigenous languages. This work emphasized the need for a deeper examination of the complete AI writing process, focusing on designers and database inputs rather than the final outcome.

Participatory Design Representing Indigenous Language Speakers

Presenter 2 discussed a participatory activity where Indigenous language speakers were asked to: 1) use different AI tools to generate images of Indigenous court interpreters; and 2) use AI tools to generate text describing court interpretation practices. Presenter 2 shared the prompts that participants used to generate this content, as well as excerpts from the group discussion where participants analyzed the limitations of existing generative AI technology in representing Indigenous language speakers and the work of Indigenous court interpreters.

Following this initial activity, the group was asked to draw images that more accurately represent Indigenous language speakers. This low-tech activity prompted participants to use images like mountains, rivers, and other land-based artifacts to represent their communities. The group then engaged in a discussion about the potential of developing alternative AI tools that can create visual representations of different Indigenous languages and communities. Presenter 2 shared takeaways from this activity and discussion, and asked the audience for suggestions and recommendations regarding how technical communicators could collaborate with Indigenous language speakers to develop AI tools that assist, rather than limit, the work of Indigenous court interpreters.

Interfacing Settler Colonialism through Generative AI

Presenter 3 discussed the benefits and risks of using generative AI in Indigenous language contexts.

Drawing on discussions with Indigenous language interpreters, including those presented by presenters 1 and 2, presenter 3 discussed the ways that Indigenous language speakers have identified ways that AI can be beneficial as they continue to navigate multilingual and multinational translation moments (Gonzales, 2018). Presenter 3 facilitated a discussion, providing examples of some possible uses for generative AI that included preparing for legal and medical interpretations using chatbots to prepare for the rhetorical contexts they would be working in.

As participants further engaged with generative AI, Indigenous language speakers identified the risks and concerns with using AI, including increased surveillance from settler-colonial institutions as well as the widespread implementation of AI without the Indigenous communities' input or perceived participation.

Presenter 3 discussed some preliminary findings and an initial draft for developing an AI protocol for using generative AI as a tool for interfacing with settler colonial nation-states and institutions.

References

Gonzales, L. (2018). *Sites of translation: What multilinguals can teach us about digital writing and rhetoric.* University of Michigan Press.

Gonzales, L., Lewy, R., Cuevas, E. H., & Ajiataz, V. L. G. (2022). (Re)Designing technical documentation about COVID-19 with and for indigenous communities in Gainesville, Florida, Oaxaca de Juárez, Mexico, and Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 65 (1), 34–49. https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2022.3140568

Plate, D., Melick, E., Hutson, J., & Edele S. (2025). *Generative AI in the English composition classroom: Practical and adaptable strategies*. Routledge.

Rivera, N.K. (2024). *The rhetorical mediator: Understanding agency in Indigenous translation and interpretation through Indigenous approaches to UX*. Utah State UP.

Zimmerli, W.C. (2025). Artificial intelligence--hype or myth? Philosophical aspects of an entrepreneurial success story. In Hoffmann, C.H. (Eds.), *Artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship and risk: Reflections and positions at the crossroads between philosophy and management.* Springer. https://-doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-45544-6_14

Assembling a UX Certificate and Building a Transdiciplinary UX Lab

Amelia Chesley, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Shannon Lodoen, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

This presentation focused on the development of an emerging, transdisciplinary certificate program in User Experience Research, Human Factors, and Writing,a program designed to serve students in a range of STEM majors at a small private institution. Scholars in our communication department are collaborating across disciplines to design a practical UX certificate program and create associated lab space that will suit our institutional context. Though we do not have writing majors or programs at our campus, our agile department is well-positioned to house a UX program, manage a UX research lab, and provide valuable expert training in the theory and practice of human-centered design and research practices.

This program will allow us to support students in transferring human-centered skills to their work in diverse degree programs, professional fields, and future careers. Key components of the certificate include 4 themed courses (a 100-level introduction to UX theory and methods; a 200-level technical writing course with an audience focus, a 300-level human-factors usability and prototyping course, and a 300-level UX practicum). Each course will train students in a range of UX research tools such as user personas, empathy maps, user journey maps, prototyping, interviews, observations, and case studies, eventually guiding them to effectively apply such tools and concepts toward user scenarios within their chosen professional fields.

In sharing the story of this opportunity and its challenges, we invited in-depth discussions about transdisciplinarity in TPC fields/programs and the benefits of teaching UX in diverse settings.

Visualizing Researcher Identity: Using UX Methods to Trace Doctoral Engineering Students' Development Over Time

Jason Tham Texas, Tech University

Jennifer Cross Texas, Tech University

Diego Polanco-Lahoz, Texas Tech University

Technical and professional communication (TPC) programs have traditionally focused on developing communication skills essential for students in engineering and related disciplines. In addition to its long-standing role in enhancing graduate students' communication competencies, TPC as a field has another equally important contribution to make: its methods, particularly those from user experience (UX) research, can provide valuable insights into graduate students' programmatic experiences. By applying UX approaches, programs can gain a deeper understanding of how students navigate their educational pathways, encounter challenges, and develop as researchers. This perspective allows for a more intentional and evidence-based program design that better supports student professionalization and identity formation.

This presentation shared findings from a longitudinal study that applies UX research methods to explore how doctoral students in engineering develop researcher identities. While prior work in graduate education has addressed aspects of identity, few studies take a process-oriented, visual approach, particularly within technical disciplines like engineering. Responding to this gap, our study recruited twenty PhD students in an industrial engineering program at a large R1 university. Drawing from UX methods such as persona building, journey mapping, and affinity diagramming, we analyzed survey and interview data through a phenomenological lens to trace how students' identities evolve in relation to modality, program stage, prior experience, and professional orientation.

We presented seven composite personas that visualize distinct identity formation trajectories. These personas, along with collaboratively developed affinity diagrams, reveal both challenges and transformative moments that shape students' sense of themselves as researchers. We argued that these methods not only enrich our understanding of researcher development but also offer actionable insights for graduate program design, particularly in STEM and professional communication contexts. Attendees gained examples of how UX methodologies can be used to study educational experience longitudinally and how such insights might support programmatic decision-making, mentorship, and assessment.

Annual business meeting minutes

CPTSC Annual Business Meeting

October 23, 2025

5:45–7:00 pm local time

SUB Room 125, Texas Tech University

Call to order & acknowledgments (Jason Tham & Nora Rivera)

- Jason and Nora did the welcome and introductions. Nora: Special thanks to the CPTSC leadership, and we are grateful to TTU's office of research for their sponsorship.

Approval of 2024 minutes (Chalice Randazzo)

- Minutes from the 2024 Business Meeting are at this link: bit.ly/2024-cptsc-business-minutes
- Vote: Joanna Schreiber motioned to approve, Victor del Hierro seconded, unanimous approval.

President's report (Jenn Mallette)

- Thank you to Jason for all his hard work in putting together this conference. First, I want to introduce our two new EC members. Our new Treasurer is Flourice Richardson. And that is a big lift, so we really appreciate her joining us. Our second new EC member is Krista Saraff, replacing Carleigh Davis (who took a job in industry).
- Things we've done: We might have some more opportunities because of STC going bankrupt, but we're also hoping to work more with ATTW. Our website is top priority: specifically, that it is back in good running order but is also serving the needs of our membership. So, our pitch is that if you know about web development, please reach out to us. We have lots of folks who are web content and usability, but we need more backend technical side people. So, any input you have for that, we'd appreciate it. Any, advice, support, volunteering—come talk to me.
- In more exciting news, we had a conversation about how to choose conference site proposals. In 2027, we will be collocating with SIGDOC again at ODU. It's not always feasible to co-locate, so we made a rubric for evaluating site proposals this year so that we can ensure that we're serving the needs of people who attend the conferences. When we do a call for future sites next year, we will share that rubric publicly in addition to the Proposal Template.
- And the final thing we did this year was the ExPRT review [note: External Program Review Taskforce]. Tharon will discuss that more later, but the gist is that we have reviewers and a

taskforce, and people have been asking for program reviews from CPTSC.

- Also, next year, we will be holding elections for the CPTSC executive committee. So, if you're interested, feel free to chat with any of us about what that's like.

Treasurer's report (Flourice Richardson

- If you want the full report, email me and I'll send it to you. We spent about $19,700. We had 2,976 in deposits, and spent about $875 on the website. Through PayPal, we collected $20,689. Most of our money went to the scholarships and grants. The budget for that is about $18,000. And we do have a healthy contingency. And we had six sponsors for the conference.

- As for the next budget, I proposed about $20,000 based on plans for website and grants. And if you want the full report, email Treasurer@cptsc.org.

- Jenn: And I'd like to say that thanks to Jason because his work finding sponsors across TTU meant the bulk of the conference expenses have been paid by TTU.

Committee reports & awards

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE (NORA RIVERA)

- Diversity scholarship awardees: They will present about their awards tomorrow at the Diversity Committee Meeting in room 213. We have two second places and one first place. Second places: Ernestina Akorfa Akorli, and Thais Rodrigues Cons. And our first place goes to Asmita Ghimire.

GRADUATE STUDENT COMMITTEE (DORCAS ANABIRE & ASMITA GHIMIRE)

- We are leading a professional development project. You might have received an email for being a mentor/mentee volunteer. The idea is to give mentorship to grad students outside of your program about dissertation topics, research, and building community. If you or your program has a structured mentorship program, please email us to let us know what that looks like. We still need more mentors, so please reach out if you're interested.

- I also want to add appreciation to Emily Gresbrink and Meghalee Das for their previous leadership. If you have a graduate student and they are struggling for a committee, we are there for them.

- Also, we're meeting tomorrow in room 233. If you're a grad student, let us know.

ADMINISTRATORS COMMITTEE (RHONDA STANTON)

- Julia Romberger couldn't be here tonight. This past year, one of our tasks was the OER site. We also received approval for a webinar. The committee held two webinars: Addison Kliewer and Dr. Leslie

Seawright. We have sent out a call for three to be held in 2025-26. So, if you know someone who would be interesting for the webinars, email us or have that person email us. We have decided to create a best practices guide for program coordinators, using the categories of information that program coordinators usually have to know.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE (XIAOLI LI)

- I have a number of the international committee members here. In response to recent changes at the national level, our committee held a panel. Also, our committee meeting tomorrow will be over Zoom. I will send the information soon.
- We have also helped the international university network in technical communication. They have monthly meetings, workshops, and seminars, and we've helped them recruit speakers. And we have hosted a number of visitors in TC, including scholars and practitioners from international sites.

GRANTS COMMITTEE (JENNIFER MALLETTE)

- Sara Doan has stepped in to co-chair with Isidore Dorpenyo. Calls went out for grants, and they're due Nov 7. If you didn't see the CFP, let us know and we'll send it to you.
- These are the type of projects we are able to sponsor because of the memberships and conference fees [Showed the slide with the research grant winners and the antiracist grant winners]:

2025 RESEARCH GRANTS:

- Krista Speicher Sarraf, "Creating Tools for Community-Engaged User Experience: A Pathway for Technical and Professional Communication Programs"
- Daniel Liddle & Yoonji Kim, "More Than Memos: YouTube Channel and How YouTube Reflects the Field of Technical Communication"
- Emily Gresbrink, "Systematic Revisions of an Engineering Technical Communication 'Micro-Curriculum'"
- 2025 Research Grants to Promote Anti-Racist Programs and Pedagogies
- Mariam Mohammed & Lisa King, "Belonging and Resistance: Experiences of African International Students"
- Andrew Marz & Abigail Bakke, "Student Perceptions of Trust in AI-Generated Human Portraits"

Programmatic Perspectives report (Russell Kirkscey & Rhonda Stanton)

- Russell: If you have presented at this conference, you should be thinking about publishing your work in Programmatic Perspectives. We will work with you from tomorrow on. So, if you have an inkling or want to talk about it, let us know. We also have several different categories: programmatic showcase, curriculum showcase, research articles. We have a special issue on editing and publishing coming out late this year or early next. We're also about to put out another call, so if you have an idea for a special issue, let us know. And we just started an online first publication right now. We're working about a year to 1.5 years in advance right now.

- Rhonda: Even though we're working about a year ahead, we get those acceptance letters out for tenure and promotion. We are in the process of researching how to get DOIs for our articles. We have decided to go with CrossRef. We have to give them evergreen information, like emails and mailing addresses, so we are waiting on the website updates to put that in motion. We will be able to export information out of the OJS we use, and CrossRef will help us. If you have information or have done this before, we would welcome suggestions, help, and ideas. We also want to encourage you to be a reviewer. Get into the OJS system and let us know if you're interested. And if we invite you and you don't have time, that's okay—let us know that, too. We also have a new book review editor, Beth Shirley. She just put out a call for more book reviews; so if you're interested, she's the person for that.

- Best research article award: We had a lot of articles to choose from, but the one we chose was "From Policy to Practice: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Student Attendance" by R. Elle Smith and Chen Chen. [Rhonda read the abstract of the article, which is linked at https://-programmaticperspectives.cptsc.org/index.php/jpp/article/view/99/159]

Distinguished Service Award (Tharon Howard)

- Joanna Schreiber. She got quite a few letters, so I've excerpted from some of them. [Tharon read from the letters: Erin Friess, Jenn Mallette, Kirk St Amant, Lisa Meloncon, and Stacey Pigg. All of them discussed her long-term service to CPTSC and her collegiality. CPTSC would not be what we are today without her contributions.]

Announcements (Jenn Mallette)

- External program review service (Tharon Howard): The External Program Review lived for a while and then died away, and then at one of our annual Business Meetings, we discussed bringing it back. We created a taskforce and created a program that you can now use. The URL is here [showed a slide], but there's also an announcement in Programmatic Perspectives. So, if you're looking to start a new program and need reviews, we can help with that; if you're going through certification, we can provide support for that. So, please check it out on the website.

- CPTSC 2026 (Jenn Mallette): Next year, we will be at Boise State University. We look forward to hosting you.
- Other announcements (Jenn Mallette): Well will hold elections in 2026. We'll also open up the CFP for conference sites next year. So, keep your eyes open for those announcements. And if you have questions about either of those, any of us on the EC would be happy to answer.

Meeting adjourn: 7:00 pm Texas time