Proceedings

2015 Conference

of the

Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication

Utah State University
October 1-3, 2015

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Using Twitter Data to Attract Students to Technical Communication Programs

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Overview

Ambient data generated by and in social media channels represents a valuable, yet generally unexplored resource for strategizing and conducting programmatic research. For instance, live tweeting of conferences is a useful way for colleagues to share information and communicate with insider and outsider audiences about new research and applications arising from the field of technical and professional communication. In particular, the data generated in these conversations via hashtags like #sigdoc or #ATTWcon provides a live, behind the scenes view of research in the field that both documents the current state of the field and signals new, emerging directions for the field's research. While noteworthy for the in-time and future perspective of the work our programs foster, this panel presentation argues for a broader programmatic articulation of Twitter conversations and the potential value they offer as a site of research for enhancing the perspectives we have of our programs. In particular, this panel presentation will describe a practical research method that program administrators can use to collect and analyze ambient Twitter data generated by technical communication researchers, teachers, students, and industry practitioners. The panel presentation makes a specific case about how to use such ambient data to support programmatic work in three ways: (1) understanding and establishing industry research partnerships; (2) forging innovative program identities in times of austerity; and (3) bolstering undergraduate recruitment efforts to persuade more students to select TPC as a desirable and marketable field of study in a competitive, information driven, knowledge economy.

Research Method

The proposed panel's research method will use Twitter's API to automatically collect a large volume of tweets about technical communication (undergraduate and graduate programs, conferences, industry trends, etc.). Drawing from sample data assembled in various databases of tweets based on keywords, hashtags, and prominent industry influencers within the technical communication community, presenters will facilitate a conversation about the potential value and applications of using this research method. In particular, presenters will discuss different coding strategies and analysis frameworks for discovering interesting patterns or trends in the data relevant to programmatic issues in three areas: research methodology, program identity,

and program recruitment.

Connection to Conference Theme

As described below in each presenter's proposal, this panel presentation connects to the conference theme in many ways, most notably in the areas of examining relationships with industry, shaping program identity, and developing research methods for examining our programs.

Take Away

In addition to providing an opportunity for healthy discussion regarding contemporary shifts in technical communication, session attendees will leave with a framework of a research method used to gather data from Twitter to inform programmatic decisions in the areas of establishing industry relationships, shaping program identity, and developing research methods for examining our programs.

Using Twitter Data to Inform Programmatic Directions by Bridging the Academy and Industry

Chris Lam, University of North Texas

Overview

While many academics already engage in technical communication communities on Twitter, this presentation argues for the systematic investigation of Twitter communities to inform programmatic directions. I propose a quantitative content analysis of Twitter data that can ultimately lead to decisions regarding course offerings and pedagogical approaches to equipping our students in the changing technical communication landscape. An empirical content analysis benefits our field because it moves beyond the anecdotal conversations and observations that we are already having regarding the changing tools, methods, and best practices in technical communication. An analysis could reveal insights about:

- Contemporary trends in technical communication workflow
- Tool usage in technical communication
- Technology prevalence in technical communication (XML, DITA, HTML, CSS, etc.)
- Changing job titles and responsibilities of technical communicators
- Other miscellaneous themes that naturally appear in the data

Connection to Conference Theme

This presentation most obviously addresses the topic area of “possible applications of programmatic research to examine relationships with industry.” By conducting systematic research that examines actual communities of technical communicators, the proposed study can provide programs with a broader perspective of how technical communication changes in industry.

Take Away

Attendees will leave with a framework of a research method used to gather data from Twitter to inform programmatic decisions. Additionally, the topic also provides an opportunity for healthy discussion regarding contemporary shifts in technical communication.

Using Twitter Data to Bolster Program Identity and Foster Cross-Disciplinary Research Partnerships

Mark A. Hannah, Arizona State University

Overview

Twitter data is a resource both for self-evaluating how the field talks about itself as well as for assessing how cross-disciplinary research partners imagine or anticipate what it might mean to work with TPC researchers and practitioners. At the core of this presentation is a concern with articulating how programmatic research practices regarding ambient data can be leveraged to forge robust program identities that generate the types of buzz that are necessary for cultivating sustainable research partnerships both within and outside of university settings. In particular, using linguistic and rhetorical frames, this presentation will consider the following questions as they relate to program identity:

1. Who engages with ambient Twitter data?
2. What types of comments or conversations stem from and through ambient Twitter data?
3. When do people engage with the content?
4. Why do Twitter participants engage with the content?
5. Where do people engage with the content?
6. How do Twitter participants engage with the content?

Answers to such questions offer program administrators useful starting points for developing Twitter content strategies that help support programmatic planning and decision-making regarding establishing, innovating on, or maintaining a program's identity.

Connection to Conference Theme

This presentation most closely addresses the topic area of "Suggested practices for using programmatic research to shape program identity."

Take Away

Attendees will leave with an understanding of the relationship between Twitter data and issues of program identity.

Using Twitter Data to Attract Students to Technical Communication Programs

Erin Friess, University of North Texas

Overview

An ongoing challenge for program administrators is maintaining and increasing the number of students enrolled within undergraduate programs. This challenge is complicated by the fact that students often know little about what the technical communication major entails. Indeed, the majority (about 88%) of majors at our home institution began in another major and only switched to technical communication after taking a service course required by other majors.

Program administrators can harness Twitter data to more readily attract students to technical communication programs in three ways. First, as discussed in the opening presentation of our panel, program administrators can better construct their curriculum to reflect the realities of the technical communication field and the needs of potential students. Second, program administrators can collaborate with admissions departments to use university handles and hashtags to identify potential majors. Third, program administrators can establish a Twitter content strategy within service courses to enable students to add technical communication as their major.

Connection to Conference Theme

This presentation most closely addresses the topic area of “suggested practices for using programmatic research to shape program identity.” Students rely heavily on social media applications when seeking information. Thus, it is important for to develop innovative recruitment strategies that use tools like Twitter.

Take Away

Attendees will leave with an understanding of how to use Twitter to increase enrollments for incoming students and those who change their major.

Advisory Boards, in Research and Practice

Beyond Programmatic Assessment: Industry Advisory Boards as Action Research Sites

John M. Spartz, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Viable, Not Just Triable: Research to Discover the Necessary Conditions for a Program

Lars Söderlund, Western Oregon University
Elizabeth Kramer-Simpson, New Mexico Tech

Using Research to Build and Benefit from Your Own Advisory Board

Ryan P. Weber, University of Alabama at Huntsville

Overview

This panel presents one case of the benefits of programmatic research by discussing both research findings about advisory boards in technical communication and the specific applications of that research. Together, the panelists conducted research into the makeup and best practices of advisory boards because their own programmatic needs required the resulting information. This research updates and expands existing scholarship on advisory boards (Dillon, 1997; Penrose, 2002) by broadening the scope of inquiry beyond specific, local programs to common practices across the field. The generated field-data holds much potential for local programs, and this panel ultimately aims to provide information that program faculty and administrators might employ in their respective programs.

This panel will offer results of our own advisory board research, discussing our qualitative research interviews with both directors of programs that operate advisory boards (n=11) and members of an existing advisory board (n=10) to a technical communication program. Our research reinforces previous conclusions that “for technical writing programs, especially, advisory board participation effectively bridges the gap between classroom and workplace” (Dillon 45). However, we also provide a more systematic collection of data that maps advisory board practices at several institutions. The results reveal several bits of practical information for attendees: the number of advisory board members ranges greatly (from 4 to 28 members), and that number depends largely on the history and context of the programs; boards meet 1-2 times a year, provide input on curricular revisions and assessment related to compulsory short and long-range student/employee competencies, and provide far more benefits than conflicts for program administrators. The data from interviews and panelists’ own institutional experience will provide attendees with strategies for building effective advisory board relationships and using advisory boards for programmatic action research.

Each panelist will also provide examples of how these research findings specifically informed and improved their own institutional practices as a way to illustrate the need for connections between broad research and institution-specific development. Ultimately, this panel endeavors to provide an explanation and approach for engaging advisory boards in programmatic research and demonstrate the relationship between field-wide research and the operation of specific programs.

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Beyond Programmatic Assessment: Industry Advisory Boards as Action Research Sites

John M. Spartz, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Typically, research on important programmatic issues like curriculum design, course development, and various administrative and institutional issues takes the form of assessment. For example, some technical communication programs use an outcome-based review model (Allen, 2004; Coppola and Elliot, 2010) for assessing their programs, and others draw on student reflections and portfolios. This assessment, while often data-rich, aims at determining "what is" to provide faculty members and administrators with evidence about their students, courses, programs, and institutions as they are or have been (Gardiner, et al., 1997; Palomba, et al., 1999). Although certainly valuable for our programs and institutions, due to the rapid evolution of our fields, we might employ additional research approaches to investigate not only what is happening inside, but also what is and will be happening outside our programs in the workplace. Panelist 1 will discuss the value of industry advisory boards as sites of research and provide a framework for action research as a necessary extension and complement to programmatic assessment. In response to the co-panelists' research, he will further describe an ongoing program-advisory board relationship and the ways in which this research has proved instrumental in program development and revision leading to student industry employment.

Viable, Not Just Triable: Research to Discover the Necessary Conditions for a Program

Lars Söderlund, Western Oregon University
Elizabeth Kramer-Simpson, New Mexico Tech

Panelist 2 will discuss how research can identify factors affecting the viability and longevity of new programs. It is common to view institutional research as an optional aid in choosing the best course of action, as when rambling e-mail chains about departmental issues continue for multiple days before anyone suggests asking if other institutions have faced similar problems. However, institutional research can easily impact a program's viability, revealing in advance the conditions necessary for the program's survival. In such cases, institutional research is not optional but mandatory.

As an example, panelist 2 notes how the panel's advisory board research revealed the differential (but universal) need for institutional resources to support advisory boards. When program administrators were asked about how to maintain a positive relationship with board members, interviewees noted that the meetings could rely on elements such as meals, a large and comfortable meeting room, and transportation support. These expectations varied between institutions and board members, but it became clear that advisory board meetings are not free, which can be a major challenge to programs with small or non-existent budgets. Panelist 2 will discuss this and other viability insights gleaned from the advisory board study in the context of institutional research as that which determines not merely how a program should run, but the components that allow it to exist and persist.

Using Research to Build and Benefit from Your Own Advisory Board

Ryan P. Weber, University of Alabama at Huntsville

Panelist 3 will discuss the connections between academic research on advisory boards and the programmatic developments undertaken as a result of this research. After conducting research on the typical membership of program advisory boards in technical communication programs, the panelist used these research findings to recruit advisory board members at his home institution. The research on advisory board members showed that many institutions tended to include approximately 4-6 technical communicators, recruit board members from leading industries in the region, and include internal members such as deans and faculty and/or members who were alumni of the program. Informed by these findings, the panelist recruited prominent technical communicators in aerospace, software, and government contracting—the key industries surrounding his institution—and drew heavily on members who were alumni and thus capable of providing a first-hand perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of the program. This research allowed the panelist to make more informed, confident decisions about programmatic matters, and it illustrates the importance of undertaking research that ties directly to the researcher's own programmatic goals. This is especially true in areas where little current research exists in the field, as is the case with advisory boards in technical and scientific communication programs. The panelist argues that the time spent conducting this research pays off not just in publication but also in better, quicker decisions about relevant programmatic issues.

Building From Where Students Are At: Critical Digital Program Development

Flexible Course and Project Design

Ed Nagelhout, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Developing Program and Course Assets

Elisa Cogbill-Seiders, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Interconnected Program and Course Assessment Strategies

Denise Tillery, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Overview

This panel describes development of a new Minor in Professional Writing at UNLV: an approach that creates seamless connections among courses, connections that break down course barriers to promote broader community engagement in learning networks and that correlate competencies, student activities, digital assets, and program assessments.

A recent article in Hybrid Pedagogy by Sean Michael Morris and Jesse Stommel outline "six theses for what critical digital pedagogy can teach the MOOC." In many ways, our panel applies equivalencies of these same theses to program development. This means that because our minor has relevance to majors across campus, and since we can't force students down a single linear path, developing the program means that course design, project design, student competencies, student outcomes, and the program assessment plan must account for different students with different skill sets and different experiences when they enter the program, and, more importantly, when they enter each course. We want students in a particular course to be successful, and feel confident in their learning when completing projects, no matter their digital experience or previous coursework. We build to them.

Our panel describes our first- and second-phase, collaborative efforts to create and maintain flexible curricula, as well as gather, develop, and store relevant course-specific and program-wide assets and open educational resources within a networked learning environment. These plans are designed to encourage a more collaborative approach among students and teachers, one that privileges informal and situated learning, promotes ubiquitous and lifelong education, thereby increasing learner control, learner choice, and learner independence. Moreover, we describe our first- and second-phase, collaborative plans to more accurately collect, analyze, measure, and report the data of our learners in our various courses as they participate in the larger program. We want to offer more than just content limited to a single course at a time, seeking instead to support efficient learning, collaboration, decision-making, and student self-monitoring across a learning environment, as well as to enhance both short-term and long-term course and program assessment strategies.

In keeping with CPTSC tradition, our panel will focus on engaging conversation with the audience around three interrelated topics: (1) flexible course and project design within a program; (2) programmatic and course assets development that incorporates open educational resources seamlessly; and (3) an open access environment that promotes flexible,

interconnected course and program assessment strategies.

The goal of our panel is to offer a variety of strategies for developing an interconnected writing program. The primary “take aways” for the audience will be opportunities to provide critical insights into our practices, prompts for interrogating their own programs, and activities that will allow them to incorporate our ideas effectively into their particular programmatic contexts.

Flexible Course and Project Design

Ed Nagelhout, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This presentation will briefly describe the ways we hope to design projects, courses, and assessments to provide greater student agency in helping them meet their needs.

Historically, course and project design have typically been top-down affairs, always developed from the perspective of the program (or, more accurately, from the perspective of the professor). We've always assumed that we know the best path for students to take for "success" in our programs. And the students were expected to adjust to meet our demands. This, of course, denies students any agency in their own growth and development as learners. Our goal is to turn this approach on its head. For example, we want to effectively address the following questions: what happens when we assign a collaborative project in our Advanced Professional Writing course where one student has taken the three required courses in the minor, one student has taken one required course and two electives, one student has taken one elective, and one student has taken no other courses in the minor? How can each student learn what they need to be successful and learn what they need to meet the goals of the minor? How can we evaluate a project effectively when each student has very different experiences and very different skills? How can we assess the success of this project under these circumstances? How can we develop course outcomes that are flexible enough to deal with this kind of situation?

Developing Program and Course Assets

Elisa Cogbill-Seiders, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This presentation will briefly describe a summer research initiative for finding assets for our professional writing program.

Assets development in undergraduate writing programs have traditionally come from textbooks. Professors would then offer supplementary materials, gleaned from previous teaching experiences, professional journals, disciplinary research, and/or their graduate studies, in order to provide students with a more “complete” introduction to course topics. Our goal, however, was to take a curation approach initially, seeking especially open educational resources available on the web.

As a first phase in assets development for our minor, we wanted to begin to create a repository for both teachers and students in the program. Our co-director acquired a summer graduate research assistant, and among her other duties, we asked her, first, to determine what kinds of open access materials were available in professional, technical, and scientific writing, taking a broad sweep and gathering as much material as possible, including texts, videos, graphics, tools, activities, tutorials, exercises, etc. Her second task was to create an initial catalog, organizing the materials in a way that would allow us to evaluate the materials as quickly and as efficiently as possible. We then created our initial evaluation criteria. Are the assets valid? Are they accessible for undergraduates at all skill levels? Can they improve student agency? teacher agency? Can they help students learn the field more effectively? Do they help students improve specific skills? Are they appropriate for individual courses? Can they span the program and work in multiple courses?

Interconnected Program and Course Assessment Strategies

Denise Tillery, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

One important aspect of our program vision is the way we see assessment as a key to program building. The questions asked by speaker 1 regarding assessing a single project are connected to questions of how we assess learning holistically throughout the program. This presentation will discuss several ways we track specific learning outcomes throughout multiple courses. First, we address the question of what we look for when we want to evaluate. For example, to assess the outcome “demonstrate proficiency in designing, writing, and editing print and digital texts for a variety of audiences and purposes in professional contexts,” we need to identify what types of texts to analyze, what features within those texts, and how those features typically evolve as students acquire, use, and eventually master the variety of skills involved. By answering these initial questions, we develop heuristics that we can use to guide assessment in the classroom (both evaluating and providing meaningful feedback) as well as overall program assessment (to help us see how well our program is achieving its objectives, as well as to report to assessment stakeholders). Based on our initial design, we will pose the following questions: 1) How can we negotiate the tension between achieving program goals for student-directed learning with some students’ desires to have courses follow traditional teacher-directed pedagogies? 2) What are common pathways to assessing specific skills program-wide when students start from multiple points of entry? 3) How can we make our assessment practices more transparent to all?

Assessing Consistent Sections of Advanced Communication Courses

Assessing the Need for and Developing Consistency in Advanced Communication Courses at ISU

Jeanine Elise Aune, Iowa State University
Jo Mackiewicz, Iowa State University

Developing Programmatic Assessment and Interpreting Preliminary Results

Jo Mackiewicz, Iowa State University

Responding to Opportunities and Challenges

Jeanine Elise Aune, Iowa State University

Connection to Conference Theme

We respond to the conference theme by discussing our work on curriculum redesign, our programmatic research (and our redesign of it), and the implications of our findings for other program directors.

Research Method

Programmatic research via objective test measures and timed essay writing.

Take Away

Benefits and drawbacks of (1) consistency across sections of courses and (2) methods of assessing programmatic objectives.

Overview

In our panel presentation, we discuss our ongoing curriculum redesign of the Advanced Communication program at Iowa State University. We focus specifically on our moves to create consistency among sections of the program's four courses, our development of valid programmatic research and its preliminary results, and some of the opportunities and challenges we face in this restructuring effort.

The Advanced Communication program at Iowa State University is one of the largest programs for upper-division writing in the US. It consists of four courses: Business Communication (ENGL 302), Report and Proposal Writing (ENGL 309), Science Communication (ENGL 312), and Technical Communication (ENGL 314). In 2013–2014, these courses enrolled about 6,475 students across more than 259 sections. In each course, sections share learning outcomes, but sections lack consistency in their week-to-week schedules, assignments, readings, and grading practices. In this presentation, we discuss the programmatic changes that we have made so far, our plans for the next two years, including our plans for programmatic research, and the lessons we have learned so far.

Assessing the Need for and Developing Consistency in Advanced Communication Courses at ISU

Jeanine Elise Aune, Iowa State University
Jo Mackiewicz, Iowa State University

Speaker 1 will discuss the need for a redesigned, consistent curriculum for Advanced Communication courses, starting with ENGL 302 and ENGL 314, and the concomitant need for quantitative assessment data.

Like other program directors (e.g., Good and Osborne, 2013), we acknowledged the call from administrators and disciplinary faculty to review the content of our upper-division service courses and to re-envision the curriculum. Also like other program directors, we felt administrative pressure to assess students' learning with objective, automated measures to counter issues with subjective measures reliant on human judgment (e.g., Condon, 2013; Petruzzi, 2011). Beyond meeting these responsibilities, we are also under legal mandate in Iowa to provide "continuous improvement" in high-enrollment courses. We started with the courses that enroll the most students: ENGL 302 and ENGL 314.

Comparisons between sections for assignments (in quality and number), grading practices, course policies, and course evaluations revealed significant disparities. Consistency was a foundational need not only to answer university administrators and the state legislature, but also to provide equitable student learning in our Advanced Communications courses, which hosted over 2300 students in spring 2015 alone. In spring 2015, we piloted a revised curriculum for ENGL 302. Then, using feedback from the pilot, we revised the course again for summer and fall 2015. We implemented updates in summer and fall 2015 and piloted a revised ENGL 314 in fall 2015. The directors will continue to assess the revised courses, monitoring student proficiencies in the learning outcomes and seeking input from instructors.

Developing Programmatic Assessment and Interpreting Preliminary Results

Jo Mackiewicz, Iowa State University

Speaker 2 will discuss the decision to move the program to objective programmatic assessment consisting of pretests and posttests and the process of selecting pre- and posttest questions from a question bank (for ENGL 302) and the process of developing pre- and posttest questions ourselves (for ENGL 314). In selecting and developing the questions, we considered (1) the primary learning outcomes we wished to advance and (2) the central learning outcomes expressed in the selected textbooks.

Speaker 2 will also discuss the benefits and drawbacks of using objective (multiple-choice) pre- and post-tests to measure achievement in progress toward programmatic goals. One programmatic goal is improving students' understanding of concepts. Pre- and posttests allow valid measure of progress toward this goal. Another benefit has been delivering quantitative test scores in reports to administration. A major drawback, of course, is that multiple-choice testing is, at best, an indirect measure of writing ability. Other, more direct (though more time-consuming) measures include holistic scoring of timed essay writing, a method we still use in the courses that have yet to undergo curriculum redesign (ENGL 309, 312, and nonpilot sections of 314). Another method is holistic rating of portfolios. This method is the one we are moving toward, particularly now that the Foundation Communication has implemented portfolios in the first- and second-year writing courses. Speaker 2 will conclude by reporting findings from two semesters of test data from of ENGL 302 and from one semester of ENGL 314.

Responding to Opportunities and Challenges

Jeanine Elise Aune, Iowa State University

Speaker 3 will discuss several opportunities and challenges resulting from our work in developing consistency across sections of our courses. Our assessment provides data relevant to the learning outcomes for the Advanced Communication program. These data can be used to support the efficacy of our courses to students, advisors, faculty, programs, departments, colleges, university, and state legislature. Assessment of test data identifies areas for curriculum changes, which can happen quickly now that there is consistency across sections, and identify opportunities for additional mentoring and professional development. Data from assessment can support excellence in teaching for promotion, awards, and annual reviews, thus reducing our reliance on student evaluations. And instructors with research projects could, within a year's time, have data from multiple sections with real-world variables. And finally, working together to develop consistency can create camaraderie as we work together to improve the quality of our program. These opportunities come with challenges, however. Instructors can feel constrained by the move to consistency, and they can interpret the assessment as a means of checking up on them. Perhaps our biggest challenge is that in our efforts to increase student learning and consistency across sections, we place our instructors at risk. If students do too well, they get higher grades; if an instructor's grades for a section are too high, they get a low performance review. So as we work towards consistency, we must also protect the instructor.

Preparing and Guiding Students

The Employability of Graduates from Technical Writing Programs: Are They Well Prepared for the Workforce?

Rhonda J. Stanton, Missouri State University

Because academic programs in technical communication work to prepare students for the world of work, directors of programs and faculty in them have sought input from industry on how to design curricula in the programs that will best train students for their upcoming role as new employees. Discussions about this collaboration between the academy and industry have focused on core competencies needed in industry, required curriculum in programs, and collaboration between them (Sutliff, 2000; Whiteside, 2003; Harner, 2004; Rainey, Turner, Dayton, 2005; Thrush & Hooper, 2006; Lanier 2009, and Meloncon & Henschel, 2013).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the required curricula in technical communication programs and the required skills for entry-level technical communicators and determine if there are gaps. Findings will provide insight into what students need to learn and therefore inform programmatic direction and development.

I will first analyze job ads posted on job boards and the list of required skills needed for entry-level technical communicators. Lanier (2009) conducted a similar analysis but took information only from Monster.com. This study will look at jobs on DICE.com, CareerBuilder.com, Indeed.com, and those posted on the STC job bank. Lanier's findings will also be considered.

This research is structured as a pilot study where I would look at job ads, but then I conduct semi-structured interviews with five to seven participants who are corporate recruiters and hiring managers who hire and/or manage technical writers. The interviews will provide more information about what skills are required for entry-level technical writers. If a participant agrees to participate but does not have time for an interview, I would send the interview questions to them via e-mail and receive answers in written format. Interviews will be transcribed and coded, looking for same or similar phrases and statements.

Finally, I will compare the employers' job requirements and the technical writing program requirements to learn if the required course work in technical/professional writing programs match what employers are seeking. Because the structure of this research is a pilot study, I will prepare to conduct a larger study in the future using the same methodology and structure, but I will increase the number of job ads analyzed, interviews conducted, and likely industries included.

By learning what skills employers require for entry-level technical writers, and by comparing these requirements to the curriculum taught in technical communication programs, we can determine if there are gaps between these. If there are gaps, then we can better focus discussions about students' needs, which will help direct programmatic decisions about curricula requirements. Additionally, these findings can inform how to improve collaboration between academia and industry.

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What Fundamental/Practical Skills Should Technical Communication Students Possess When They Graduate?

Jeffrey A. Bacha, University of Alabama at Birmingham

According to the Society of Technical Communication (STC) website, “The value that technical communicators deliver is twofold: They make information more useable and accessible to those who need that information, and in doing so, they advance the goals of the companies or organizations that employ them.” This seems like a reasonable argument to make. However, beyond a solid foundation in writing instruction, what practical skills need to be integrated into a college curriculum to help our students “make information more useable and accessible” so they are prepared to help “advance the goals of the companies or organizations that employ them”? In the proposed presentation, I will stimulate discussion about this issue by proposing the following two programmatic questions: What essential, work related skills should Technical Writing students possess when they graduate from our academic programs? What type of instruction needs to be integrated into a technical communication curriculum to make sure our students possess those skills when they graduate from college?

To facilitate discussion, I will present information regarding changes made to the Professional and Technical Communication program at my home institution over the last three years to better match 21st Century technical communication practices. I will discuss our decision to start offering various “suggested tracks” within our program and how we are attempting to align our courses within those tracks to eliminate overlapping instruction and better prepare students for the next course in the sequence. Specifically, I will demonstrate how our new introductory course connects to two technology-focused courses I have developed inside our technical communication track and how those courses then link up to our senior level Technical Writing course. I will also discuss how we are helping students engage with “real” clients from the local area to produce documents they are expected to include in a self-generated digital portfolio they can use when looking for a job after graduation. Along the way, I will highlight the skills we are hoping our technical communication students are acquiring as they progress through our program and what we hope they will be able to accomplish once they graduate.

Ultimately, my goal in giving this presentation is to initiate a discussion among attendees to see where our various programs align, to discover major curricular differences, and to hopefully push the conversation toward forecasting the future of Technical Communication instruction. Technical Communication practitioners should also find this discussion useful because it has the potential to open up a dialogue between those of us who teach and those who practice technical communication strategies.

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Programmatically Addressing the Issue of Value: Preparing Students to Enter Efficiency Environments

Joanna Schreiber, Georgia Southern University

Programs must prepare students to explain the value of their knowledge and skills in a variety of business contexts, but this is often easier said than done. The value of the technical communicator has been defined as essential to the information economy (e.g., Johnson-Eilola, 1996/2004) and, at the same time, technical communication scholarship has acknowledged that the complexity of this dynamic knowledge work is often invisible (e.g., Hart-Davidson et al., 2008) and misunderstood by both management and co-workers.

Complicating matters are management practices that further define and affect technical communication work. Brady and Schreiber (2013) have discussed the performance review genre as particularly tricky for technical communicators who struggle to understand and explain their value. Scholars have argued the necessity for practitioners to explain their value in terms meaningful to management (e.g., see Carliner, 1996), but the relationship between management practices and TSC value remains an under-explored issue in field.

In this presentation, I posit that programs need to incorporate meaningful and critical engagement with management practices, particularly efficiency management practices, as one strategy to prepare students to explain their value. Students are often required to create portfolios or engage in other reflective activities as a way to bring together the knowledge and skills learned in a program. Such activities should include reflecting on skills and knowledge acquired in a program in relation to specific management practices. The goal is not to redefine curricular goals according to management practice, but to prepare students to negotiate a variety of business contexts.

One type of management practice in need of critical engagement is efficiency management. Using an industry case study, I illustrate how Lean Six Sigma can redefine the work of technical communication (e.g., as measureable and process-driven) and why it is important for students to be prepared to explain how their own knowledge (e.g., rhetorical concepts) can align with and, more importantly, inform such environments.

Connection to Conference Theme

This presentation offers a solution for a common programmatic issue and can create new avenues for programmatic research. Incorporating critical engagement with management practice can and should happen at the local level, but ought to be meaningfully monitored, studied, and theorized through programmatic research.

Research Method

I draw on management scholarship and business literature to discuss Lean Six Sigma's underlying concepts, e.g., process-driven continuous improvement. I use a case study from Xerox to illustrate how Lean Six Sigma can define technical communication work, in this case the work of redesigning a document to increase usability. Xerox positions the work of improving the document as a result of Lean Six Sigma problem-solving. A technical communicator would be tasked with illustrating the complex rhetorical work involved beyond this label.

Take Away

As faculty, we're increasingly asked to develop measureable outcomes for assessment purposes. We do not always think that our students will also have to adjust their work practices according to management structures. I hope this presentation will help faculty see that they have much experience to offer and that our struggles with data-driven environments mirror what many of our students will face.

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Improving Sustainability and Growth of Technical and Scientific Programs by Adding Intergroup Dialogue to the Curriculum

Corinne Renguette, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Connection to Conference Theme

Sustainability and growth are important issues facing technical and scientific programs. One avenue to ensure sustainability and program growth is to make sure technical and scientific communication courses are included in the general education common core curriculum line-up (Rehling & Lindeman, 2010). Getting these courses into the general education common core can be a huge challenge if technical and scientific communication courses are meant to fulfill only the basic, required learning outcomes, which are typically fulfilled by composition, journalism, creative writing, and speech courses. Instead, these courses should be listed as common core humanities electives (Rehling & Lindeman, 2010).

Diversity, cultural sensitivity, and intercultural communication are also pressing issues in technical and scientific communication programs to prepare students for working in a diverse, global work environment (see, for example, Bokor, 2011; Cárdenas, 2012; Ihsen & Gebauer, 2009). These issues are often included in social and cultural understanding or critical thinking components of humanities courses in the common core. Including diversity and intercultural communication content in our technical and scientific communication curriculum can be one way to get these courses into the common core while improving our ability to prepare students to be culturally sensitive in a global, diverse workplace.

Curriculum design in technical and scientific communication programs must include innovative pedagogical approaches to engage students in these critical discourses. Engaging students in intercultural communication issues will also help them practice skills for communicating in diverse, intercultural groups and promoting social justice in technical and scientific workplaces. Intergroup dialogue is a participatory learning approach that offers structured opportunities for this type of critical discourse (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011). Integrating intergroup dialogue into technical and scientific communication programs could create a much-needed sustainable curriculum that includes an innovative pedagogical approach to teaching intercultural communication and social justice in diverse technical and scientific contexts.

Research Method

Intergroup dialogue is a four-stage, learner-centered, critical-dialogic pedagogical approach that has been successfully used in many fields including social work, education, psychology, and sociology to help students learn to explore issues in diversity, identity, power and inequality, conflict resolution, and social justice (see, for example, Nagda, 2006; Sorenson & Nagda, 2009; Zúñiga, 2003; Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). Intergroup dialogue can also be used as an approach to teach intercultural technical and scientific communication skills. This presentation will discuss how intergroup dialogue can be adapted for use in technical and scientific communication degree programs to promote sustainability and growth while better preparing students for a global workplace.

Take Away

Attendees will learn what intergroup dialogue is, how intergroup dialogue has been used in other fields, ideas for possible uses in technical and scientific communication programs, and how intergroup dialogue could impact program identity and sustainability.

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Session 2

Technical Communication Client Projects and Non-Profit Partnerships: Programmatic Research, Student Voices, and Future Directions

Project Management: How and Why Should We Integrate It in the Technical Communication Curriculum?

New Learning Experiences: Improving Instructional Design in Technical Communication Through UX Principles

Weighing the Options: Three Perspectives on Assessment Tools Used in Technical Communication Programs

Configuring Curriculum and Planning Programs

Technical Communication Client Projects and Non-Profit Partnerships: Programmatic Research, Student Voices, and Future Directions

Developing a Long-term Non-profit Partnership

Elisabeth Kramer-Simpson, New Mexico Tech

Qualitatively Researching a Long-term Non-profit Partnership

Steve Simpson, New Mexico Tech

Grant Writing for a Long-term, Non-profit Client

Abigail Smoake, New Mexico Tech

Designing Materials for a Long-term, Non-profit Client

Rachel Rayl, New Mexico Tech

Overview

This panel discusses how client projects/service learning projects have been shown to provide real-world opportunities for students and rich learning experiences in the technical communication classroom (Huckin, 1997, Matthews and Zimmerman, 1999, Walsh, 2010, Weber and Spartz, 2014). We present qualitative programmatic research on our client project curriculum design throughout the program, across several "generations" of technical communication students. Much of the emphasis in client project and service learning literature has been on what benefits students report at the end of the semester through reflections on their learning during the course projects or through instructors' observations of their students. However, by placing more emphasis on student voices several months to a year following these experiences, we are better able to see how students apply concepts from these experiences in internships or jobs. Further, we are able to see how this particular aspect of our programmatic curriculum can be re-shaped to provide better learning opportunities for students. In our program at New Mexico Tech, we have begun discussing the impact of client projects (Kramer-Simpson, Newmark and Ford, 2015) through case studies of interns and a survey of recent graduates of the program. We also have explored through exploratory qualitative inquiry the benefits of developing long-term relationships between our program and specific non-profits—rather than the one-shot, "hit it and quit it" service learning models (Cushman, 2002)—and distributing projects across different stages in our program's vertical curriculum.

We build on our initial research here through the incorporation of two student voices from two different "generations" of the Technical Communication Program at New Mexico Tech. We discuss in this panel how one particular client, the local homeless shelter, has served our students in a variety of courses and has provided a rich learning opportunity for both social as well as skill development of students in our program. From the perspective as instructors and teachers, we seek to provide students with rich learning opportunities. From our research, we are reminded that students may begin these projects with a different set of goals than program instructors may have and that client projects can have numerous drawbacks (e.g., less structure). However, we demonstrate that client projects' rich complexity still provides numerous

opportunities to develop transferable skills to support entry into internships and the workplace, and that the stability of the long-term relationships with specific clients allows for a deeper experience than students may have through one-shot models.

In this panel, we describe take-away techniques for implementing a long-term, cross-curricular model of client projects and describe ways that we have adapted our teaching over the last three years to better meet students' needs. We also share students' voices in order to represent the potential learning that can take place in these projects and how it can aid students in professional development.

Developing a Long-term Non-profit Partnership

Elisabeth Kramer-Simpson, New Mexico Tech

Speaker 1 will outline the history over the past three years with the Puerto Seguro homeless shelter, how the client-projects were initially structured and how this structure was changed through teacher observations of student-client interactions. This speaker will discuss how the client projects fit within the larger program goals, and aim to provide students with both technical communication skills and social awareness (Bourelle, 2014). This speaker will outline some of the observed benefits to both students and the community, which include securing $14,000 in grant funding for the shelter through a variety of grants, providing posters for an open house that raised awareness of the shelter services and developing curricular material for the grant writing class.

Qualitatively Researching a Long-term Non-profit Partnership

Steve Simpson, New Mexico Tech

Speaker 2 will explore how qualitative research of students' experiences in these projects provided a bigger picture of the benefits and drawbacks of the curriculum and demonstrated the range of engagement students had. Some students had very surface-level experiences; others invested deeply and even pursued further volunteer opportunities in the organization. Further investigation of these students demonstrated that their level of contact with Puerto Seguro directly impacted their stake in this learning experience. Another factor that played a role was the student's particular learning goals and future career ambitions. Speaker 2 will describe the changes made to the curriculum based on research conducted on the first and second generation of technical communication students participating in this project and will preview future research to be conducted with the third generation.

Grant Writing for a Long-term, Non-profit Client

Abigail Smoake, New Mexico Tech

Speaker 3, a student from the first “generation” of this client project curriculum and a graduate of the technical communication program, will discuss her experience working on grants for the homeless shelter in two separate classes, two years in a row. The first year, she learned a lot about the organization, which meant that she was able to build on that knowledge the second year, help others who were not as familiar with the organization, and find new information more easily. She wrote a more effective grant the second year, as she spent less time searching for pertinent information and more time writing. This student speaker commented that she found the activity similar to professional work in the field. This experience built her skills in grant writing and choosing the most persuasive information to include in grants. The only downside that this student saw was that grant efforts were not further spread out across the community. However, she valued “making a real difference” to the homeless shelter and the people it serves. This student saw client projects as “closer to what we will be doing on the job”. This student mentioned several benefits. Client projects enabled students to practice working with clients and colleagues. Also, the project gave students a “head start” on professional development by providing volunteer experience for a resume or creating a polished document for a portfolio.

Designing Materials for a Long-term, Non-profit Client

Rachel Rayl, New Mexico Tech

Speaker 4, also a student but from the second “generation” of technical communication students, describes how she learned skills closely related to industry through two client projects. The poster and grant-writing guide sheet that Speaker 4 designed primarily developed visual design and synthesizing information skills. In both projects, she was told what information or types of information to include, but little direction from the client on how to present it to the intended audience. Working with a non-profit gave her a more relaxed setting to experiment in and complete deliverables, thereby allowing her to focus on transferring classroom knowledge into industry without the added pressure of industry. She has also noticed that clients’ lack of direction and feedback has been an issue in industry internships. Client projects have an inevitable lack of information and the potential for students not to realize information is missing until the day the project is due. The uncertainty of expectations between what the client wants and what the student can provide, and the student knowing what is “good enough for a grade” and how much time to spend on the project (and balance this with other class demands) can make these client projects uncomfortable academic experiences. These client encounters, though uncomfortable from an academic standpoint, greatly improved this student’s methods for obtaining information from clients, which is something that she has now taken into her second summer internship in the industry.

Project Management: How and Why Should We Integrate It in the Technical Communication Curriculum?

The Role of Knowledge Management in Understanding Project Management Processes

Constance Kampf, Aarhus University

The Role of Interpersonal Communication in Managing Projects: Integrating Lessons From PM Experts Into Our Teaching of PM

Line Berggreen, Aarhus University

Managing Experiences: Utilizing User Experience Design (UX) as an Agile Methodology for Teaching Project Management

Guiseppe Getto, East Carolina University

Overview

Project Management is a set of practices that come from engineering environments related to the economics and coordination of large-scale projects such as Civil Engineering projects for building bridges or large scale desalination plants. The classic textbooks such as *Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling* and the *Project Management Body of Knowledge* from the Project Management Institute focus on the mathematics of financial management and control. In Civil Engineering, Project Management is often paired with Engineering Economics. This field has been established since the 1960s, with early PM studies on the Apollo project. However, in the 2000s, Smith et al (2003) found that many people self-identify as project managers, even when the organization doesn't see them as such.

In addition, Project Management has moved from large-scale infrastructure to software projects. Recent trends in software focused project management include the Agile manifesto and Scrum, communication intensive processes that shift the focus of project management from project planning and economic management to interaction between product owners and development teams during implementation. These trends are moving from software development environments to user experience focused environments that engage people via emerging technologies such as social media.

Project management practices are also spreading to marketing environments and being used in R&D at the interface of Engineering and Marketing. For example, in an interview in 2014, the CEO of a large Danish company expressed that their Project Management Stage Gate Process for R & D was run by marketing people because when engineers were in charge they produced scientifically interesting new products that no one would buy. So as project management practices both spread outside of engineering and from manufacturing and infrastructure projects to knowledge intensive projects, understanding the place of project management in the Technical Communication curriculum becomes more complex. At the same time, it also becomes more interesting because Technical Communicators often find that in order to succeed, they need to be part of the project conception, not the add-on piece after the

engineering work is accomplished. This panel explores different perspectives on teaching project management in the Technical Communication curriculum, and raises questions about how we can leverage this changing environment by using and understanding project management practices in the workplace to give Technical Communication students an edge in the work environment after they graduate.

The Role of Knowledge Management in Understanding Project Management Processes

Constance Kampf, Aarhus University

As Project Management processes shift in form from Waterfall, and design-build frameworks to agile processes such as Scrum, the role of knowledge management and the interconnection configurations between project conception, project planning, and project implementation shift. This presentation offers a flexible framework for placing project management practices together and connecting them through knowledge management practices so that students can see beyond some workplace discourses that set up agile and traditional project management processes against each other. The framework enables students to learn about PM from a global perspective that will enable them to adapt to and engage with different industry practices depending on their career paths. This presentation also presents the International Project Management Association model for Excellence as a possible Project Management Organization that can be fruitful for Technical Communication Students due to the integration of knowledge management practices in the model's components.

The Role of Interpersonal Communication in Managing Projects: Integrating Lessons From PM Experts Into Our Teaching of PM

Line Berggreen, Aarhus University

This presentation brings together findings from PM experts about the connection between PM documentation and formally structured communication practices and interpersonal communication competences. Research shows these competences are used by experienced Project Managers throughout the project planning and project implementation processes. Exploring these competences offers vital educational content for raising the awareness of the role and impact of interpersonal competences on PM. Specifically, speaker two explores the role of organizational structures and culture for technical communication students working in project intensive environments.

Managing Experiences: Utilizing User Experience Design (UX) as an Agile Methodology for Teaching Project Management

Guiseppe Getto, East Carolina University

The popularity of agile frameworks for project management within a variety of professions necessitates new approaches to teaching project management. At the same time, the increased pervasiveness of digital technologies means that more and more projects will relate closely to the development of user experiences (UX). To connect these two interests (project management and UX), speaker 3 explores an agile methodology for teaching project management. This methodology utilizes the UX Process and related concepts (e.g., preliminary research, prototyping, usability testing, and maintenance) to argue that traditional components of projects —strategies, teams, clients, deliverables, timelines, and benchmarks—must be refashioned into ultra-flexible heuristics that can be adapted to a variety of contingencies.

New Learning Experiences: Improving Instructional Design in Technical Communication Through UX Principles

Designing Courses with LX and Student Journey Maps

Sheryl Ruszkiewicz, Oakland University

Taking UX Failures as Opportunities In The Classroom

Kristi Wiley, Michigan State University

Applying LX Through Third Party Applications in Learning Design

Jack T. Labriola, Texas Tech University

Overview

Under the framework of “Innovative or updated pedagogical practices for many of our common courses,” we present heuristics for designing innovative learning experiences for a variety of technical communication courses. Borrowing best practices from the emerging field of user experience design (UX) and the more established field of instructional design, we introduce a new pedagogical framework we call learning experience design (LX). LX invites teachers to scaffold courses based on professional experiences that mirror communication situations students will face beyond the classroom. Based on the concept of the customer journey map (Flom, 2011), a process for mapping user needs and pain points for a digital application, LX maps professional experiences based on empirical research within the context of specific courses common to the technical communication curriculum (e.g. business writing, technical writing, grant writing, UX, and web design, etc.). Based on these journey maps for key professional activities, students are then led through simulated experiences that mirror these activities (e.g. defining a business model: Carliner, 2012; creating documentation that supports agile processes: Whittemore, 2012; designing information spaces that support user intentions: Albers, 2009; defining goals for a grant proposal that are persuasive to reviewers: Moeller & Christensen, 2010, etc.). Ultimately, we hope that LX provides an agile framework for scaffolding impactful learning experiences that can scale to any course common to the technical communication curriculum. The main take-away for attendees of this panel is a methodology for increasing the experiential impact of their course outcomes and improving student professionalization.

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Designing Courses with LX and Student Journey Maps

Sheryl Ruszkiewicz, Oakland University

Speaker one will discuss how and why instructors should adopt learning experience design (LX) and student (user) journey maps into the process of course creation, course redesign, and course adjustments between semesters. Specifically, she will examine how LX can enhance course quality, student engagement, effective teaching practices, data-driven course design, and scholarship in teaching and learning (SoTL). Essentially, student journey maps are a way to trace students' journey from their history before a class, through their adaptation to new experiences in a class, and even to help students think about experiences they will have beyond the classroom. She will also present heuristics for creating and analyzing student journey maps for any course in technical communication. Finally, she will explain how this process can be scaled to a program-wide assessment of student journeys through a specific major.

Taking UX Failures as Opportunities In The Classroom

Kristi Wiley, Michigan State University

Speaker two discusses how “failures” in UX-based learning help teach technical communication students real life contingencies within the college classroom. Based on a service-learning course in UX in which students work with a real client, speaker one explores the new skills and mindsets students experienced along the way through failures such as not meeting the expectations of clients, having difficulties with users during usability testing, and struggling to create usable deliverables. Focusing on the learning experiences from these failures she argues that hands-on opportunities are essential for student learning in a digital world. Being exposed to real clients with real needs gives students the experiences they need to become equipped with real skill sets they will need after graduation. Specifically, she focuses on what types of experiences are developed through this type of experiential class design, and how they can help other learners and teachers in a variety of courses.

Applying LX Through Third Party Applications in Learning Design

Jack T. Labriola, Texas Tech University

Speaker three will discuss supplementing third party applications that aren't native to a given learning environment in order to improve student learning experiences (LX). He will do so through a case study of his use of the mobile app "Remind" in his summer classroom to create a space for students and the teacher to interact via their mobile devices. Using the Remind app to create calendars that can be automatically sync'd to student's phones and to send out last minute announcements or changes, has helped him to create a more fluid, and seamless class dynamic that takes into account current technologies students use. He will focus on the experience both from the teacher's perspective, as well as via a survey of actual students who have used the account in a pilot study. Ultimately, he will leave speakers with a list of similar third party applications that can be integrated into any digital classroom environment to create new interactions with students.

Weighing the Options: Three Perspectives on Assessment Tools Used in Technical Communication Programs

Balancing the Real and the Ideal: Considering Pre- and Post-Testing as a Tool for Assessment

Amanda Bemer, Southwest Minnesota State University

Testing the Test: When All Else Fails, Revisit the Rubric

Tammy Rice-Bailey, Milwaukee School of Engineering

Unveiling Golden Nuggets of Transformative Learning through Reflective Writing

Laura Vernon, Radford University

Overview

Assessment is not new to technical communication programs in higher education. It has long been a duty of nearly all university faculty and administrators to "prove" student learning and "measure" programmatic performance in some way and usually only to accreditation agencies. What is new, however, is the paradigm under which institutions are now operating to assess and communicate success. Universities are facing more scrutiny than ever before from parents, students, policymakers, and lawmakers; and program assessment is becoming increasingly data driven to establish success benchmarks and facilitate comparisons across institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). The movement toward education reform includes words like "accountability" and "transparency" to help stakeholders "decide whether the national investment in higher education is paying off and how taxpayer dollars could be used more effectively" (U.S Department of Education, 2006, p. 4). In "A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education" (2006), a commission of professionals, scholars, and officials in business, education, and government admonished higher education to "change from a system primarily based on reputation to one based on performance" (p. 21). Assessing achievement in terms of a return on investment appears to be the new norm.

What does this new assessment paradigm mean for technical communications programs? Program administrators and faculty are under more pressure to "develop meaningful, evidence-based measures" that "indicate how students' skills have improved over time …" and to communicate "useful, reliable information" in a "consumer-friendly" manner and in "aggregate form." (U.S. Department of Education, 2006, pp. 4, 21-22, 24). Thus, technical communication programs may need to reflect on or re-examine their assessment approaches to better meet these expectations in tandem with their needs, resources, and goals. This reflection or re-examination process is particularly true for small programs with limited resources.

To this end, the presenters in this panel will focus on three assessment tools: pre- and post-testing, an evaluation rubric, and reflective writing. The presenters, all from small programs, will share their perspectives using these assessment tools as a way to guide session attendees toward a robust discussion of how to apply, and perhaps improve, them. While no tool is perfect, all three have merit and can be used at the program, course, project, and assignment level. The

three presentation topics, including takeaways, are explained below.

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Balancing the Real and the Ideal: Considering Pre- and Post-Testing as a Tool for Assessment

Amanda Bemer, Southwest Minnesota State University

Amanda Bemer teaches in a small professional communication program at a regional, public university. Currently, no assessment exists for her service technical communication courses, and she recognizes the need to fill this gap in order to both improve pedagogical practices and report results for her university's ongoing accreditation process. Writing-based assessment seems to be the most common type of assessment in technical communication, but the realities of this type of assessment create difficulties in small professional writing programs. She suggests that "ideal" assessment is not always practical and asks whether a "good enough" approach to assessment using pre- and post-tests might be useful in the service technical communication course. Writing-based assessment takes a lot of preparation, and then the actual assessment work typically requires lengthy work by multiple raters. Testing puts all the work in the preparation process and takes significantly less time after the tests are administered. She acknowledges that testing assesses different aspects of student learning and ability than writing-based assessment, but she asks whether this method is "good enough" to be acceptable. In her presentation, Bemer will discuss how pre- and post-testing assessment can be used in the service course in a practical way to produce meaningful assessment results. With these insights in mind, session attendees will be better prepared to adopt this type of assessment to meet their course goals and to demonstrate program effectiveness.

Testing the Test: When All Else Fails, Revisit the Rubric

Tammy Rice-Bailey, Milwaukee School of Engineering

Tammy Rice-Bailey teaches at a Midwestern engineering school where no standard assessment tool is used in her program's technical communication courses. In her first year teaching at this university, she was required to give a final exam in her classes. Having not previously given final exams in her classes at another institution, she opted to administer a 40-question (multiple choice, true/false) test based on the PowerPoint slides she had used in class. The results of this test were arbitrary at best and did not "verify" the competency of any student. In retrospect, she determined that while the PowerPoint slides she had used as the basis for her assessment covered core principles of page design, audience analysis, technical reports, and instructional writing, the students' ability to recall these principles did not correlate to their ability to apply them. Students who had masterfully produced product specifications, instructions, and technical reports were not necessarily the same students who scored high on the exam. In her presentation, Rice-Bailey will use Bloom's taxonomy to discuss the differences between knowledge-level learning objectives and competency-level learning objectives to conclude that final exams, as a standard, may not be useful in all technical communication classes. With this in mind, Rice-Bailey will suggest a model evaluation rubric that can be applied to student papers and projects to more accurately measure the skill level of students in technical communication courses.

Unveiling Golden Nuggets of Transformative Learning through Reflective Writing

Laura Vernon, Radford University

Laura Vernon teaches at a comprehensive public university of approximately 9,500 students in southwest Virginia. Her professional writing program is a concentration of four courses within the English major. The 300-hundred-level introductory course she teaches fills an interesting role in that it is both a service course and a concentration course. While the value of the course is anecdotally known and the four or five sections offered each semester fill quickly, no “hard” evidence exists that the course is meeting student and programmatic needs. More compelling “data” is essential to grow the program and to benefit more English majors and cross-disciplinary students. In her presentation, Vernon will discuss reflective writing as a credible way to assess student learning and program effectiveness. She will explain how reflective writing can reveal “golden nuggets” of transformative learning not usually captured through testing—golden nuggets such as confidence building, rhetorical astuteness, and writing sophistication. She will share the results of a study she conducted Spring Semester 2015 that demonstrates how reflective writing processes and “data” can be useful for both faculty/administrators and students. At the conclusion of her talk, Vernon will suggest ways to overcome reflective writing assessment challenges (e.g., time allocation and writing prompt development) and will explain how reflective writing can be analyzed quantitatively (to satisfy the skeptics who want “hard” numbers) using student-learning outcomes. Attendees will leave the session with a solid understanding of why reflective writing assessment works and how to administer it properly.

Configuring Curriculum and Planning Programs

Theories and Practices Regarding Student Retention in TPC Programs

Chris Dayley, Utah State University

Curricular Bloat and Technical Communication Programs

Timothy D. Giles, Georgia Southern University

The New Writing Major: English Departments and Their Second B.A.

Brian Ballentine, West Virginia University

Program Identity and Curriculum Development: Using the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning to Build Sustainable Outcomes

Carroll Ferguson Nardone, Sam Houston State University
Brian Blackburne, Sam Houston State University

Theories and Practices Regarding Student Retention in TPC Programs

Chris Dayley, Utah State University

Recruitment and retention of students, especially students from diverse backgrounds, is becoming an increasingly important issue for TPC programs (Savage& Mattson, 2011; Jones, Savage, & Yu, 2014; Savage & Matveeda, 2011). Issues of student departure have been important to colleges and universities for many decades. Although much research has been done on the topic, retention of students remains one of the key challenges facing higher education today. Approximately 50 percent of students leave higher education (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2011). The prospects of completing a bachelors degree are even worse for students from minority backgrounds. Only about 40 percent of underrepresented minority students (blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans) will graduate college within 6 years while 60 percent of their white counterparts will graduate in the same amount of time (Miners, 2010). Student departure is an important topic because of its effect on the lives of students and the health of the university. Students leaving the academy create consequences for students and colleges on many levels including monetary, moral, and social implications. Many studies have been done showing important factors in student persistence. Classic theories from higher education scholars such as Astin (1977), Tinto (1975), Bean (1983), Pascarella & Terenzini (2005), among others, serve as the basis for modern scholarship on student persistence. This presentation will review some of the major theories regarding student retention in higher education and give suggestions as to how we can apply these theories in our own programs. We will also discuss how retention strategies differ when applied to students of differing racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Participants will leave this presentation with an understanding of how existing retention theories can be applied to aid our current retention efforts in TPC. Participants will also gain an understanding of base level retention theories to aid in research projects involving student retention and degree completion. Particular emphasis will be given to current research and practices in retaining students who come from populations with traditionally high rates of departure.

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Curricular Bloat and Technical Communication Programs

Timothy D. Giles, Georgia Southern University

Technical communication programs often begin in English Departments with a service course taught for Business or Engineering. Consequently, the service course remains the gateway course for a technical communication curriculum. To what extent do multiple service courses unnecessarily complicate a technical writing program?

Our institution has recently seen a great deal of success with Professional and Technical Writing as part of an online Bachelor of General Studies with an area in Writing. When we began this new program for the Bachelor of General Studies, we put online our courses we were teaching face-to-face. As a result, we had two "introductory" courses: "Technical Communication," a service course taught primarily to Information Technology, Construction Management, and Electrical Engineering; and "Writing in the Workplace," another service course for Business Education, Hotel & Restaurant Management, and Military Science students. To further confuse curricular issues, we also have "Foundations in Professional and Technical Writing," a theory course required for all students in our face-to-face BA in Writing and Linguistics degree.

More recently, we have decided to create an online graduate professional and technical writing program. Our target audience consists of students with liberal arts degree who now want to be technical writers. As noted, our current program is bottom heavy with introductory courses, so here we have yet another need to create an introductory course. We want to introduce students to our certificate as well as to the field of technical communication.

Another concern is the University's recently mandated commitment to improving student writing. What will this all mean to the professional and technical writing program? Should these introductory courses be collapsed one into another? This presentation will pursue these questions by examining other programs for evidence of this type of curricular bloat.

The New Writing Major: English Departments and Their Second B.A.

Brian Ballentine, West Virginia University

This individual presentation reports on the development of a new major (BA) titled Writing Studies approved recently within our department of English. The major combines new and existing courses in professional writing and creative writing to offer two-track options for students. At its core, the curriculum is unified around an emphasis on the production and editing of print and digital texts. Attendees will receive an overview of the new curriculum but they will also get a summary of the many steps required to gain faculty support for a second BA. Prior to approving the new major, our department's BA was in English literature and we offered only concentrations and minors in both professional writing and creative writing (we also have an MA in professional writing as well as an MFA in creative writing). As with many professional and technical communication (PTC) programs housed within departments of English, our PTC faculty remain outnumbered by literature colleagues. Securing votes for the new major required: 1) Collaborating closely with creative writing colleagues 2) Preparing assessment data and student surveys to gain a better understanding of student interests and demands 3) Tracking and reporting major numbers and course enrollment data for the entire department 4) Preparing a report on competing curricula from peer and aspirational peer institutions 5) Working collaboratively with the department's Undergraduate Program Committee to secure literature faculty "buy in" for a new major. The presentation will provide an overview of the significance of each of these steps and conclude by suggesting that a second major can actually unify faculty around the mission to recruit more students into the department.

Program Identity and Curriculum Development: Using the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning to Build Sustainable Outcomes

Carroll Ferguson Nardone, Sam Houston State University
Brian Blackburne, Sam Houston State University

As faculty in technical and professional writing programs seek to assess their courses and degree plans to meet ever-changing environmental demands, the task seems akin to Sisyphus pushing the boulder up the hill. By the time we get changes implemented, we find that our technology, our course design, or planned outcomes are either outdated, under theorized, or underfunded. How can faculty keep pace with changing market demands (both internal and external) when research shows our programs are somewhat invisible (Trent & Northcutt, 2013) or when calls for best practices in assessment see-saw between the scholarly and the practical? (See, for example, Volume 4, Issue 2 of *Programmatic Perspectives*).

This proposal seeks to engage a larger conversation to determine effective theoretical underpinnings for both program assessment and curriculum development. The authors will discuss the value of building curricula and expanding programs using the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) as a starting point. Among the factors driving such a focus is the fact that faculty and administrators outside of technical writing are often called upon to assess the effectiveness of our program design and outcomes. SoTL theory can build cross-disciplinary bridges through its lexicon and its framework, which focuses on student-centered, integrated, strategic learning objectives and concomitant faculty development. This topic meets the conference theme by suggesting theoretical foundations for research on programs and programmatic issues.

Drawing on cross-disciplinary SoTL literature, the authors will suggest a 4-prong strategy in assessing program strengths to ask questions to build toward realistic goals:

1. *Determine methods for establishing appropriate standards and practices*. Focusing on literature, the instructional methodology and tools, and critical evaluation of course objectives should help determine how well individual program curricula fit the larger community. Possible questions: Should the STC BOK be considered? How can smaller TW programs localize their outcomes, rather than seek to meet the outcomes of larger programs?

2. *Determine faculty perceptions and concerns*. Possible questions: What do faculty (internal and external) consider to be the core skills and basic knowledge in TW? What effects do state assessments have on curricular objectives? What areas of confusion persist?

3. *Examine student perceptions*. As stakeholders in our curriculum development efforts, should student satisfaction be appraised? In what ways should personal student outcomes (entry-level positions and starting salaries) help to assess program outcomes?

4. *Examine external stakeholders*. How might faculty in other areas view our students' critical thinking and writing skills? How might "downstream" assessment of our students from industry and business professionals be part of the measurement?

These strategies and questions suggest a starting point to discuss methods for building

programs from research-based foundations. Technical writing programs must assure some level of accountability to both internal and external stakeholders, and SoTL (a scholarly, research-focused framework) is a compelling method to help begin the discussion.

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Session 3

Articulating and Developing Localized Programs

Sorting Out, Pushing Back, Buying In: The Value of Program Assessment for Students, Instructors, and Programs

Re-Thinking Educational Contexts

Cultivating a Programmatic Ethos of Social Justice: Benefits of Partnership-Driven Research

Articulating and Developing Localized Programs

Localizing in and on the Environment: Designing an Asset Based Curriculum

Kendall Leon, Portland State University

Beginning Anew: Updating a Programmatic Identity to Reflect Regional Needs

Ashley Patriarca, West Chester University

Negotiating Programmatic Development: Local Geographies and Global Institutions

Lehua Ledbetter, The University of Rhode Island

Research, Localization, and Articulating Programmatic Identities

Stacey Pigg, North Carolina State University

Overview

Localization, or the process of adapting texts, information, products, or services to particular languages or cultures, has risen to the forefront of technical communication. Building from the longstanding attention to localization in translation contexts (Maylath and Thrush, 2000), recent scholarship has traced pedagogy and practice for global web localization and context management (Zhu and St. Amant, 2010; Clark and Batova 2015), has argued persuasively for shifting localization discussions from user-end to initial design stages (Sun 2006, 2009), and has theorized localization as a social justice issue (Agboka, 2013). Across these discussions, theorists have debated how best to teach localization to technical communication students. However, only rarely have theories and practices of localization been taken up as concepts that might directly inform technical and professional communication program design, research, or assessment. Ding (2010) used the term "localized programs" to discuss how and why technical communication curricula derived from Western contexts has often been unsuccessful or irrelevant when introduced in Chinese universities. Analyzing the particular history and current situation of writing instruction and technical communication in China, Ding argues that technical communication curricula is best implemented with deep attention to situated economic, epistemological, institutional, national, and regional contexts.

The general importance of localization to the field and the particular example taken from Ding's research raise a number of questions worth further discussion: To what extent should technical and professional communication programs in the United States be *localized*? How should our programs' distinct *geographic and cultural locations* impact programmatic curriculum design, research, and assessment practices? What methods, tools, and heuristics can be of use to those of us charged with program-building as we make decisions to situate programs in institutional, city, state, and regional contexts? How should we balance the increasing importance of accounting for global issues with the importance of attending to the local? These questions address many concerns that currently confront program-builders. With technical and professional communication curricula increasing offered through distance programs, the

advantages of enrolling distanced students or instructors may direct attention away from resources, industries, and even cultural barriers that lie geographically closest to our institutions. Furthermore, while cross-institutional outcomes and multi-institutionally shared curricula enable alignment across geographically dispersed technical and professional communication programs and degrees, programs that are indistinguishable from one another may not best prepare students for regional cultural, economic, and workplace situations.

This panel presentation brings together speakers from across geographical regions and institution types to discuss how issues of localization can and perhaps should shape programmatic research and program-building in technical and professional communication. We connect our discussion to the broader conference theme by bringing theories of localization to suggest 1) related research questions that can shape programmatic research; 2) methods and research designs for shaping programmatic research; and 3) how this research can shape program identity, outcomes, and relationships with industry. Attendees will leave this presentation with methodological tools and heuristics to guide localized program and curricular design as well as assessment.

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Localizing in and on the Environment: Designing an Asset Based Curriculum

Kendall Leon, Portland State University

After being tasked with reviewing an institution's technical and professional writing program, which is currently a fully online program, Speaker One noted that the program didn't appear to be rooted in the surrounding context in which it was housed, despite the presence of a vibrant non-profits, start ups, and a growing tech industry, and the fact that the students were all local, desired to stay in the area, and specifically chose the program because of its location.

Drawing on Kretzman and McKnight's asset based model for community development, this presentation proposes a place based methodology for redesigning technical and professional writing programs to be localized, and to build on community assets for curriculum design, Speaker One extends Kretzman and McKnight's model to include time (and timing) as part of an asset based curriculum design as a way to consider the skills and abilities students need to be successful writers in today's workplace environment to be prepared the changing dynamics of global workplaces in the twenty first century alongside the particulars of a locale. More specifically, this methodology involves an adaption of asset mapping derived from interviews, artifact analysis, and surveys. Speaker Two will discuss the case of a program located in a large Mid-Atlantic metropolitan region. This program, developed in the early 1990s, is in the early stages of curricular revision to be more inclusive of local contexts and stakeholders. The contexts for this program have changed significantly since its beginnings. On a campus level, the total student population has grown by nearly 25% in the last ten years, with the minor growing by an even higher percentage. In addition, the local and regional contexts for the program have shifted. Though the program's metropolitan area has always boasted a diverse population, the U.S. Census attributes the area's 3.4% growth from 2000-2010 primarily to work-authorized immigrants. In addition, the area's industries have shifted to focus on healthcare, utilities, and publishing. Curricular revision that accounts for these local changes is clearly needed.

This presentation will address the tensions inherent in localizing a program: Which stakeholders will have their needs and values represented? To do so, Speaker Two will draw on assessment data from student exit interviews and portfolios, as well as problematize the conclusions that can be drawn from such data at the local level. Speaker Two will also discuss the processes of gathering feedback from campus and community stakeholders. Audience members will leave with practical guidelines for such discussions on their own campuses.

Beginning Anew: Updating a Programmatic Identity to Reflect Regional Needs

Ashley Patriarca, West Chester University

Speaker Two will discuss the case of a program located in a large Mid-Atlantic metropolitan region. This program, developed in the early 1990s, is in the early stages of curricular revision to be more inclusive of local contexts and stakeholders. The contexts for this program have changed significantly since its beginnings. On a campus level, the total student population has grown by nearly 25% in the last ten years, with the minor growing by an even higher percentage. In addition, the local and regional contexts for the program have shifted. Though the program's metropolitan area has always boasted a diverse population, the U.S. Census attributes the area's 3.4% growth from 2000-2010 primarily to work-authorized immigrants. In addition, the area's industries have shifted to focus on healthcare, utilities, and publishing. Curricular revision that accounts for these local changes is clearly needed.

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Negotiating Programmatic Development: Local Geographies and Global Institutions

Lehua Ledbetter, The University of Rhode Island

Speaker Three discusses the process of developing, planning, and implementing a small professional and technical writing program within a writing major at a public, rural Northeastern university. This presentation discusses the affordances and limitations of developing such a component in a region where manufacturing has been a historically dominant industry, and discusses the shifting local, economic and geographic landscape as they influence the development of a professional writing curriculum. Moreover, this presentation examines the impact of institutional and administrative perceptions of what is “professional writing” at both a global and local level. While technical and professional communication have become increasingly attentive to the needs of global audiences (Sun 2012; Jones, Savage, and Yu 2014), bringing much-needed attention to issues of diversity, this presenter examines the equally important need for attention to locality and, therefore, student and faculty access to industries and resources. The speaker draws on data from student and faculty interviews to probe the negotiations between students’ needs, a unique regional geography, and an institutional desire for global outreach, revenue and programmatic sustainability.

Research, Localization, and Articulating Programmatic Identities

Stacey Pigg, North Carolina State University

Speaker Four will discuss how theoretical tools emerging from discussions of globalization and mobility can provide useful foundations for planning programmatic professional writing research that is attuned to local context without assuming a static conception of culture or place or rest on stereotyped local "trait geographies" (Starke-Meyerring 2005). In particular, Sun's (2009) conception of *locale* offers a useful term for understanding performed locations that emerge in the lived interactions performed around a mobile activity. With this conception in mind, Speaker Four asks: what is the *locale* of a professional writing program and how is it constituted?

Discussing a large professional writing program in the Southeast U.S. providing upper-level writing instruction for students in technical, scientific, and business fields, the presentation will further apply Sun's conception of localization to suggest that programmatic research can act as an active local identity-building process through which disciplinary knowledges and practices can be made local while involving program stakeholders in ongoing identity articulation. Audience members will leave with examples of research questions guiding this kind of research, as well as processes for involving large program stakeholders in programmatic research.

Sorting Out, Pushing Back, Buying In: The Value of Program Assessment for Students, Instructors, and Programs

The New Norm: Challenges and Suggestions for Peer-To-Peer Assessment Training and Norming

Erin Pumroy, Texas Tech University

Numbers or Faces: Why Are We Assessing? For Administration or Students?

Ian Weaver, Texas Tech University

Scoring the Process: Anonymizing, Norming, Reporting Preliminary Findings, and Lessons Learned

Timothy Elliott, Texas Tech University
Brandon Strubberg, Texas Tech University

Overview

This panel will present a case study of an introductory technical communication program's efforts to develop an assessment practice and culture. Led by a committee of four doctoral students, these efforts included reviewing program outcomes, developing a programmatic assessment tool, vetting it with the program's twenty faculty members, piloting the tool, and reporting initial results. The presentation panel, comprised of three sections, will provide insights into how to assess a large service course program, but the information it provides can be applied to entire programs or departments. While the outcomes of this programmatic assessment are preliminary, the process of program assessment has already offered program faculty multiple opportunities to consider the value of the introductory technical communication program to its students and to the overall institutional mission.

Our panel will describe the case study site, explaining the purpose and need for program assessment, and provide rationale for the chosen program assessment methodology. We argue that programmatic assessment is a valuable educational experience for graduate part-time instructors because it prepares them to administer and report assessment data and offers them professional development experience in program administration and faculty cultural politics. This administrative experience, as well as the process of creating a data-driven assessment tool, make the argument for programmatic assessment as an inclusive strategy for determining the most pressing needs of a technical communication program.

The New Norm: Challenges and Suggestions for Peer-To-Peer Assessment Training and Norming

Erin Pumroy, Texas Tech University

This presentation will discuss challenges of peer-to-peer training, coordinating, and norming with the graduate student committee for this assessment project, and it will suggest solutions for these issues. Challenges included typical team issues of coordinating schedules and managing personalities as well as unique issues of training graduate students who were unfamiliar with assessment techniques, norming their feedback, and liaising between the graduate student team and a faculty administrator. The presentation will detail tools and techniques we used to train and norm our team: scholarly articles; Google docs; and iteratively categorizing ideas using card sorting, affinity diagramming, and group scoring. The presentation will end with a summary of these techniques' effectiveness and present the final version of the first assessment rubric that we introduced to other instructors.

Numbers or Faces: Why Are We Assessing? For Administration or Students?

Ian Weaver, Texas Tech University

This presentation will review potential challenges of articulating assessment goals from the committee to the department instructors. One of the challenges we'll discuss is how the committee perceived collaboration versus how the department instructors perceived assessment. Pushback can arise when administrative methods seem to counteract instructors' goals in the classroom. Viewing the program as composed of individual instructors vs. a team can have a profound impact on the successfulness of assessment. We will provide perspectives for working with instructors to manage pushback and resolve competing views about programmatic goals, including participatory design strategies, listening rhetoric, and metaphors.

Scoring the Process: Anonymizing, Norming, Reporting Preliminary Findings, and Lessons Learned

Timothy Elliott, Texas Tech University
Brandon Strubberg, Texas Tech University

This presentation begins by discussing the procedures for selecting and anonymizing student end-of-semester reflective writing assignments, norming scores for these assignments among large groups of 15-20 instructors, and collating scoring data. The preliminary findings of our assessment illustrated a need to emphasize intercultural communication and ethics, standardize some assignment descriptions, and adjust programmatic objectives to meet our strengths and the evolving needs of our technical communication students. The presentation will end with a discussion of program-specific constraints, the in-depth findings of our assessment, our plans to adapt our curriculum based on these results, and what other programs could learn from our assessment experience as they try to improve the value of technical communication in their own programs.

Re-Thinking Educational Contexts

Usability Research as Tool to Ease Transition from Classroom to Workplace

Kimberly Baker, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

The Value to Technical Communication Programs of Editing a Journal in Science/Technology/Policy

Russel Hirst, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Technical Communication, Digital Humanities, and STEM

J.D. Applen, University of Central Florida

Usability Research as Tool to Ease Transition from Classroom to Workplace

Kimberly Baker, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

What should be taught in a professional and technical communications (PTC) classroom is an ongoing discussion, especially concerning which forces should drive pedagogy – should curriculum focus on teaching students to adapt to current industry needs or should academic perspectives and critical engagement be taught instead (e.g. exchanges between Tebeaux and Miller). While the debate about how to help students prepare for the workplace has evolved, relocated, and shifted over time, the fact remains that few classroom activities are directly comparable to complex workplace problems, and thus, students must prepare to meet those challenges.

Most PTC instructors see their role as broader than to simply teach students to adopt a new identity and conform to expectations; critical examination of the rhetorical situation, organizational culture, and roles in these systems need to remain central in our pedagogy to help students engage thoughtfully and strategically to enact productive changes. I see several essential features and characteristics of usability research aligning with those pedagogical aims and goals. I propose that the research practices themselves, can be used in more expansive ways than are typical in PTC classrooms to help students understand norms and expectations, explore boundaries, identify stakeholders, investigate goals, needs, contexts, situations, available rhetorical options and the potentially diverse constraints that may shape responses, and produce effective communicative products.

While usability is a growing area of PTC scholarship and pedagogy, some may presume its applications are limited because they regard usability as a separate set of research tools best suited to document evaluation, an approach to identify, define and resolve product-based problems that effect users. Thus, one might conclude that usability research is taught solely so graduates can obtain jobs that involve usability. I argue that PTC students could benefit from experience with usability beyond a resume credential, that the research practices themselves offer opportunities to continue learning post graduation in ways that facilitate adjustment.

Further examination of how usability research experience can help PTC students transition between the classroom and workplace builds on PTC scholarship about developing literacies (e.g. Cargile-Cook, Nagelhout, Swarts), and examining the complex social process of transition and how novice writers learn about their workplace and organizational cultures and the roles stakeholders play in those systems (e.g. Beaufort, Brady and Schreiber, Freedman and Adam, Kastman-Breuch, MacKinnon, Winsor).

Developing such assessment skills and decision-making skills is among the many learning objectives of the PTC classroom, and such competencies play an important role in helping students ease their transition from the academic classroom to the professional workplace. I argue, that usability research skills afford students an appropriately complex toolkit to carry with them from the classroom into the workplace and I wish to help further the discussion of how we PTC instructors can help students apply their classroom experience with usability research in their professional careers.

Research Method

Pending IRB approval, this dissertation research will focus on interviews with recent PTC program graduates who are full time employees in a technical communication field, their supervisor or senior colleague, and PTC instructors

Take Away

Extends current understanding of usability research and potential applications.

The Value to Technical Communication Programs of Editing a Journal in Science/Technology/Policy

Russel Hirst, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

I propose a presentation that describes an "academe-academe-industry" collaboration and considers the value of such cooperation to technical communication research and programmatic health—the ongoing theme of our CPTSC conferences. Although it is not unusual for industry and an academic department of engineering to work together, added collaboration from something like a department of English is much less common. Yet opportunities for such partnerships exist all over the country—and the value of entering into them is tremendous.

I direct the program in technical communication at my institution, and I've had fairly extensive industry contact over the years. Two years ago I began a focused effort to connect with the nuclear industry, and then even more specifically with the field of nuclear security. I attended meetings on the topic, got to know some of the professors in this field at my university, and sat in on a master's-level course in nuclear security. A year ago these professors in nuclear engineering/security invited me to launch with them a new journal: the *International Journal of Nuclear Security*. The first issue has just appeared. This is a free, open access, peer reviewed, interdisciplinary journal: http://trace.tennessee.edu/ijns/

My learning curve in connection with this editorship is steep and exhilarating. It provides access to people, places, and portals that would never have become available to me in any other way. For example, next week I'm off to Vienna for the annual meeting of the International Nuclear Security Education Network (INSEN), where I'll be presenting about the journal and connecting with scholars and practitioners in nuclear security from around the world. I'll also be meeting with officials from the World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS), also headquartered in Vienna, and I'll be working on a document with them. And I've just been granted access to an information portal maintained by the International Atomic Energy Agency. All these privileges require authorizations by gatekeeper organizations, agencies, and countries. My volunteer labor on the journal has been the key allowing me to begin passing through such gates.

As editor of this new journal, which is sponsored by the Institute for Nuclear Security (INS) at my university, I have a ringside seat from which to study the fascinating scenario of global communication in nuclear security. This is enriching my department's program in technical communication at every level. It provides a rich research venue for me and my colleagues and students, as well as an editorial assistantship for one student and half-time employment for another. I anticipate that INS will provide more such posts for my students as we continue our relationship, especially as the journal expands from a semiannual to a quarterly publication and other features accrue in connection with the journal—such as a writing contest for nuclear engineering students (now launched), a conference wherein those students may present their work, and other initiatives.

In my presentation for CPTSC, I will provide more detail about these things, expand upon the research and programmatic value involved, and provide a "flow chart" showing the process of getting administrators oriented to such an initiative and convinced about its value. It is unusual for a non-subject-matter expert to edit a science/technology/policy journal. But by teaming up with subject matter experts who serve as reviewers and consultants—and with technical communication experts and students serving as editors and designers—it is not merely

“possible”; it can be highly successful and rewarding, for all stakeholders. My presentation will make this case and hold up my fledgling experience as editor of the *International Journal of Nuclear Security* as a valuable and reproducible model for technical communication programs.

Technical Communication, Digital Humanities, and STEM

J.D. Applen, University of Central Florida

This individual presentation will provide a survey of the technical skills, theory, and practices used by digital humanities scholars and connect them with the work of technical communication instructors. This presentation's attendees will take away an enhanced perspective of how program-related research in the digital humanities can augment our curricula with some STEM-styled elements.

Nearly all "literary" material produced today is "born digital" as it is produced, stored, and accessed on electronic devices (Kirschenbaum and Reside 260). Bolter writes that each new medium provides "a new strategy" that achieves an "authentic experience for its reader" (45), and we should be able to identify the changes in new media affordances and how they affect the authenticity of the text. For example, traditional literary archivists will study the actual paper a nineteenth century author wrote on because a photocopy of an original manuscript communicates ideas and intentions differently than the manuscript, and they also pay attention to the "dissonance" between iterations of electronic files that are regularly transferred over to new and newer technologies (Kirschenbaum and Reside 268).

As the knowledge of artifacts such as paper, "bindings, [and] dustjackets" are the province of traditional archiving, preserving iterations of born digital texts in a "usable form" is the concern of contemporary archivists (264). Some contemporary literary authors carefully save each version of a manuscript, while others write over or delete earlier version of works, thus eliminating any trace or palimsestic layer of them that could reveal the creative process (260-2). Literary archival research for born digital manuscripts now requires computer science skills such as the use of timestamps and metadata (262) as the language of manuscripts is encoded to make sense of the binary values recognized by machines, and the "symbolic nature" of these languages changes with new technologies (263).

A long standing concept in our field is that technical communicators need to be symbolic analysts (Johnson-Eilola 245-6), and understanding the symbolic nature of information encoding used in the digital humanities requires "new work habits, new training, new tools, new practices, and new instincts" (Kirschenbaum and Reside 272). These elements could shed light on successive iterations of archived texts found in industry, medicine, government, and education. At my institution, we have a digital humanities minor that challenges students to acquire a sense for how basic archiving skills and the production of electronic texts can better present documents from the humanities, and our technical communication students are encouraged to take courses in the minor. In one course, basic TEI P5 is taught, which is an XML-based language that is used to archive literary works, which parallels single-sourcing technology used in industry. In another course, students are exposed to the essentials of HTML 5 and CSS used for both style and layout. Familiarity with these languages allows students to be informed about how symbolic language represents texts, and learning them can support the humanities version of STEM education, an emphasis that is extolled by the STC (STC), and better positions our students for success.

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Cultivating a Programmatic Ethos of Social Justice: Benefits of Partnership-Driven Research

Programmatic Ethos: The TPC Perspective

Jared Colton, Utah State University

Programmatic Ethos: The Partner Organization Perspective

Rikki Wheatley-Boxx, AmeriCorps VISTA

Experiences and Lessons Learned: The Partner Organization Perspective

Krista Gurko, AmeriCorps VISTA

Experiences and Lessons Learned: The TPC Perspective

Rebecca Walton, Utah State University

Overview

Our panel will present experiences and lessons learned from a longitudinal pedagogical research study designed and conducted by two technical and professional communication (TPC) scholars and the leaders of the state chapter of a national service organization. This partnership included joint design of service-learning classes, the foci of an IRB-approved research study (IRB #6070) that explores how to bring social justice pedagogy into the technical communication classroom. TPC scholars have become increasingly interested in how pedagogy can encourage critical engagement with political, social, and economic issues within and outside of the classroom (Agboka, 2013; Haas, 2012; Moore, 2013; Williams, 2010; Yu and Savage, 2013). One prominent strategy for engaging with these issues is service-learning (Ashworth & Bourelle, 2014; Cook, 2014; Scott, 2004, 2008). Scholars have also called for TPC programs to include social justice initiatives as an explicit part of their programmatic goals and identity (Jones, Savage, & Yu, 2013; Savage & Mattson, 2011). CPTSC's annual conference has featured social justice in research and pedagogy across programmatic platforms (Gonzalez, Del Hierro, Del Hierro, Haas, and Savage, 2014; Read, Walton, & Dush, 2014). Jones, Savage, and Yu (2013) noted that truly making social justice a focus of technical communication programs, practices, and pedagogy requires re-thinking and re-envisioning the field on a number of levels: "It must mean more than a passive openness to such differences; it must mean that technical communication as a field of theory, pedagogy, and practice must change in its perspective and attitudes and ways of interacting with science, technology, institutions, and professions" (p. 145).

These calls to incorporate social justice initiatives have resonated with the technical communication program at our university. We find ourselves in transition. We are intentionally cultivating a programmatic ethos of social justice--ethos in the Aristotelian sense of intentional, habituated practices that inform and convey character and identity. This cultivation includes revising our curriculum (graduate and undergraduate), rewriting online program descriptions, hiring scholars committed to social justice, and funding graduate fellowships for students sharing this commitment. Perhaps one of the most important of these efforts is the research study on which our panel will present. Speaker one, a TPC professor, will describe the broader

efforts to cultivate a new programmatic ethos. Speaker two, the director of the partner organization, will present the broader programmatic mission of the national service organization. These presentations serve as the foundations on which the next two speakers will build. Speaker three, the program coordinator of the service organization, will present specific examples of outcomes and benefits of the service-learning partnership and concomitant research study for the partner organization. Speaker four, the PI and a TPC professor, will close the panel with concrete lessons learned regarding jointly designing service-learning classes and pedagogical research. In this way, the panel will present a key approach and application for changing our programmatic identity, that of partnership-driven research.

Programmatic Ethos: The TPC Perspective

Jared Colton, Utah State University

Savage and Mattson (2011) called for TPC programs to seek out “opportunities for transforming our professional practices in ways that advance, not hinder or oppose, social justice” (p. 9, 2011). In response, we are developing a programmatic ethos of social justice as an Aristotelian *hexis*, in which students and instructors work to cultivate dispositions from conscious forms of habituation (*ethos*) achieved through repeated activity (see Gross & Walzer, 2008; Hawhee, 2004). A major component of this *hexis* is incorporating social justice issues into the technical communication classroom; however, little to no research addresses effective ways to do this. This panelist will (1) explicate the concept of *hexis* as it relates to social justice and TPC programmatic identity and (2) describe one key approach to developing this *hexis*: conducting a study to better understand how to bring social justice pedagogy into the technical communication classroom, a study designed in partnership with a national service organization.

Programmatic Ethos: The Partner Organization Perspective

Rikki Wheatley-Boxx, AmeriCorps VISTA

Families in poverty often stay in poverty because they lack the skills or resources necessary to successfully maneuver their environment and improve their situation. The national service organization Public School Partnership (PSP) is dedicated to providing access to the education and educational resources necessary to help individuals lift themselves out of poverty. PSP employees are placed within organizations (usually public schools serving low-income families) to fight poverty and advance social justice by providing educational support services. To pursue this mission, they must negotiate challenges of limited financial resources and proficiency demands beyond the scope of their training. This panelist will (1) describe the national service organization and its mission and (2) convey how the research/service-learning partnership with the TPC program helps to support this mission.

Experiences and Lessons Learned: The Partner Organization Perspective

Krista Gurko, AmeriCorps VISTA

Organizations that qualify to host a PSP member commonly lack resources such as personnel time and expertise for creating needed materials. These schools and non-profit organizations entrust a PSP member to identify and strategize ways of procuring donations and guiding volunteer efforts to increase the organization's ability to reach and improve services for disadvantaged clients. Working with the TPC students provided PSP members a dedicated group of volunteers with a targeted set of class assignments that allowed each PSP member to think of how they could benefit their site beyond their own skills, networks, and time availability. Each partner organization benefited from receiving materials they would not have otherwise been able to access: paper or electronic materials created for their site's situation and priority areas. An additional purpose of the PSP program is to provide each member with opportunities to expand their own skill set and be better prepared for management and leadership positions when they enter the workforce. Collaboration with the TPC students placed the PSP members in a client position where they could perfect their skills of leading a project while balancing the needs of their site supervisor and the capacity of the TPC student group. This panelist will discuss 1) the importance of quality materials for different stakeholders at impoverished sites, 2) examples of how this well-designed collaboration has supported the PSP mission of eliminating poverty through education, and 3) how PSP members have increased their own capacity to reflect on poverty and their ability to coordinate volunteers strategically to increase quality of services at a partner site.

Experiences and Lessons Learned: The TPC Perspective

Rebecca Walton, Utah State University

A common challenge in service-learning courses is crafting a course design that can meet the distinct--even conflicting--goals of multiple stakeholders (Clark, 2004; Hollis, 2011): e.g., supporting the organizational mission of community partners; providing multiple low-stakes opportunities for students to practice field-specific expertise; fulfilling programmatic requirements to address particular topics; and delving into social, political, and cultural issues underlying unjust power disparities *and* making clear the relevance of these issues to TPC. Wrapping up the panel presentations with concrete, practical takeaways for TPC instructors, this panelist will share examples of successful and unsuccessful strategies we used to address wide-ranging stakeholder goals through collaborative, iterative, research-informed course design. These strategies included (1) incorporating class readings recommended by the partner organization, (2) negotiating assignment design with the partner organization prior to the start of the semester, and (3) establishing clear channels for direct communication between students and their contacts within the partner organization.

Session 4

Programmatic Considerations in International Contexts

Programmatic Perspectives in Online Contexts

Gathering Data and Assessing Contexts

Programmatic Considerations in International Contexts

Usability for Social Justice in Technical Communication: Exploring Localization Usability of Western Technology in a South-East Asian Country

Keshab Scharya, Michigan Technological University

Inter-Institutional Partnerships between the República de Colombia and the United States: Preliminary Considerations

David Alan Sapp, Loyola Marymount University
Angela Christine Bailey, Universidad del Norte

Identifying Areas of Instructional Need in International Technical Communication through Intralingual Translation Workshops: Moving Towards Hospitable Writing

Massimo Verzella, North Dakota State University

Usability for Social Justice in Technical Communication: Exploring Localization Usability of Western Technology in a South-East Asian Country

Keshab Scharya, Michigan Technological University

Overview

The design of technical documents, systems, and services require students of technical communication to consider how their products empower or disempower users of distant cultures for social equity in the process of globalization.

Connection to Conference Theme

As new livelihoods are emerging along with massive global market flows and supplies of innovative technological products of the Global South to the north, usability plays a vital role to promote social justice in northern countries. Thus, the theoretical and practical objectives of usability in conjunction with social justice can be accomplished by empowering local users through localization usability. From a social justice perspective, localization in the Global North countries such as Nepal can help product designers in the Global South to address important issues in design, information technology, and usability. As the field of technical communication expands inter/cross-culturally by confronting complex forces of power, hegemony, and ideology in the process of postmodern globalization, social justice concerns arise for the liberalization and empowerment of the un/dis-enfranchised people on the one hand and for localization usability on the other.

Research Method

I conduct a survey in a country of the Global North, i.e. Nepal, to answer the following research questions:

a) How does usability promote social justice in the process and development of technical products, systems, or services for inter/cross-cultural technical communication that is complicated by forces of postmodern globalization?
b) To what extent usability is deployed in the Global South products marketed to users in the Global North?
c) Are designers in the Global South addressing usability for social justice through product designs for Global North audience?

Drawing upon localization usability as a theoretical framework (Sun 2206, 2009; Agboka, 2013), I investigate to what extent usability has been deployed in a medical device designed in Germany and used in hospitals' surgical wards in the capital city of Nepal. Because these wards are considered very sensitive places and even caregivers are not allowed to accompany their patients for privacy and security concerns, I draw from a survey strategy (Matveeva, 2008) to investigate in what ways users are empowered or disempowered for localization usability for social justice. The survey provides insights into de facto users' needs, successful and/or unsuccessful task performance, goal achievement, and prevalent intercultural skills, attitudes, values, and knowledge for designing technological products for localization usability.

Take Away

The practice of teaching usability while preparing technical documents, systems, and services eventually contributes another way of teaching technical and scientific communication courses: preparing students as responsible global citizens by considering how product usability promotes social justice both locally and globally. Apart from efficiency, effectiveness, error-free, ease-of-use, and satisfaction (Nielsen 1993; Barnum, 2002, 2011; Dumas & Redish, 1999) that characterize usability, technical communicators, who are connected to global economy as product designers and developers, need (perhaps should) equally pay attention towards usability for social justice in the field of technical communication.

Inter-Institutional Partnerships between the República de Colombia and the United States: Preliminary Considerations

David Alan Sapp, Loyola Marymount University
Angela Christine Bailey, Universidad del Norte

Over the last 25 years, efforts to internationalize academic programs in our discipline have resulted in more globally aware U.S.-based students and faculty with stronger cross-cultural communication among other skills. These outcomes have been achieved by adding global perspectives to the curriculum, hiring an increasingly globalized faculty (those born and educated outside the U.S., and U.S.-trained faculty living and conducting research abroad), more U.S. students traveling for internships and study abroad, and building inter-institutional partnerships. Despite these advancements, scholarly conversations about global partnerships tend to focus on benefits for U.S.-based students, faculty, and institutions, often lacking non-U.S. perspectives. In addition, it often goes unchecked that U.S. institutions are motivated to participate in global partnerships by the allure of financial profit or a sense of charity, neither of which foregrounds equity, fairness, and mutual benefit. Model partnerships, by contrast, feature mutual empowerment, mutual enrichment, and inter-institutional solidarity.

In this presentation, the two authors (one from Colombia and one from the U.S.) will introduce their preliminary motivations for global partnerships, with a focus on benefits to the Colombian students, many of whom are not able to travel abroad, and to the Colombian university, its academic programs, and its faculty in their collective efforts to internationalize curricula and educate globally-aware students. The authors will address the following priorities, consistent with this year's CPTSC theme and the ongoing urgencies of our discipline:

- Globalization and internationalization of curricula
- Sustainability and equity of benefits of global partnerships
- Opportunities for professional development for faculty
- Generation and use of limited resources
- Assessment of impact on programs, institutions, and the discipline
- Access to and shifts in technology
- Political considerations

Then, based on their past experiences and a review of existing literatures, the authors will offer five "starting point" recommendations for the formation of model inter-institutional partnerships: (1) Recognize that a partnership is a relationship that is complex, multidimensional, and requires time, attention, and patience. Strong collaborative relationships are intentional and characterized by mutual respect, equal voice, shared responsibilities, clear lines of accountability, shared vision, and mutual interest. (2) One institution should not assume that a particular need exists for the partner institution. Representatives from each institution should spend time learning about the other, identifying and valuing the strengths of each, in addition to needs and challenges. It is important to work together to clearly articulate goals, expectations, roles, and responsibilities. (3) Do not force the partnership; be sure it is a good fit for all participants. Partners must be willing and able to assist in carrying out the objectives, and both partners should share equally in the responsibilities and benefits. (4) A strategy for ongoing communication should be developed to effectively evaluate progress, openly discuss concerns, and make changes. The partnership should be evaluated regularly with a focus on both methods and outcomes. (5) Finally, participants at all levels of a partnership should share

success stories with their colleagues: faculty, administrators, staff, and students. Doing so will help strengthen the partnership and raise awareness of its value.

Identifying Areas of Instructional Need in International Technical Communication through Intralingual Translation Workshops: Moving Towards Hospitable Writing

Massimo Verzella, North Dakota State University

Connection to Conference Theme

When subject matter experts create documents that aim at global readers performing activities or completing tasks in precise ways, the main concern becomes the usability of a text. In its turn, usability involves, and in a way starts with, translatability. Preparing a text for translation is a type of what Roman Jakobson's would call *intralingual translation* (1959). Experimenting with intralingual translation is a pedagogical activity that requires students who are native speakers of English to process language in a way that is, so to say, unnatural to them. As they rely a little less on the idiom principle and a little more on the open-choice principle (Sinclair, 1991; Erman and Warren, 2000), native speakers enter an empathic understanding process that allows them to catch a glimpse of how non-native speakers encode language. This sneak peek into a different cognitive model for linguistic production can inspire native speakers to become sensitive, hospitable communicators in a world driven by a vocal demand for information and access. I believe that programs in technical and scientific communication should promote a cosmopolitan orientation (Palmer, 2013) by encouraging forays into translation theory and practice

Research Method

The goal of this observational, exploratory, and theory building study is to collect insights and uncover tendencies that could be organized into a predictive model for native speakers' intralingual translation skills.
The study addresses two research questions:

- Can native speakers of English identify Multi Word Expressions (MWE) that are potentially difficult to comprehend for global audiences?
- Can they reword these MWEs by consciously resorting to the open choice principle?

A total of 35 students participated to this research. They were all enrolled in two different sections of Writing in the Technical Profession at North Dakota State University. Their task was to translate a film review from highly idiomatic English into Global English.
First of all the participants identified MWEs that, in their opinion, could be difficult to understand for non-native speakers of English. Next, they reworded these MWEs with the goal of preparing the film review for publication on a website with an international readership (BBC News). The corpus of revised documents produced by the participants in the US constitutes the data source for this study. The initial coding pass was intended to list MWEs marked for revision. The second pass aimed at organizing the different renderings of the MWEs marked up for revision in a different table.

Take Away

Attendees will be encouraged to evaluate the pedagogical potential of intralingual translation as an activity that helps speakers of English to prevent communication failure due to *unilateral*

idiomaticity (Seidlhofer, 2002) and *asymmetrical convergence* (Giles, Coupland, and Coupland 1991).

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Programmatic Perspectives in Online Contexts

Extralocating Faculty in Technical Communication

Sam Dragga, Texas Tech University

I organized a session for the 2006 CPTSC conference about program location in technical communication. It would lead to a 2007 session at the ATTW conference and a 2010 special issue of *Technical Communication Quarterly*. In all this discussion about program location, however, the assumption was always that faculty would be geographically located with their programs. In this individual presentation, I will challenge that assumption. As we consider the positioning of programs in technical communication (which department? which college?), we must also consider the positioning of tenure-line faculty and the merits in their geographical diversity.

After teaching at Texas Tech University in Lubbock for 23 years (including ten years as department chair), I departed Lubbock for Long Beach, California, but continued as tenured full-time faculty at TTU. New opportunities to inform my teaching and research were available in my new urban environment:

- Long Beach Heritage offers walking tours of historically and architecturally significant buildings. I received training, did research, and started giving tours.
- Long Beach Coalition for the Homeless operates as a clearinghouse for service providers. I revised its ill-designed and out-of-date website, familiarizing myself with the services available and the unfilled needs.
- International Visitors Council of Los Angeles brings emerging leaders from developing nations to Los Angeles for a week of meetings with civic and corporate officials and houses the visitors with local families in order to offer a genuine immersion in American life. My wife and I are among the local families.

These are opportunities available to me only because I live in Long Beach. And none of these opportunities would I have seized if I were only temporarily living there—on a sabbatical, for example. It is the ongoing and enduring nature of my residence that has been vital to building a network of allies and associates, creating trustworthy relationships, demonstrating devotion to the community, and proving the merits of my knowledge and abilities as a technical communicator.

I claim that it is important for students that their faculty live in diverse locations—that that the multiplicity of experiences of the faculty enriches the education provided to students and minimizes the risk of insularity that arises with all faculty living in the same city and offering the same array of experiences. Diversity in education isn't only about bringing faculty and students from a wide variety of locations to share the homogenizing influence of the same geographical location: it is also about allowing students and faculty living in a wide variety of locations to build a mosaic of insights and opportunities from their daily lives.

The appropriate label for faculty operating outside the university's local community is a rhetorical challenge as the typical identifiers (e.g., distant, remote) imply that these faculty are less involved or less interested in the lives of their students and institutions. I reject these pejorative connotations: these faculty offer no diminished contribution but a new and equally important contribution to the education of their students. The term I propose for such faculty is extralocated.

Customizing Online Pedagogy—a Programmatic Approach for Graduate Certificates

Adam Rex Pope, University of Arkansas

Among the various incarnations of technical and professional communication programs that have proliferated in recent years, graduate certificates have had some of the largest growth rates (Meloncon 2012), but traditionally these programs haven't received as much attention as other program types (Nugent 2013). As Meloncon notes, certificate programs pose special sustainability challenges to their home departments because they often rely on limited course offerings and a potentially limited pool of qualified faculty to teach those courses. In this poster presentation, I offer one potential solution to the problems of sustainability, flexibility, and adaptability raised by Meloncon (2012), building on the curriculum customization work done by Meredith (Zoetewey) Johnson (2013), Sara Beth Hopton (2013), and Julie Staggers (2013).

In their 2013 panel presentation, Johnson, Hopton, and Staggers discussed the implementation of a track-based online tech writing course developed to meet the needs of an outside department at their university. Their innovative solution was the front-to-back implementation of custom tracks that aligned with the interests of students taking the course, in this case students destined for a medical workplace. By offering the track-based options throughout the course, the course allowed students to take their shared topic and apply it to various potential professional outcomes they were interested in.

Building on Johnson, Hopton, and Staggers's work, I've worked to develop a hybrid track model for use in online graduate certificate programs in an attempt to address some of the concerns raised by Meloncon (2012) and to meet local staffing and curriculum needs. Instead of opting for the full-length tracks that Johnson et al. made use of, courses are divided into two halves, with the first half consisting of a shared core of content related to the course's subject (such as Writing for the Web), and the second half divided into at least two tracks that move into a specialized application of the core content (such as Writing for Content Management and Writing for Social Media).

The semi-track based method of instruction allows for greater flexibility in offerings for students, while still maintaining a coherent core curriculum for the program. Students are able to get a better understanding of the breadth of practice covered by the core skills and theory they've covered in the first half of the course while taking advantage of the tracks to choose a specialization that best fits their professional development goals. Programmatically, this approach allows programs to offer students meaningful choices in their coursework without having to offer multiple electives concurrently on a regular basis and worrying about bringing in enough students to ensure all electives make their minimum enrollment in a given semester.

In my poster for the conference, I will map out the key issues identified by previous research, outline the benefits of the semi-track based approach to course development, and provide an overview of what that approach looks like when applied programmatically in the graduate certificate program I have developed. Attendees can expect to come away from the poster presentation with an understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of the semi-track-based method of course development in their own graduate certificate programs. A handout will also be provided.

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Researching Models for Online Service-Learning in Technical Communication

Teena Carnegie, Eastern Washington University

Service learning has for many years fit well within the technical communication classroom. Because technical communication courses emphasize workplace writing, collaboration, and project management, they provide diverse opportunities for connecting with community partners (J. Blake Scott, 2006). In technical communication, service learning provides a contextualized learning experience. As students learn the theory and practice for producing technical communication documents, they actively participate in service by writing and designing documents needed by the community partner. While service learning has proliferated in the face-to-face classroom, its adoption in online courses has been very limited. A review of literature produced only three articles that directly address implementing service learning in the technical communication classroom.

The lack of published research dealing with online service learning is not limited to technical communication. In their research on E-service learning, Waldner, McGory, and Widener (2012)conducted a review of the literature, targeting 10 journals focused exclusively on service learning or online learning (p. 129). They sought to locate peer-reviewed articles that focused on the intersection between service learning and online education. They noted a “the sheer lack of articles on the topic” (p. 130). Even after expanding their search criteria for their literature review, they located only 12 journal articles and one book (p. 132). They noted that the resources were largely anecdotal, and there were “no rigorous cross-course studies of e-service-learning techniques and outcomes” (p. 132).

Their research suggests that very few online courses integrate service-learning. Such results are surprising given the growth of online education. According to NCES (2014), there are over 5.5 million students taking courses online. Online enrollment continues to grow at a faster rate than traditional enrollments. In fact, online enrollments constitute 73.7 percent of the increase in overall enrollments. The importance of online education seems particularly significant for public, four-year colleges: 70.8 % of whom indicate that online education is critical to their long term strategy (Allen & Seaman, p.15). Waldner et al believe that many practitioners of service learning abandon it when they teach online, viewing “the online medium as a barrier to service learning” (p. 123). I propose, however, that it is the lack of well developed pedagogical models, providing information on effective practices, which constitutes the greatest barrier for many faculty. As programs consider adding online courses, the question of how to incorporate service learning into online curriculum becomes critical. Having more concrete models and information about factors that influence success would increase the feasibility of incorporating service-learning into online courses and programs. In this presentation, I propose that further research is needed to build on the work done by Soria and Weiner; Hill and Harris; and Bourelle. Additional research focused on attributes of service-learning and how they translate to online learning is needed. More importantly, I will raise questions about what attributes of the service learning pedagogy should be of particular concern.

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YouTube™ Beauty Tutorials as Online Instructions: Exploring Implications for Research and Pedagogy

Felicia Chong, Oakland University

Instruction sets have long been considered a prominent genre in technical communication. Recent analyses on electronic instruction sets (Selber, 2010; Van Ittersum, 2014) highlight the need for us to consider the implications of this emerging genre. In this presentation, I will examine beauty tutorials on YouTube as a form of online instructions that involves the employment of rhetorical strategies and craft knowledge, and explore its implications for technical communication research and pedagogy.

YouTube is a billion-user platform where young women are providing beauty tutorials on body, hair and makeup. The content ranges from product reviews to demonstrations on how to remove body hair, curl or straighten hair, or put on false eyelashes. As evidenced by the millions of channel views and subscribers, these YouTubers' advice has now become the voice of authority (e.g., their popularity far outweighs the videos that are produced by cosmetics companies). Frequently referred to as "beauty gurus," many have even become YouTube employees through its Partner Program.

Foss and Foss (1991) argued that historically, women's activities (e.g., baking, sewing, designing) could often be seen non-rhetorical communication in male-dominant society. Although there is technical communication research that focuses on women's work and technologies (e.g., Durack, 2004; Rohan, 2001; Tebeaux, 1998), makeup and beauty has rarely been discussed as a form of rhetorical and technical knowledge that requires attention in our field. These beauty tutorials reveal that YouTubers do employ rhetorical knowledge through multimodal composition that incorporates audio, video and/or written texts on the screen. They also demonstrate their craft (techné) knowledge by performing the actions through sharing personal narratives and experiences.

Drawing on Selber's (2010) heuristics framework for conceptualizing electronic instructions sets and the research question that Rude (2009) raised for technical communication, I hope to initiate a conversation on how YouTube, as a form of embedded instruction sets, influences our research directions and our pedagogical effort to prepare our students for designing and maintaining instructions in this environment. More specifically, I will discuss these questions:

- Although Selber (2010) stated that "self-contained instruction set" (i.e., the "how-to" instruction manuals featured in our textbooks) is "alive and well" (p. 114), how do these YouTube tutorials, where instructions are presented in non-conventional ways, influence our research on information design and design practices? For example, in instructions writing, we typically discourage the use of humor and language that suggests ambiguity, but it is common to find YouTubers using humor, entertainment (e.g., upbeat music, flashy text) and a trial and error method/attitude (e.g., trying out or testing the product for the first time on camera) in their tutorials.
- In this form of user-generated tutorials/instructions, where users could both create content and engage with others through ratings and comments, how should we facilitate our students' understanding of the user's role and rhetorical agency in this digital space, especially when these users' identity is being redefined as "experts" and "gurus"?
- How do women who provide beauty tutorials using rhetorical skills and craft knowledge/

techné broaden our perspectives of women's contributions to technical communication?

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Gathering Data and Assessing Contexts

Using Big, Unstructured Data for Technical Communication Program Improvement

Aimee K. Roundtree, Texas State University

Useful Programmatic Data: Cultivating Information to Support Strategic Decision-Making

Enrique Reynoso, Purdue University
Michael J. Salvo, Purdue University

Implementing Core Competencies Through Assessment and Curriculum Development

Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
Barb Horvath, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Assessing Shifts: Using Video Reflections to Make Learning and Practice Visible

Emma Rose, University of Washington Tacoma

As If Students Mattered: Gathering Student Perceptions in Curriculum Review and Redesign

Susan Popham, University of Memphis

Using Big, Unstructured Data for Technical Communication Program Improvement

Aimee K. Roundtree, Texas State University

Connection to Conference Theme

Covers research methods to examine our programs
Covers research design and research methods that should be used to conduct such research
Proposes approaches for using programmatic research to guide curriculum development
Covers uses of research to inform program development and assessment

Research Method

Using data mining techniques and archives for making programmatic decisions

Take Away

Gain exposure to core techniques, common software, and big data archives to gather and analyze for the purpose of updating courses and curriculum, aligning outcomes and objectives to standards across the country and identifying new topics, skills and trends from industry for course design and reporting to administration.

Overview

When making programmatic decisions and evaluations, there are several, large archives of data we can use, such as comments from decades of student course and program evaluations to syllabi or course descriptions of similar courses from around the country. However, the volume of this textual data makes it difficult if not impossible to deploy traditional methods of rhetorical analysis—from critical theory to content analysis between coders. This presentation will review some standard practices and approaches to data mining, and it will make suggestions about the kinds of archives worth using.

First, the presentation will review and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various guidelines and best practices (published by statistical software companies and research consultancies such as Butler Analytics) in order to approach developing a framework for guidelines in our field. Scholars use technology solutions—such as text analytics programs designed by SPSS and other statistical software brands, software designed by linguists and communication scholars such as DICTION and DISCURSIS—but with varied approaches and degrees of success (e.g., rhetorical precision and insight). Ultimately technology can augment, but not replace, close reading for general categorization but not critical thinking or extrapolation. The presentation will demonstrate how to use data mining technology (such as Tropes, Discursis, and Rapid Miner) and data mining techniques (such as tokenizing, parameter setting, text association, clustering, etc.).

Second, the presentation will suggest possible large data sets that can help inform and improve technical communication program assessment and design. Gathering several years of job descriptions for technical writers and usability specialists from job sites and databases can help uncover skills and technology important to teach in corresponding undergraduate and graduate

courses. It can also help programs demonstrate to administrators the value of the technical communication degree. Gathering several course descriptions from technical communication service courses taught across the country can help uncover course objectives or outcomes that typify those courses. Gathering several abstracts from theses and dissertation projects can help advisors map the terrain of research in our field. These archives can also help identify future directions for new courses and potential untapped careers for technical communication graduates.

The presentation will be interactive. Attendees will be shown first-hand the inner workings of data mining software and techniques. The presentation will gather small size sample sets of the data listed above. It will also review lessons learned from planning big data research collaborations with the Austin Fire Department (AFD), a project where two important lessons were learned: First, there are opportunities to leverage technical communication skills such as rhetorical analysis and usability testing for the purpose of assisting other fields besides applied science, engineering, computer science, and medicine.

Second, collaboration with service fields will also require technical communicators to acquire new skills--analysis techniques for big data from archives of unstructured documents such as technical reports and public comments. Finally, the presentation will provide suggestions for how to augment curriculum in usability testing and research methods courses with big data methods.

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Useful Programmatic Data: Cultivating Information to Support Strategic Decision-Making

Enrique Reynoso, Purdue University
Michael J. Salvo, Purdue University

Big Data, analytics, and uncovering hidden correlations are but the latest expression of elements of data assessment that have been important before the last generation of terms. Knowledge management, data mining, and knowledge discovery were fashionable terms in the 1990s and into the 2000s, and there will likely be new emergent revisions of these terms offered again. Yet there is value in articulating the insights revealed through analysis of programmatic and institutional data. Whatever the hype, investigation of records yields insights form uncovering unseen correlations, exposing oversights, and inviting further investigation.

While such data sets may fall far short of what current vogue names Big Data, these institutionally- generated datasets are nevertheless worthy of attention and analysis. This presentation articulates those data points that were useful in running and repeating institutional analysis of a professional and technical writing program and supported the creation of information from this ambient data. The presentation is designed to invite discussion and inquiry among administrators interested in using existing assessment practices as well as those considering creating contextually appropriate processes. The presentation is designed to help administrators use data to support arguments that are valued by internal and external stakeholders while being mindful of the challenges any kind of outside mandated assessment brings to programmatic evaluation, as articulated by Denny (2008).

The approach is based on participatory assessment as articulated by Salvo and Ren (2007) as "characterized by negotiation and dialog among various internal stakeholders, including students, administrators, faculty and instructors." Challenges of naming and inviting participants and stakeholders are discussed, as are challenges of both data gathering and data analysis. The speaker is prepared to discuss some basics of information processing during the discussion period in order to orient the audience to some of the more accessible data available to program administrators as well as to more esoteric data. As the title implies, the heuristic of determining which data sets to include will be judged on usefulness in supporting and strengthening representations of scientific and technical communication programs. Further, discussion can be encouraged around articulating assessment practices that incorporate programmatic data at a variety of institutional contexts.

Thematically, rhetorical use of data to best represent the work of technical and scientific communication will be the focus of the presentation, as will the use of data and data analysis to strengthen ethos of those reporting program identity. Speaking from the perspective of a second-generation assessment, the presentation is designed to support others looking to include effective data analytics into programmatic, institutional and extra-institutional assessment and communication about programmatic assessment and development. Attendees will be encouraged to articulate sources of data they may have overlooked but are already available to them both through institutional partners, staff, faculty, instructors, and students.

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Implementing Core Competencies Through Assessment and Curriculum Development

Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
Barb Horvath, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

This presentation shares our programmatic perspective from a research institution regarding how we developed and integrated core competency areas in our undergraduate technical communication program. We discuss why we used a competency approach, how it has informed our program assessments, and how it is shaping our undergraduate curriculum.

A competency approach has often been associated with workplace practice (Yeats and Thompson, 2010, p. 229; Hayhoe et al., 1994, p. 14); for example, competencies for an academic program might be chosen in conjunction with professional workplace expectations. However, our competencies combine a rhetorical, humanistic approach with an emphasis on workplace practices. We generated five competency areas in 2013 following a review of all syllabi and curriculum: written communication, digital literacies, rhetorical/writing theory, technology and culture, and information management. We chose to focus on these competency areas to better situate our undergraduate program amidst a move from a college of agriculture to a college of liberal arts. The competency areas helped us more clearly introduce our program to students, faculty, and college administrators.

The competency approach has informed our program assessments. In 2014 we assessed the competency areas by surveying students and faculty. Students found the competency areas helpful in better understanding the major “Technical Writing and Communication”; faculty unanimously supported the competency areas and identified ways their individual courses mapped onto the competency areas. In 2015, we integrated competency areas with our annual program assessment (required by our college). We selected three of the five competencies in connection with three university learning outcomes, and we found complementary overlaps. Assessment involved reviewing student performance through individual assignments and courses that aligned with outcomes or competencies. The 2015 assessment allowed us to identify strengths (written communication) as well as weaknesses (digital literacies and information management).

Assessing Shifts: Using Video Reflections to Make Learning and Practice Visible

Emma Rose, University of Washington Tacoma

Reflection is an established practice in the teaching of writing and composition. Students create reflective writing to continue to practice writing and also engage in metacognitive practices of learning. Reflection is a powerful tool to help students see what they have learned and even who they are becoming. Reflection “entails a looking forward to goals we might attain, as well as a casting backward to see where we have been” (Yauncey 1998, p6). However, reflection in the writing classroom tends to be a written text, constructed by a student for the instructor.

The practice of video reflection is well established in other fields, namely teacher education programs (for example, Fuller and Manning 1973; Wang, J. & Hartley, K. 2003). Video reflection offers promise for our field, some are considering using video reflections to assess shifts or changes in students’ perceptions about the learning objectives of the course and themselves (Leydens 2015).

In this presentation, I will share preliminary results from a study examining the experience of learning in nascent video game designers. The research is part of a larger study investigating the development of technical identities. The setting was an informal learning program introducing high school students to video game design and user-centered design during a three-week summer program. Students recorded pre and post video reflections to assess how their thinking about themselves and their learning changed over time. The video reflections were framed as a practice they would undertake as a community of learners and therefore the audience for the reflection was not only the students assessing their own learning but also for the group as a whole.

The topic of video reflections is germane to the conference theme. First, video reflection can make students’ learning visible to themselves and also provides an opportunity to collaborate across program and university to share what is working, what is not, and the impact of our courses on our students. Rich video reflection data can make learning visible in ways that are compelling for both learners and instructors. In addition, video reflections of high school students allow us to see if and how students are connecting to the field. One challenge of technical communication programs is often students think of them as solely technical writing. By engaging in activities such as video game design, user centered design and user experience, we have an opportunity to connect and reach out to students who may identity with the field even if they have not yet sought it out by name.

In summary, the presentation will engage the audience to consider how student video reflections can inform their own courses and programs. Specifically, we discuss:

a) How does the process of making reflections visible allow students to see transformations in their identities as learners, writers, designers and members of a community of practice?

b) How can video reflections help instructors and programs assess student learning and course design?

c) How can we engage in outreach with high school students to introduce user-

centered design and technical communication?

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As If Students Mattered: Gathering Student Perceptions in Curriculum Review and Redesign

Susan Popham, University of Memphis

Curriculum review can be one of the most tension-fraught activities of a faculty within a large and diverse department, filled with territorialism, favoritism, and years of habitual teaching and scholarship. Even in collegial departments, faculty often see their own courses as those that are the most important (i.e. practical, rewarding, meaningful, or significant), and they may fail to see the importance of courses taught in other fields or by scholars whose expertise is other than their own. Further, when faced with the task of critically and objectively reviewing the curriculum of their own courses and of their home department, faculty often resist that critical self-analysis, instead reverting to unwarranted proclamations about the import of the courses that they have taught for years. Little wonder—change can often be hard and disturbing. And, most scholars do teach and conduct research in the areas that they find interesting and important. Despite these challenges, departments are charged, especially in an era of administrative and programmatic assessment, with the task of curriculum review, in order that the faculty ensure that their teaching and course offerings are on par with what is needed and expected by students, prospective employers, and university administrators. Certainly, faculty perceptions are considerations most commonly associated with a departmental curriculum review; however, rarely are students perceptions considered in such a task, a gap that seems illogical. After all, students are at the center of curriculum and curriculum redevelopment, often an effect of curriculum review; they are the raison d'etre for curriculum and its review.

This presentation shows the results of a recent survey of 350+ English undergraduate students about their perceptions of current curriculum, how their chosen programs and interests fit with the larger departmental requirements, and their suggestions for curriculum review and redesign. In this process, students were asked to consider how their chosen programs in Professional Writing might be better structured within the English Bachelor's program. The presentation also shows the more (and less) fruitful and productive questions to ask in regard curriculum review and curriculum redesign. Ultimately, this presentation argues that gathering students' perceptions and suggestions is an important, yet often overlooked, element in a department wide curriculum review process. In summary, CPTSC attendees will be asked to consider the role of gathering student perceptions in curriculum redesign and will learn ways for doing so.

Session 5

The Faces of Distance Education: Utilizing On-Campus Resources to Broaden the Community of Online Learners Through Video Conferencing

Re-Contextualizing Courses and Re-Envisioning Classes

Pedagogical Perspectives and Practices

The Faces of Distance Education: Utilizing On-Campus Resources to Broaden the Community of Online Learners Through Video Conferencing

The Confluence of Technology and Student Resources that Develop Community in Online Courses

Rosa Thornley, Utah State University

Adapting the Objectives of Writing Tutors to Work with Online Students

Shay Larsen, Utah State University

Improved Delivery Format for Underutilized Library Services for Online Students

Dory Cochran, Utah State University

Students do not thrive in isolation. Despite improvements in the infrastructure of learning management systems, isolation is a major stress factor for online learners that diminishes the quality of education achieved and even worse, leads to higher attrition. Although the level of course content remains consistent between face-to-face and distance education classes, access to external experts can be limited for the growing population of online students. This panel will present an online course design that includes synchronous methods that provide research and writing resources to promote social constructivism rather than simply transfer of knowledge too frequently apparent in traditional online delivery. Using innovative methods improves both research and writing skills across multiple disciplines.

Distance Education is seeing a paradigm shift from the independent study courses of yesteryear to fully online higher education environments in our contemporary society that are designed to provide a sense of community with a fully functional support network. Too often the network utilized consists only of peers and the instructor. Utah State University (USU)'s main campus in Logan offers supplemental instruction on many levels through traditional face-to-face, hybrid, interactive broadcast, and online delivery methods.

This panel will review two resources: research librarians and Writing Fellows. Research librarians guide students through customized library research guides to access library databases. Writing Fellows are student mentors trained to give one-on-one peer feedback, which improves writing skills for students in upper-level courses. Unfortunately, both of these resources have been consistently underutilized by the regional campus and distance education (RCDE) students. Conferencing technologies were leveraged in webinar format to provide these same student resources for those enrolled at regional campuses and online students in remote locations. The presenters propose that course design that includes group and individual conferencing tools with these additional "faces" enriched research and writing skills proving critical to students' success in the RCDE course.
Group conferencing with research librarians and Writing Fellows was added as a course requirement to motivate attendance. The instructor met with these external experts to determine

topics for group conferences geared to help student meet general outcomes for written assignments, asynchronous discussions and research projects in the course. Two sessions were scheduled for each topic, and students were required to attend two of the eight sessions offered. USU's Center for Innovative Design and Instruction currently provides workshops to train users about conferencing software. Presenters on the panel will discuss their individual approaches to adapting their services for virtual delivery methods and how they facilitate group discussions. They will also discuss the challenges of technology and the depth of knowledge these synchronous discussions added to students' success compared to similar courses, both online and face-to-face. Together, the panel will provide evaluation results submitted by students who participated in this experiment and how this pedagogical approach is being transferred to and adapted in other courses.

The Confluence of Technology and Student Resources that Develop Community in Online Courses

Rosa Thornley, Utah State University

Social construction is too often ignored in online courses. This presentation will study how video conferencing software was leveraged to synchronously connect peers in an online environment with their instructor and student resources available in traditional classrooms aiding in retention and enriching students' learning experiences.

A recent survey, found that "the proportion of higher education students taking at least one online course is at an all-time high of 33.5 percent." Chief decision makers in higher education rated the outcomes in online comparable or better than face-to-face, but agreed that more discipline is needed for students to succeed leading to concerns that retaining students is a greater problem for online courses. Prefacing the presentation with this data, I offer a model using simple video technology paired with course design and willing participants to help students separated by place develop a sense of community that offers support to aid in success.

Video conferencing tools, often embedded in learning management systems, were used with course design that required the initial synchronous interaction in webinar format facilitated by expert resources. Once students got a taste of the benefits of communication with their peers, the instructor, librarians, and Writing Fellows, many participated frequently in other webinars throughout the semester. This pedagogy led to more meaning social interaction, higher retention, and higher success rate among students in a depth humanities and communication intensive course offered at Utah State University.

Adapting the Objectives of Writing Tutors to Work with Online Students

Shay Larsen, Utah State University

Since its founding, the Writing Fellows, a group of professionally trained student tutors at Utah State University, have helped students develop their writing skills. By collaborating directly with professors, Writing Fellows offer constructive writing advice one-on-one with students in order to improve their understanding of the assignments and cultivate tools, tips, and practices to better their writing. As an experienced Writing Fellow having worked in traditional face-to-face courses and having seen the substantial benefit the program offers students, I was offered the opportunity to pilot the first attempt to adapt services offered by Writing Fellows for an online delivery. Our experiment using existing technology and adding innovative tutoring methods pulled in tremendous positive response and blended the questioning process with experience and ideas from students, tutor and teachers into a well-connected virtual community. In the role of an online Writing Fellow, additional skills were required including writing mini lectures, designing PowerPoint presentation, and facilitating group discussions on genre writing and assignment expectations, which prepared students for individual appointments with their assigned tutor. Face-to-face interaction, critical in the tutoring process, spurred the use of video conferencing that allowed the students to connect to their Writing Fellows on a level usually reserved for traditional on-campus environments. The experiment not only benefited and transformed the virtual classroom, but instilled rich experience for the Writing Fellows involved that will become invaluable in both future graduate programs and careers.

Improved Delivery Format for Underutilized Library Services for Online Students

Dory Cochran, Utah State University

As distance education continues to grow, finding ways to effectively integrate library resources, while still providing meaningful interactions for online students, can prove challenging. Although distance education students have access to all of the library resources and services, these services often remain underutilized. In typical librarian-faculty member collaborations, librarians would embed research tutorials and customized library help guides in online classes to supplement library instruction. This panel will address a new conferencing feature that enhances the services and resources the library already offers. A librarian at Utah State University collaborated with an English composition lecturer to offer an online webinar as a course requirement. Offering a group conferencing infrastructure to online students is a more effective way to teach about how to use library resources, ensuring students receive direct research help at their point of need. Discussions were focused around the class research assignments, and included copyright issues in online publishing, evaluating resources, and pertinent scholarly resources available in the library. During the webinar, students were encouraged to post questions in the chat box or to use their microphones and contribute to the conversation. By being embedded in the course from the start, the library is no longer an “add-on” but rather a partner, seamlessly integrating information literacy and research skills from the start so that students know about all of the resources and services available to them. This approach results in more successful outcomes with the librarian viewed as a collaborator in the course and students taking more initiative to connect with the librarian for research help.

Re-Contextualizing Courses and Re-Envisioning Classes

Incorporating Social Media in the Technical Communication Classroom

Sandi Harner, Cedarville University

Overview

In the past few years, we have questioned whether social media has a place in the technical communication classroom. This presentation argues that if we do not prepare our students to deal with social media within the corporation, someone else will be taking these jobs. I will discuss why our students should be prepared to move into this field and end with specific suggestions for classroom activities.

Connection to Conference Theme:

This presentation addresses the question of incorporating innovative issues into our curriculum. Social media is taking over our culture, and corporations are not blind to that fact. Most corporations and organizations are seriously examining their involvement in this arena. They are looking for savvy young people to lead the way and develop effective social media platforms for them.

Issues Addressed

- Job qualifications for social media
- Social media platforms
- Suggested classroom activities
- Success stories
- Suggested text books

Research Method

In this presentation I will present evidence that our students are the best choice of workers to direct and contribute to a corporation's social media efforts. I will share how I have incorporated social media in my class for the last four years by examining the readings and the projects assigned to prepare them. I will also share success stories of my graduates in this field. Finally, I will give a list of suggested articles and textbooks for use in the classroom.

Take Away

Attendees will discuss whether we should prepare our students to work in the field of social media. They will leave with handouts detailing how this is accomplished in the curriculum at Cedarville University. A list of important articles and texts used as a basis for the curriculum will also be included.

Research Methods and Curricular Commitment: Situating a Methods Course within a Professional Writing Minor Program

Michael S. Knievel, University of Wyoming

In this presentation, I report on preliminary research into the curricular design of technical/professional communication minors that investigates the presence and role of a research methods course within a sampling of such programs. Starting with the premise that the so-called "public turn" in composition studies has created greater overlap with more generalist professional writing programs like that at my university, I offer an overview of various models of the research methodology course drawn from undergraduate writing programs with different emphases, including composition and rhetoric, writing studies, and technical and professional writing (Mathieu, 2005). I then briefly outline the rhetorical work that a minor curriculum performs within an institutional context and position the research methods course within the concentrated curricular space that defines such small programs, especially when such minors are "stand-alone" programs. Curricula in such settings, I argue, must satisfy a breadth of motives, as programs effectively "become" the discipline, both for colleagues and for students.

In addition to surveying models from around the country as a type of programmatic research, I also describe and analyze elements of my own institutional and programmatic context to reveal the affordances and constraints shaping the contours of the research methods course in a minor. At my university, our 18-credit-hour professional writing minor is the only programmatic expression of technical and professional writing/communication as a discipline. Like many minor and certificate programs, it emphasizes applied rhetoric situated within workplace contexts. Partly in response to student exit interview feedback and partly out of a sense of disciplinary obligation, we have recently considered the possibility of adding a methods course to supplement the primary and secondary research already woven into the fabric of the existing curriculum (Spilka, 2009). In doing so, we have looked to the aforementioned range of possibilities in order to imagine a viable local solution, which I outline.

In short, while research methods courses have the potential to introduce the epistemological work and rigor of a discipline, their value must be placed within a context of student need: within the context of a minor that by definition offers few courses, a "wrong" course has the potential to disproportionately—and paradoxically—compromise the curriculum for students who view the minor as subordinate to their major course of study. This presentation seeks to elicit audience discussion about 1) the viability and potential role of such a course in a minor, and 2) the contours of a methods course in such a setting. Audience members will be exposed to a sampling of basic methods course models across writing studies, broadly construed, as well as a means of evaluating a methods course within their own programs.

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Programmatic Research on Curriculum Development: A Proposal to Include a Capstone Portfolio Course to Shape Program Identity and Curriculum Design

Herb Smith, Kennesaw State University

Many technical communication programs today use portfolios as assessment tools for measuring student performance in individual courses, but few programs have a capstone portfolio course that assesses curriculum outcomes. This presentation offers discussion points on the benefits of designing a capstone project portfolio course to shape program identity and also to provide students with portfolios that showcase skills, concepts, and tools useful in the workplace. Specifically, this presentation will describe an innovative project portfolio course for technical communication majors that includes a mentoring component, an Open House that serves as a final exam, and a process approach for developing professional paper and electronic portfolios. Attendees will receive guidelines on how to develop such a course.

Programmatic Research on the Usefulness of Portfolios in the Academy and in Industry

Research documenting how portfolios contribute to the learning environment and to program identity consistently points out the value that portfolios have as pedagogical instruments. Research suggests that portfolios help in shaping the professional identity of students as well as the identity of academic programs. Kimball (2003) notes that portfolios have great promise as pedagogical tools while Scott and Plumb (1999) comment on how portfolio assessment addresses ABET criteria for engineering programs to show how well their graduates communicate effectively. Killoran (2011) reports the results of a survey of 240 independent contractors and consultants noting how portfolios help them market their technical communication services. Zimmerman and Paul (2007) examine mentoring practices within the technical communication classroom and note the difficulty in developing an effective mentoring model.

It is clear that portfolios are widely used for a variety of reasons; however, there is very little research that focuses on how a capstone portfolio course can help shape program identity and provide students with a valuable professional tool. This presentation focuses on that topic.

Description of the Course Content

Our project portfolio course has essentially two main components: 1) the development of electronic and paper portfolios and 2) a career unit that includes a mentoring program. Each student creates a working portfolio of sample artifacts for feedback. Using feedback from classmates, teachers, and a mentor, students revise and re-design their working portfolios into professional portfolios. The career unit focuses on having students develop a number of career documents that include a professional LinkedIn profile, a professional resume, and a networking plan.

Mentorship Program

Each student is paired with a professional technical communicator, writer, or media specialist. The mentor provides the student with feedback on the student’s developing portfolios and also provides the student with career advice.

Open House

Every student in the portfolio class must participate in the Open House, which serves as a final exam in the course. The Open House, which we have run for better than 10 years, is a huge success providing our students and our three undergraduate degrees with widespread exposure and a great deal of positive feedback from the general community and from administrators and faculty throughout the university.

Conclusion

A capstone portfolio course offers technical communication programs a number of important advantages. It helps shape program identity, functions as an important assessment vehicle, and provides students with a valuable professional tool.

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What Can I Do with this Major? Using the Intro Course to Address a Common Student Concern

Nick Carrington, Cedarville University

I will discuss how we transformed our introductory class to address a common question among our students: “what can I do with this major.” We made this change based on formal and informal research including the following:

a) Conversations with recent graduates and current students.

b) Meetings with prospective students.

c) Graduate job data

Because of the data we collected, we changed the introductory course to focus more on foundational skills and potential careers in the field than on creating basic technical documents. In my presentation, I will describe the methods I use in order to help students realize their career potential with a degree in technical communication/professional writing.
I will discuss how my colleague and I discovered a problem through our research and created a solution to that problem. This process fits well with the conference theme that focuses how research informs curricular decisions.

Overview

I will address the issue of program enrollments and administrative respect. Our program at Cedarville has been fighting the numbers game for many years. We are constantly looking for new ways to recruit and help prospective students, their parents, and our administration understand what we teach and why it is worthwhile.

Research Method

Research often reveals issues that researchers did not anticipate. In 2011, we collected data about where our graduates’ career paths. In subsequent years, we collected data from graduates, current students, and prospective students geared toward bettering our recruiting efforts. In the process, we came to a few conclusions tangential to our purpose. First, professionals with writing, editing, and design skills have a myriad of career options. Our graduates held many kinds of writing jobs in seemingly countless industries. Second, prospective students and current students (even upperclassmen) frequently struggled to understand what career options they have when they graduate from a technical communication/professional writing program.

We felt it important to help students understand their career potential because of their desirable skill set. To accomplish this purpose, we made major changes to our introductory course to focus on career opportunities and foundational skills in the field. These changes include assignments where students interact with professionals, study job ads, and review literature related to foundational skills and writing careers.

Take Away

Attendees will learn about how our program collected data from graduates and current students

and used that data to address a curricular need. They will also see how our introductory course functions while hearing a rationale for the approach. Attendees will likely have encountered the same question from students and can see how another program addressed the issue.

Pedagogical Perspectives and Practices

Students Exit Quietly: Using Critical Theory to Encourage the Dialectic

Emily J. Petersen, Utah State University

Connection to Conference Theme

My presentation is a pedagogical approach to ideological, political, and other uncomfortable discussions in the classroom that may marginalize students or put them on the defensive.

Research Method

Critical Theory

Take Away

Audience members will leave with a sense of how critical theories of race, class, gender, sexuality and so on can address issues of marginalization within the classroom and encourage quiet students to join the conversation. My suggestions will be accompanied with a reading list, either for instructors or students. I draw from various critical theories within and without the field to inform instructors and students on ways of grappling with difficult and possibly marginalizing classroom conversations.

Overview

According to Hamel (2009), women often leave workplaces quietly instead of speaking up when disappointed with policies or broken promises. I observed a similar phenomenon in my classroom. Several students felt marginalized, but left the course quietly, telling me in their final papers how much they disagreed with or felt oppressed by other students' comments. Instead of speaking up, they stayed quiet, upsetting themselves and leaving the dialectic unexplored. I would have welcomed their participation in class discussions, even if contradictory to other students or myself, as such conversation would have encouraged all students to interrogate their own positions and would have increased the richness and diversity of our learning experience and ultimately our understanding of the materials.

As Young (2009) realized, structural oppression can be the result of "often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions" (p. 56). According to Young, the five faces of oppression include exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Who gets to claim oppression? In what ways can our courses and content marginalize students who may be inclined to stay silent, rather than engage in productive, collaborative conflict in order to achieve a better sense of how ideologies and practices play out in real life? How do we, as instructors and program administrators, address the silences of marginalized students, whether they are truly oppressed or not, and counter some of the loudest voices that make unconscious, but well meaning, assumptions?

My presentation will examine this problem and suggest ways of using critical theory to foster productive conversation on difficult issues in the classroom. Audience members will leave with a sense of how critical theories of race, class, gender, sexuality and so on can address issues of marginalization within the classroom, even if such ideology tends to contribute to students' difficulty with engaging in productive dialogue with each other. I suggest that we consciously

create intersectional classrooms, encouraging students to reach across ideological divides and cultural and contextual boundaries to enhance critical thinking and better solve similar problems in the theory and practice of technical communication.

My presentation will specifically suggest that we and our students 1) discuss the complexities of social groups and identity (Wenger, 1998; Young, 2009); 2) recognize boundaries and borders (Anzaldúa, 1987); 3) examine the role technology and culture play in domination (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944); 4) take a user-centered approach to the classroom by including students in its design and problem-solving (Johnson, 1998); 5) share our standpoints and encourage (or require) students to do the same (Bourdieu, 1977; Harding, 2004); 6) adopt multicultural and third-wave feminist ideas of accepting difference (Tong, 2009); and 7) embrace conflict as a healthy collaborative strategy (Burnett, 1993). Each of these items will be accompanied with suggestions for reading, either for instructors or to include in assigned class reading. All of these ideas are drawn from various critical theories within and without the field, and should inform both instructors and students on ways of grappling with difficult and uncomfortable classroom conversations.

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What Do We Know? Researching the "Obvious" in TC Assignments

Chalice Randazzo, Eastern Michigan University

This presentation argues for the value of research that considers students' processes for creating common technical communication (TC) assignments. Such research, I argue, allows TC educators and programs to be reflexive—what Cunliffe (2002) called a "turning back" on closely held practices and beliefs—about the approaches we take to those assignments. To illustrate this point, this presentation considers the sources that students use for advice while writing resumes. The resume is a common assignment in technical communication courses, so students' processes for writing it might seem obvious to their instructors, but actually researching students' experiences opens opportunities for reflexively reimagining the assignment in ways that benefit TC educators and students.

My argument draws from surveys, interviews, and focus groups I conducted with 88 students at two research sites, where I asked them about the sources they used for advice when writing resumes. Students most frequently reported using people (teachers, family, friends) and the internet as sources of advice. While these sources might seem obvious to TC educators, closer examination of students' responses showed that their assessment of sources was not balanced: they prioritized advice from people they considered "relevant," which they defined as directly related to the specific field that they were applying in, and they reported that their instructors' and/or career counselors' advice was less relevant than advice from professionals. Additionally, only 11 students (roughly 13%) reported using their technical communication textbooks for anything more than visual examples. These results suggest that students consider academic sources (textbooks, instructors, and career counselors) as less credible and valuable to their resume writing experience.

In response to these results, I suggest reframing the resume assignment as a qualitative research project where students gather information from multiple sources (internet, people, books), synthesize and analyze the resulting data, and use those results to make informed decisions about their resume. Students already go through these steps, so shifting the assignment makes their current (sometimes tacit) process more explicit and positions TC educators as informed guides. Such reframing allows educators to draw credibility from their expertise in qualitative research standards (e.g., Conklin & Hayhoe, 2011; Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It also allows students to practice qualitative research skills, create and strengthen professional networks, and gain expertise in their career fields.

This presentation includes a handout with the frequencies of students' reported sources of resume advice. The handout will also suggest steps to reconfigure the resume assignment as a research project. This study is just an example, I argue, of what can be gained by researching students' writing processes even if—perhaps especially if—educators feel they know what students are doing in these common TC assignments.

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Investigating Writing Instruction in the Disciplines through a Multi-Departmental SOTL Project

Pavel Zemliansky, University of Central Florida

Connection to Conference Theme

This presentation will report on the design and early stages of the implementation of a multi-disciplinary SOTL project intended to investigate the purposes, methods, and results of professional writing instruction in multiple departments of a very large public university. The project connects to several topic areas put forth in the call for proposals:

- It connects programmatic research with SOTL.
- It considers research questions, useful in understanding our relationships with colleagues in other departments and disciplines.
- It will present actionable research results to colleagues in other fields and to university administrators.

Research Method

This project engages multiple departments and disciplines in a study of professional writing instruction. We have recruited 16 faculty members from 8 departments across the university to design and conduct field-specific professional writing SOTL research. All participants have undergone intensive, semester-long training in WAC/WID and have taught using those methods in their disciplines for at least one year. The presenter is a part of the WAC team which will lead these researchers in designing and implementing discipline-specific research projects into their own teaching and their students' learning of professional writing in their fields. Due to the diversity of the participating departments, which range from mathematics and computer science to political science to education, we anticipate a diversity of research methods and approaches put forth by these scholars. Based on the accepted applications, we anticipate surveys of students, interviews, and qualitative case studies to be the dominant research methods. The role of the WAC team will be to help participants create rigorous and sound research projects, the results of which can be later published in peer-reviewed outlets. Such guidance will take place through a combination of group workshops and individual consultations with participants. Since the project is scheduled to begin in August of 2015, this presentation will detail its early stages: design, recruitment of participants, and initial results of workshops and consultations. The presenter will ask the audience for feedback on project design and implementation.

Take Away

The audience will take the following away from the presentation:

a) A method which can be used to investigate attitudes towards and methods of professional writing instruction across departments and disciplines. This is an important takeaway since it addresses one of the key purposes of TSC programs in most contexts

b) A useful method of curricular and programmatic assessment through SOTL

c) A better understanding of potential venues for connecting their TSC program with other programs and colleagues at their institution and across institutions

Visuals Vying for Valuable Volume: How Teaching Comics in Small Technical Communication Programs Can Yield Big Results

Robert Watkins, Idaho State University

For programs that only offer one or two technical writing classes to students, curriculum design choices are vital. Each pedagogical choice matters and affects each student. Classes and curriculum become crowded and often tradition conquers innovation. However, to not explore new pedagogical choices could stagnate the field, even if the units take up only an additional week or two. One curriculum design choice I argue for stems from an empirical study I carried out and continue to adjust based in teaching students to design comics in order for them to learn valuable visual literacy skills.

With the demand for data visualization and technical visuals perpetually growing in value in both higher education and the workplace, creating effective visuals in technical communication program classrooms has become a need more than a luxury. However, when we ask students to use images they often turn to generic Google image searches or tired clipart without doing any original design. Additionally, too often the focus in the classroom remains in analysis; while this is a good start, engaging in production of images is vital. Diana George addresses professional communication's reluctance to make students producers. She writes that we rarely encourage students to move from visual critics to being visual producers (213). She worries that while the profession would be comfortable with students studying visuals, producing them takes it too far (216). But teaching visual literacy production through comics can address both of these concerns.

The data stems from an empirical classroom study I orchestrated that incorporated progymnasmata (Quintilian, D'Angelo) to enable students to create and analyze instructional comics in a step-by-step process. My presentation will place comics among visual rhetoric theories such as design demystification, the use of gestalt principles, and technology as tools (as championed by Northcut, Brumberger, Bernhardt, Kostelnick). My pedagogical approach will rely on multimodal design principles (from New London Group, Ball, Bezemer, Kress) and focus on production-centric pedagogies like those championed by Rice and others. I will discuss the classroom study by addressing the results from students that suggest that comics effectively teach juxtaposition, core writing skills, and hierarchy in an intuitive fashion that may be unique to the medium. My continued study focuses on two technical writing classes taught simultaneously with one incorporating a comics unit and one not. The final visual-based assignment will be analyzed using coding strategies to see what affordances lie in teaching comics in the classroom by comparing the control group with the comics-based class.

Other instructors can benefit from this method because they can see that a low-tech approach can teach a highly technical process. Programs can adopt the strategy or use aspects of it by incorporating other visual design assignments (such as infographics) to teach similar techniques in limited timeframes and capacities.

Conversing with The SME: The Development and Efficacy of Social Intelligence in the Training of Technical Communicators

David Young, Texas Tech University

This talk stems from a conversation with a colleague while interning as a technical writer (Bloch, 2011). We were discussing the complications of expanding our team with distance technical writers and began discussing what qualities make a good technical writer. Of course we discussed the qualities that one would expect to see: effective communicator, ability to collaborate with subject matter experts (SME), aptitude for learning technology, etc. These qualities are nothing new to those interested in the development of technical communication programs. Researchers have consistently sought to identify the core competencies of technical communicators from various perspectives (Allen and Benninghoff, 2004; Hart-Davidson, 2001; Rainey, Turner, and Dayton, 2005). As our discussion progressed, however, we began to delve deeper into what he saw as the most critical competency for the technical writer, the ability to build and maintain relationships with SMEs. Those who have practiced technical writing understand the frustrations of dealing with SMEs who by the nature of distributed work have their own respective goals, deadlines, motivations, etc. Managing these relationships in spite of these differences, however, is paramount to becoming an effective technical communicator. The majority of technical communication programs address this necessary competency by emphasizing collaboration within technical communication courses (Allen and Benninghoff, 2004). However, industry managers are still requesting that students be even more prepared for the realities of managing essential workplace relationships, especially with SMEs (Whiteside, 2003). In addition to the incorporation of collaborative and team-centered exercises, I propose social intelligence as a theoretical construct from which we can more effectively prepare technical communication students for the work that they will do outside of the classroom. The concept of social intelligence has received much attention in the field of business management as a quality of exceptional workplace performance. My goal is to draw upon this existing research to identify how social intelligence may compliment technical communication programs and facilitate the development of capable, well-prepared technical communicators.

Often, definitions of emotional and social intelligence (ESI) are conflated into one larger umbrella term; however, social intelligence is the focus of this talk. In business management research, social intelligence is defined as “the ability to recognize, understand, and use emotional information about others that leads to or causes effective or superior performance” (Boyatzis, 2008, p. 7). While intimately connected with emotional intelligence, which describes the ability of individual to direct reflection internally, social intelligence is focused externally on how individuals manage their relationships with other individuals (Koman and Wolff, 2008). Social intelligence emphasizes traits such as empathy, organizational awareness, conflict management, and influence as factors of an individual’s ability to perform job responsibilities. Based on existing research, connections have been drawn between social/emotional intelligence and workplace success for business managers, but social/emotional intelligence also appears to be a foundational competency in building and maintaining relationships with SMEs (Dreyfus, 2008; Boyatzis and Saatcioglu, 2008). When faced with SMEs who maintain different goals, values, and deadlines, traits associated with social intelligence can help overcome the dissonance inherent between SMEs and technical writers.

Attendees of the presentation will gain the perspective on how social intelligence is developed via the experiential knowledge gained while interning as a technical communicator. Even

graduate students looking to become professional academics can benefit from the intern experience because the social intelligence to succeed as a technical communicator can inevitably be passed on to their students, who will become future technical communicators themselves.

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Session 6

Perspectives on Programmatic Research

Outreach, Engagement, and Collaboration

Perspectives on Programmatic Research

Researching a Path for the Next 25 Years

Russell Willerton, Boise State University

Dr. Mike Markel started the technical communication program at Boise State University after joining the English faculty in 1990. The English department has five emphases: literature, writing (a mix of creative writing and advanced composition courses), English education (grades 7–12), linguistics, and technical communication. The tech-comm program was designed primarily to prepare local students for local jobs with manufacturing companies such as Micron Technology (memory chips) and HP/Hewlett-Packard (printer technology). Dr. Markel and our colleague Dr. John Battalio retired after this spring semester.

Twenty-five years later, the economic landscape of Boise offers fewer jobs related to manufacturing and more opportunities in a variety of start-up companies. However, the curriculum of our technical-communication program looks almost exactly like it did 25 years ago. With state support for higher education well below the levels before the Great Recession, every academic program on our campus must continually assert its viability and potential. While the technical communication program has long been one of the English department's smallest and least-funded programs, the low numbers of students have led the provost to put the program on notice: Without notable growth in enrollments and numbers of graduates over the next four years, the technical communication program is at risk of being closed.

Thus, our program faces two urgent challenges: the need to update an outdated curriculum, and the need to attract and retain more students. In addition to enrollment numbers, anecdotal evidence from recent department-wide recruiting events indicates that high-schoolers tend to know little about the field of technical communication, and prospective English majors frequently do not consider technical communication among their options in our English department.
In keeping with the 2015 conference theme, this fall we will research students' perceptions of technical communication in hopes of increasing enrollments. We will research two groups: English majors, and non-English majors. To reach the English majors, we will survey the students in ENGL 198, a one-credit, pass/fail seminar required for all English major. A typical ENGL 198 class has 60–80 students. To reach non-English majors, we will survey ~250 students in ENGL 101, first-year composition. Both surveys will follow IRB-approved protocols. Although these survey samples will not support generalizations about the populations of Boise State English majors and of non-English majors, they will provide a foundation for understanding Boise State University students' perceptions of technical communication.

We seek answers to these questions:

a) What do students know and perceive about technical communication?

b) How many students can identify someone they know who is a technical communicator?

c) Do students have favorable or unfavorable views of technical communication as a field of study and a field of employment?

d) What can we do to portray technical communication in a favorable light to students?

At CPTSC 2015, I will discuss both the results of our research and the methods we used to conduct it. Attendees can consider how our insights might apply to their respective programs.

Toward a Program of “Administrative Research”

Jay Gordon, Youngstown State University

Recently our PTW program was required to produce a one-page SWOT analysis for the provost. The precise purpose of the analysis was not entirely clear to us, so the worry naturally arose among faculty that the provost, formerly our STEM dean, would use these analyses to determine which humanities and social science programs to cut. But thus far no programs have been threatened, as far as I know, as a direct result of their SWOT analyses coming up short.

These political worries raised the specter, as one could imagine of C.P. Snow's famous "Two Cultures" analogy, and there was much rumbling about "STEM people" not respecting (nor understanding) the work of the humanities and social sciences. Setting aside these political worries, though, we could see that the SWOT analysis was a valuable exercise for us. We had to articulate clearly, honestly, concisely and substantively what our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are. We had to make our analysis meaningful to a potentially hostile or at least skeptical audience. Rhetorically, we had to practice what we preached.

In light of this year's conference theme, our SWOT analysis can actually be seen as one component among several of a kind of (not-yet-formalized) administrative research study. We regularly produce assessments of learning and program reviews as well, and these kinds of reflective inquiry are themselves built up from various kinds of curricular research. Learning assessments, for example, require us to examine empirically how successfully students are meeting program goals. And from these assessments, as well as our own examination of the field and currents in pedagogy, we gain information that guides us in refining these goals year to year. Even our marketing efforts, which involve communicating with graduates and investigating the most effective means of getting the word out about our program, are built on research.

In my presentation, I will briefly explain our administrative research activities (such as outlined above) and then offer a proposal for a more formal and structured administrative research program. The components of the program include those mentioned above, but instead of treating them as isolated administrative tasks, I will propose integrating them into a whole. Specifically, I will propose an approach to administrative research that focuses on (a) curriculum development, (b) program security, and (c) marketing strategies.

Administrative research, like SoTL, is meant to be applied in a reflective way to the improvement of one's program, which simply means serving students more effectively. At the same time, such research could also be conducted fruitfully in a more elaborated theoretical context (such as, for example, the complexities of resolving the binary distinction between, on the one hand, the humanities and social sciences, and on the other hand, the STEM discipline.

Historical Technical Communication: Programmatic Implications

Andrew Hillen, University of South Florida

Connection to Conference Theme

Technical communication programs have access to different arguments to justify their legitimacy and relevance in academia and broader society. An under-studied avenue, with programmatic implications, are the historical narratives of technical writing. These historical antecedents do not need to work their way into undergraduate classrooms. Instead, I argue that these ancient anecdotal narratives offer alternative frameworks. Technical and scientific communication program administrators and scholars can utilize these frameworks to add value to the boundary delineation of disciplines and departments within the larger scope of technical and scientific communication.

Research Method

My presentation offers a selection of ancient authors— Pherecydes, Thucydides, and Posidonius— as case studies of ancient technical communicators. These examples demonstrate the resonance of technical writing issues as far back at 650 BCE.

Coming from a Classics background, my work incorporates specific examples of diction and style. For example, Thucydides' use of the term, συγγράφω, "to compose," is used in relation to technical compositions that redefined several different ancient genres and their practitioners. Utilizing Longo and Miller, I pay close attention to the cultural context of the choices that these authors made and suggest that they disregard genre conventions to most effectively communicate with their audience.

Take Away

This perspective offers technical and scientific communication programs insightful pedigrees and a narrative to use in internal discussions, and provide alternative handles for those outside the discipline to grasp the significance of technical communication.

Reciprocity: IRBs and Technical and Professional Writing Research(ers)

Johanna Phelps-Hillen, University of South Florida

Connection to Conference Theme

This presentation suggests we harness the assets of Institutional Review Boards in relation to, and from the perspective of, technical and professional writing researchers, both local and international, programmatic and disciplinarily. Focused on research, and the infrastructures that help shape and build research agendas, this presentation directly addresses the 2015 theme by discussing research approaches and applications from a meta-perspective, that is, it discusses this question: how do we legitimate and build research within, with, and *about* the institutions wherein we work, research, and administer programs?

Research Method

This presentation offers a snapshot of a larger dissertation project examining the infrastructural and relational possibilities of Institutional Review Boards and text- and workplace-based researchers. It responds to recent critiques from legal and medical scholars that argue that Institutional Review Boards are in need of moderation and updating (Schrag, 2010; Klitzman, 2015; Schneider, 2015). Drawing upon the work of scholars such as Eble, Banks, McKee, and Anderson, I suggest potential collaborations, questions, and heuristics to examine the ways technical and professional writing researchers interface with Institutional Review Boards.

While primarily theoretical, yet based on case studies situated in technical and professional communication, this presentation responds directly to the recommendation that "as a field, [we] should approach the topic of programmatic research and the questions, methods, application, and context that affect and are affected by it (CPTSC CFP, 2015)." It does so with not only the awareness that the day to day institutional pressures we experience impact our program and assessment design, but also with an attendance to the impact the longstanding, legislatively mandated IRB has on the following categories from the 2015 CPTSC CFP:

- "Research questions used to examine our programs
- Research design and research methods that should be used to conduct such research
- Possible applications of programmatic research to examine relationships with industry
- Theoretical foundations for our research on programs and programmatic issues
- Administrative practice related to our programs
- Approaches for conducting programmatic research in global contexts"

Rather than a critique, this presentation suggests reciprocal and effective modes of engaging with, and recognizing the effects of, IRBs. It offers an asset based approach to harness the opportunities for study, as well as the areas for critique and examination, wherein technical and professional communication scholars can engage robustly and achieve positive outcomes.

Take Away

This presentation offers attendees a snapshot of a constructive approach to working with, and recognizing the value of, Institutional Review Boards. It counteracts narratives that disparage

IRBs and suggests instead ways in which technical and professional writing researchers can begin to engage productively to enhance these institutional bodies. Attendees walk away with a better understanding of, based on two brief case examples, the impact of IRBs on the everyday research we conduct both within and on our programs. It suggests that the methods and methodologies we use to build our projects and assess our programs, which are based too on our academic pedigree, our home program, and our project, are impacted by IRBs.

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Outreach, Engagement, and Collaboration

Community-Engaged Learning in a Professional & Technical Writing Program

Becky Jo Gesteland, Weber State University
Shelley Thomas, Weber State University

UX Mentorship: Developing a Research Partnership for Program Innovation

Quan Zhou, Metro State University
Victoria Sadler, Metro State University

Engineering a Community: Establishing and Developing Cross-Curricular Collaboration

Jennifer Mallette, Boise State University

Stakeholder Theory, Salience, and Program Administration

Jim Nugent, Oakland State University

What's in It for All of Us: Critical Reflections on and Best Practices for an Academe-Industry Partnership in Florida's Socio-Political Context

Ella Browning, University of South Florida

Community-Engaged Learning in a Professional & Technical Writing Program

Becky Jo Gesteland, Weber State University
Shelley Thomas, Weber State University

Overview

The Professional & Technical Writing (PTW) Program at Weber State University (WSU) consists of six required courses, three of which have been offered as Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) classes. Recently, the PTW faculty decided to apply for CEL program designation, meaning that all six courses would involve CEL of some kind. This presentation explains our rationale for seeking this designation, the process of applying for it, the means of implementing the program-wide designation, and our plans for assessing the courses and program for accreditation and overall effectiveness.

Background

Our Center's (CCEL) Carnegie Classification™ provides the framework for a strategic partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, providing both curricular and co-curricular community engagement opportunities for students, faculty and staff in partnership with local community organizations affiliated with WSU. Students, faculty, staff, alumni and community partners come to the CCEL to create connections and opportunities to give service, to grow through learning and experience, and to build a community that thrives. The association between CCEL and the surrounding community provides the students opportunities to create documents that meet client specifications and to create technical writing samples to include in their professional portfolio.

Take Away

Attendees will understand why we decided to pursue CEL designation for the PTW program and how we are implementing the program-wide designation. Moreover, they will learn about our assessment strategy (at the assignment, course, and program level).

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UX Mentorship: Developing a Research Partnership for Program Innovation

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Victoria Sadler, Metro State University

At Metropolitan State University, we have recently launched two programs in the Design of User Experience (DUeX)—an undergraduate minor and an online graduate certificate. As we move forward with growing these programs, we want to establish close connections with the local user experience (UX) community.

This past spring, we took our first step to formalize our relationship with the local UX community by initiating a research partnership with the Minnesota chapter of the User Experience Professionals Association (UXPA). The UXPA Minnesota chapter launched a mentorship program that connected experienced UX practitioners with those who seek a career in UX. About 15 mentors/practitioners and 15 mentees signed up for the program voluntarily. In the four months that followed, mentors and mentees developed their own ways of learning and sharing. Our project was to assess this UX mentorship program. This project was funded by the Community-Engaged Scholarship Grant, provided by our university's Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship.

Specifically, we had the following goals:

- Evaluate and improve the mentorship program established by the Minnesota Chapter of the UXPA
- Investigate the benefits of participation by mentors and mentees
- Articulate best practices to inform future mentorship initiatives
- Inform the development of our emerging UX program, its curriculum and directions

The grant allowed us to gather data via three instruments: an online survey; roundtable discussions; and interviews with the two educational coordinators for UXPA Minnesota.

In the following of this proposal, we highlight some of the findings.

Prominent Findings

- Mentorship is a timely and practical way for those seeking a UX career, as formal education in UX is lacking.
- Mentorship is best done with clearly identified goals questions for both mentor and mentee, a reasonable rhythm of meetings, and a mentorship period long enough to gain meaningful experience, hands-on projects, discussions of books and articles in UX.

Findings about Mentors

- The majority between 35 to 45 years old
- A lot more female than male mentors
- Nearly 50% of mentors had worked in UX for more than 10 years

Engineering a Community: Establishing and Developing Cross-Curricular Collaboration

Jennifer Mallette, Boise State University

Entering a new institution, while exciting, harbors the potential for missteps, especially for a new assistant professor. Add in expectations for cross-disciplinary collaboration to extend a communication in the disciplines initiative, the necessity of deliberated action becomes greater. To establish a productive working relationship within an English department and across campus, which approaches hold the most potential for success? How does one navigate the culture of a particular community to account for the needs of various stakeholders while also advocating for methods grounded in research?

In this presentation, I explore ways to initiate and build a cross-curricular collaboration between the English Department and the College of Engineering at my institution, given my role as newcomer. I argue that these strategies should use the tactics of community engagement, such as those discussed by Paula Mathieu and Eli Goldblatt. For instance, Mathieu (calling on Michel de Certeau) argues that one must approach community projects using tactics—actions that are not contained within a specific institutional location or demarcated by strict boundaries—rather than strategies, which are "calculated actions that emanate from and depend upon 'proper' (as in propertied) spaces" (16). Given the often divided nature of humanistic and STEM disciplines, this understanding of tactical action asks one to rethink spaces and borders in ways that promote deeper engagement and cooperation. Goldblatt too offers a vision of involvement deeply rooted in the community rather than isolated and detached from it. While both Mathieu and Goldblatt focus on community literacy programs, their discussions offer useful approaches that can be applied to the interactions between an English department, a college of engineering, and other community stakeholders, such as industry. In essence, to work together productively, we must rethink disciplinary boundaries and develop a community to support writing initiatives.

To further explore and support this approach, I call on my experiences with a failed attempt to initiate cross-curricular work. While working as a graduate student at a different university, I came to understand that not all institutions eagerly embrace the concept of building an interdisciplinary writing and communication program. In fact, some stakeholders may actively push against such attempts especially when they believe that doing so will transgress boundaries or cede territory that has been painfully claimed. These experiences have taught me the value of deliberate action, of listening to all those involved, and of learning the various perspectives and histories at work within a given context.

Finally, I seek to spark conversation among participants of how to extend and develop the program at my current institution as well as at other colleges and universities. As Linda Adler-Kassner discusses, we need to reframe the stories that surround our writing programs; that reframing extends to the views of writing within the disciplines that pose a barrier to the kind of collaboration we strive to build. I hope this conversation enables us to share ideas and brainstorm approaches that will change those narratives and permit the building of a new community within our varied institutional contexts.

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Stakeholder Theory, Salience, and Program Administration

Jim Nugent, Oakland State University

The term “stakeholder” is widespread in our scholarly conversations about technical communication pedagogy, practice, and program administration. In volumes of the CPTSC *Conference Proceedings* published between the years 2002 and 2012 alone, the term appears within some three dozen presentations. The wide growth and broad applicability of the term “stakeholder” has earned it a certain buzzword cachet and near-ubiquity. However, Nugent and José (2015) have offered a modest corrective to our field’s use of the term by drawing attention to the word’s origins within the literature of *stakeholder theory*, a rich strain of scholarship in the disciplines of management and business ethics. They have described the often unacknowledged root of the “stakeholder” concept in the work of the ethicist R. Edward Freeman, who has positioned stakeholder theory squarely within the tradition of philosophical pragmatism as part of a “Rortian and Deweyan vision of inquiry” (Freeman et al., p.72).

As Nugent and José have suggested, one particularly useful and adaptable concept from this scholarly domain is the notion of stakeholder salience. Stakeholder salience implies that, even as an organization acknowledges its reliance upon and interconnectedness with myriad stakeholders, it should only attend to those stakeholders *in proportion to* their respective salience to the organization. As Freeman et al. (2010) observed, achieving “balance between allowing external influences (stakeholders) to determine completely organizational strategies *and totally ignoring them* is at the heart of modern stakeholder theory” (p. 89, emphasis added). The notion of salience refutes facile characterizations of stakeholder theory advanced by Gallagher (2011), Fish (2008), and others, who have implied that any attempt to attend to stakeholders in higher education means “giving away the store” and entails abandoning our most cherished disciplinary values and academic autonomy.

In this presentation, the speaker suggests that stakeholder theory can offer a model for technical communication program administration that allows us to avoid “all or nothing” thinking as we seek to make our disciplinary ideals manifest under uncertain material conditions. After providing a brief overview of the relevant stakeholder theory literature, the speaker will discuss the implications of looking beyond the buzzword façade of the term “stakeholder” to incorporate new, more nuanced concepts such as stakeholder salience into our scholarly conversations. The speaker will conclude by discussing some administrative case studies to illustrate the theory’s practical implications for program administration.

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What's in It for All of Us: Critical Reflections on and Best Practices for an Academe-Industry Partnership in Florida's Socio-Political Context

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This presentation offers critical reflections on the ways Florida's complex socio-political context has shaped how one local community thinks about the purpose of higher education and possible relationships between universities and local businesses, as well as best practices for implementing a successful academe-industry partnership in such a context. The following proposal provides background on the socio-political context (Background Part 1), background on the partnership (Background Part 2), a brief literature review of relevant scholarship, and a summation of what panel attendees will gain from this presentation.

Overview

Background Part 1: In 2014 the Florida Legislature established performance-based funding for universities across the state. Although funding is based on seven different metrics,[1] critics tend to focus on two: (1) number of graduates produced by the university and (2) salaries graduates earn upon graduation.[2] This system is part of Governor Rick Scott's larger "Keep Florida Working" budget,[3] which aims to "provide a return on taxpayers' investments"[4] by graduating students quickly and retaining them locally. Regardless of how Florida's technical, professional, and scientific communication program administrators and faculty feel about this, what is clear is that this is the context in which we must evolve our programs and our field.

Background Part 2: In late 2014, in response to Scott's initiatives, the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce established a new program, the Education Connection, in an effort to create a partnership between chamber members' local businesses and local universities[5] - with little success. In May 2015, seeking summer part time work, I began working as an intern at the Education Connection while also a doctoral student studying technical communication at the University of South Florida (USF) and acting as assistant program administrator for three professional and technical service courses at USF.

Almost two decades ago George F. Hayhoe asked, "The Academe-Industry Partnership: What's in It for All of Us?" and prophesied "Technical communicators in the academy and industry need to explore a new model of education for the next millennium, one that fosters, promotes, and actively pursues learning—and learning to learn" (1998, p. 20). Many scholars have attempted to answer this question since then, some focusing on internships (Kaseorg & Pukkonen, 2015; Sapp & Zhang, 2009; Tovey 2001), others on student-client interactions (Breuch, 2001), and many on general academe-industry partnerships (Campbell, 2006; Palmeri & Tuten, 2005; Lippincott & Voss, 2001). Some have also provided suggestions for programmatic practice and teaching strategies (Bridgeford, Kitalong & Selfe, 2004; Johnson-Eilola & Selber, 2001; Rehling, 1998).

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1 Information on the most recent version of Florida's performance-based funding (April 2015) can be found here: http://www.flbog.edu/about/budget/docs/performance_funding/Overview-Doc-Performance-Funding-10-Metric-Model-Condensed-Version-April2015.pdf

2 http://www.nea.org/home/59772.htm

3 http://www.keepfloridaworking.com/content/current/Education.htm

4 http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/the-buzz-florida-politics/content/scott-florida-doesnt-need-more-anthropology-majors

5 http://www.tampachamber.com/Involvement/Education-Connection.aspx

This presentation seeks to add to this conversation by showcasing one successful practice for navigating this particular socio-political context. Using survey data collected from students and instructors in two professional and technical communication service courses, this presentation will share the results of a unique partnership between one program and a local Chamber of Commerce, exploring critical questions about how to communicate programmatic research and issues to individuals and institutions outside of academia as well as questions about programmatic relationships to industry. Attendees will walk away with strategies and best practices for creating similar partnerships between their own programs and local businesses in their communities.

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