



Conference Abstracts

Sustainable Growth in Technical and Scientific Communication: Principles, Personal, and Programmatic

The 34th Annual Meeting of the Council for Programs in
Technical and Scientific Communication
October 11-13, 2007
East Carolina University, Greenville, NC

Department of English

Thomas Harriot
College of Arts and Sciences



Ann Brady
Humanities
Michigan Technological University

Report on CPTSC Research Grant: "Linguistic and Cultural Diversity In Scientific and Technical Communication"

I propose to report on the curricular research that a graduate student and I are doing, sponsored by a 2007 CPTSC Research Grant. The title of the project is: "Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Scientific and Technical Communication: Designing International Curricula." Following is a summary of the proposed presentation.

The globalization of the workplace requires that students be prepared to work in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts. Curricula in Scientific and Technical Communication (STC), however, often do not meet this demand. In their 2005 study, Sandi Harner and Anne Rich found that only 1% of undergraduate STC programs require a course explicitly in the topic of global or international communication, and only 5% of programs offered such a course as an elective.

To address this need, one Michigan Tech University faculty member and one International graduate student are re-designing and piloting a course (HU 3120) required of all STC students, as well as select students in Business, Engineering, and Technology. We intend for students completing this course to demonstrate increased sensitivities to the cultural dimensions of language and to the linguistic diversity existing in the classroom and the workplace.

Specifically, we are:

- Developing assignments. We have, for instance, begun work on assignments in which students write in English for International audiences in order to emphasize the cultural dimensions of discourse, including the written, visual and iconic.
- Training instructors. Already in place is a practicum, required of those instructors new to teaching the course (2-3 each semester) and attended by experienced instructors as well (5-6 each semester). Dedicated to pedagogical development and innovation, this practicum provides the context in which instructors can learn about these assignments and prepare to teach them.
- Implementing the assignments. HU 3120 is offered in multiple sections over the academic year. We have begun to pilot these assignments this summer and will continue to do so throughout 2007-08.
- Assessing the assignments' effectiveness. We are administering both pre- and post-instruction assessments. Specifically, we are asking students to (1) write proposals in which they identify the rhetorical problems they anticipate as they write for International audiences and (2) write reflections on the process of producing these documents, the challenges they faced, their solutions, and what they learned from wrestling with the complexities of cultural diversity.

Works Cited

Harner, Sandi, and Rich, Ann. "Trends in Undergraduate Curriculum in Scientific and Technical Communication Programs." *Technical Communication* 52:2, 2005. 209-220.

Ed Malone

Department of English & Technical Communication
University of Missouri-Rolla

The Role of Historical Studies in Technical Communication Curricula

At least 200 historical studies have been published in the top five technical communication journals since 1990. This level of productivity seems to suggest that (a) the journals' editors and reviewers acknowledge the importance of historical research, (b) scholars see value if not utility in historical research, and (c) historical research is now part of the mainstream of technical communication research. What uses are academic programs making of this research? Do they require (or even offer) courses in the history of technical communication? In the context of their curricula, how, when, and where do they teach the history of technical communication? What are their justifications for doing so or not doing so? The investigators will explore these and other related issues. The findings will enable program administrators and faculty to make better-informed decisions about the role that historical studies should or should not play in their curricula. The findings may also benefit technical communication scholars who are researching the history of technical communication by giving them feedback about the value of their research.

Elizabeth Avery Gomez
Department of Humanities
New Jersey Institute of Technology

Towards a Lexicon for Diversity in Technical and Scientific Communication Programs: Strengthening the Message in Academic Programs and Professional Organizations

The need to increase diversity initiatives within the discipline exists. Establishing a lexicon for diversity in technical and scientific communication programs is proposed as one initial step. Creating a website dedicated to this research topic in a virtual space is proposed as a forum to review existing terms and the messages conveyed in academic programs and professional organizations. Through the website, discussion groups, idea generation, and information gathering can take place.

The ability to review our findings across the discipline and discuss next steps toward diversity initiatives that benefit the program as a whole can be included within the website. For example, common terminology shared with the CPTSC Program Review group can help develop diversity programs within the discipline. Common terminology can also become inclusion criteria for the CPTSC program reviews, as well as to promote communication with other groups through publication. The technical and scientific communication field can also benefit from ongoing initiatives to increase diversity among academic programs. The National Institute of Health (2006) and National Science Foundations (2006) both have numerous academically funded programs designed to increase diversity in higher education programs and the workforce needs of the 21st century. These funded programs range from pre-K-12, to summer programs, and for each level of higher education. Many Federal workforce agencies are also implementing diversity initiatives (NIH, 2006). For example, in 1995, technical communication administrators Peg Cheirett and Bruce Gibbs identified concerns about recruitment, retention, and the management of a diverse workforce in the 21st Century.

In year one of this research, a content analysis and review was conducted of the terms used for diversity messages in published materials and websites promoting technical and scientific communication programs. In parallel, a content analysis and review of terms used by NIH and NSF feeder programs, such as Bridges and McNair (NSF, 2006; BEST, 2004) were also reviewed.

In year two, the findings will be made available to the CPTSC Program Review group for discussion on next steps. The findings will be posted on a secured site with Blog capabilities to facilitate discussions among the CPTSC program review group initially. Discussion topics based on the content analysis and review could include: ways to develop diversity initiatives, ways to develop evaluation criteria for CPTSC program reviews, and ways to bridge to feeder programs.

In sum, the findings of this analysis and review are being presented as a discussion vehicle to strengthen the message for diversity in technical and scientific communications in academic programs and professional organizations.

Stan Dicks, Susan Katz, Jason Swarts
English - Technical Communication
North Carolina State University

Multi-modal Program Review and Assessment

In the last year the degree programs in the English Department at NCSU were required to perform eight-year assessments and to undergo external review for assessment and improvement purposes. This included the M. S. degree in Technical Communication. We decided that assessment of the program should involve all of the constituent groups influenced by the program: prospective students, current students, faculty, alumni, and industry and government employers. Obviously, using a single feedback mechanism for such disparate groups would simply not work, so it became obvious that we would need to use multiple methods for eliciting, receiving, and analyzing data about the effectiveness of our program as perceived by the different audience groups.

As part of the self-assessment process, we developed a set of core program objectives and outcomes against which we would measure the results. Our assessment plan included three broad objectives: to guide students in their development as professionals in their chosen fields in technical communication, to prepare students to be effective theoreticians and practitioners in technical communication, and to continue to be perceived as a highly successful graduate program that achieves local, national, and international visibility. Under each of these objectives we listed several desired outcomes and the method and frequency of data collection we would use to determine how well we were achieving the desired outcome. It is those methods that comprise our multi-modal approach to self assessment.

To assess prospective students' perception of the program, we used the graduate school's application and admission statistics for the previous ten years, studying the rise and fall of applications and trying to see correlations with economic conditions (there were none apparent). We also studied how well we did recruiting and retaining a diverse group of students and were pleasantly surprised to see that we easily exceeded departmental and university averages. For current student assessment we used two vehicles: (1) an exit survey in which we specifically asked students how well they thought the program had helped them to achieve each of our desired outcomes, and (2) assessment by faculty advisors as to how well students' capstone projects reflected success in meeting the desired outcomes. Our primary means for assessing faculty were to study the numbers of publications in books and in peer-reviewed articles to ensure that it was remaining at a high level. We studied alumni by conducting an extensive survey (described by Susan Katz at last year's CPTSC meeting). Finally, to study how well we were doing with industry, government, and non-profit employers, we studied the ongoing rise in job openings we received from them for our students to work in internships, part-time, and full-time positions.

The results of all of this data collection and analysis were or will be used for two main purposes: to meet the university requirements for assessment and to allow us to make improvements to our courses and our curriculum. We issued an extensive assessment report that was used internally by the department and issued to the external assessment team, which gave the M. S. program high marks. M. S. faculty will use the assessment results and report to study our individual courses and our overall curriculum to determine what changes and improvements we can make.

We propose to present a panel in three parts: (1) an overview of the results, (2) suggestions for doing multi-modal self assessments, and (3) applying self assessment results to curricular and program modifications.

Rick Mott
Dept. of English and Theatre
Eastern Kentucky University

Successfully Growing a TC Program: Building Alliances and Negotiating Departmental Politics

Due to the corporatization of the university, academic programs face mounting pressure to increase their numbers of students in order to justify their cost. Fortunately, for those of us working in technical and scientific communication programs, we teach a subject that is waxing rather than waning in terms of its importance, significance, and position within research and industry. Consequently, many TC programs have increased their numbers of students by following a set of successful recruitment strategies and procedures, which may vary from institution to institution.

Yet, at what cost do we increase our numbers? As most of us in academics know all too well, frequently we must attempt to grow our programs by drawing on a limited—and often shrinking—set of resources. As a result, if we succeed in raising our numbers, must we necessarily divert resources from other, less successful programs into our own in order to sustain the effort? From where do those resources come? And at whose expense?

Of course, the location of our program—whether housed in a department of English, humanities, communication, or engineering—may affect potential available resources; but, in order to sustain our program's viability, and to maintain our collegiality, we must often ameliorate, or at least try to avoid, the problem that if we are growing in numbers and taking a bigger piece of the resource pie—a resource pie which may include teaching loads, course offerings, and tenure lines—some other program's piece may be getting smaller. Because, unfortunately, once we force someone else to accept a smaller piece of some real or imagined resource pie, we are actively recruiting unwanted opponents and unconsciously fomenting disruptive and unproductive dissent.

How, then, do we position our technical and scientific writing programs to work as an ally—rather than as a competitor—with other programs within our department, within our college, or across the university? Rather than being viewed by our colleagues as an unfair consumer of resources, how do we demonstrate the value—to us, to them, and to the university community—of a vigorous and growing communication program? And how do we demonstrate to our colleagues that one program's success does not have to come at the expense of another program's well-being.

For my five-minute presentation, I intend to briefly summarize the pitfalls of growing a technical and scientific writing program, and then offer suggestions of how we can best build alliances with other programs—both within and without the department—and how we can negotiate the inevitable departmental politics that accompany the changing academic landscape.

Teena A. M. Carnegie
Department of English
Eastern Washington University

No New Funding Needed: Accountability Issues in Growing from an Option to a Major

This position paper raises questions regarding issues of accountability when growing technical communication programs. Where and how do we get information regarding resources needed to support programs? Can we legitimately justify expanding programs with arguments of efficiency while marking the “no new funding” checkbox on state program approval applications? What are the best practices for establishing and managing program resources?

These questions arise from my recent experience expanding the technical communication program at Eastern Washington University. Like many small programs, the EWU program is contained within an English curriculum. The technical communication program, for example, is one of three options in English (the other two being creative writing and literature). In Washington State, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) requires that options share 50% of their courses as a common core, and in English departments such as mine, the core courses are inevitably deemed to be literature courses. Given the need for electives and internships, it is possible (although rare) that a student could complete a major in English with a technical communication option having taken only two courses in technical communication. Clearly, more substantial coverage in technical communication subjects is needed to adequately prepare students for the job market.

To alter the number of mandatory technical communication courses within the program, however, requires expanding the program from an option to a major. Creating a new major puts technical communication courses at the core of the program, but it also requires state approval which means the completion of a HECB proposal.

Through the approval process for new programs, the Washington State HECB seeks to enact its strategic plan and bring accountability to the foreground. The HECB strategic plan, for example, emphasizes two primary goals: increasing opportunities for students to earn degrees and ensuring the higher education system remains responsive to the state economic needs. The strategic plan views the alignment to educational resources with the needs of the economy as a critical action, arguing that the state “must respond to student and employer demands in the field where current or projected job creation outpaces the capacity of the higher education system to produce trained graduates.”

Completing a new program proposal highlights issues of accountability faced by growing programs. Generally, it is not difficult to demonstrate that technical communication increases opportunities for students. Statistics show a 23% increase in jobs for technical writers nationally with an average of 2,620 openings annually. In Washington, technical writing is listed as one of the ten fastest growing occupations with the number of jobs in technical writing expected to increase by 33.3 % over the next 7 years.

Showing the alignment of educational resources, however, can prove to be a major stumbling block for small programs growing into majors. Often the information needed regarding graduation rates,

administrative support (FTEs for administrative and clerical staff), and other costs of a program can be hidden in department and college accounting and difficult to separate out. Administrators are often reticent to discuss resources and finances for programs, sending an implicit message that new programs must be justified based on efficiency and requests for increased resources avoided. But the question remains: is this feasible or healthy for growing programs?

Michael S. Martin
Department of English and Philosophy-Tech Comm Program
University of Wisconsin-Stout

Developing a Student-base for Certificate and Master's TC Programs

Developing or re-establishing a program in an era where funding and numbers are a central concern to administrations creates very little time to make a program viable, especially in the eyes of administrators. Co-op and internship programs provide Technical Communication programs a fertile ground for recruiting potential students into either a certificate or newly developed Master's program. It is often common that many people working in technical writing positions gravitate to that position because of previous writing experience rather than a degree.

Through co-op site visitation and presentations, it is possible to meet many of the career professionals that are working with current students and provide them with essential information about the technical communication program including curriculum and opportunities for continuing education, particularly when that opportunity can be done through distance learning.

While programs often turn to high school career fairs and college recruiting, connecting with older non-traditional students who are already acquainted with the technical communication field provides some outstanding possibilities for both the above mentioned programs. This possibility and avenue is being developed out of such an experience. While visiting a co-op site and meeting with both the Technical Writing team and the team leaders, and doing such a presentation about the program, including a look at the faculty, the updated curriculum, and the facilities available, it was discovered that only about 25% of the people on the team had an actual degree in Technical Communication. However, the response to the curriculum was extremely positive, and a typical comment was, "I wish I could take that class. Is it possible to take it on-line?"

Such a response created a conversation among the Technical Communication faculty and led to an updating of both a certificate/specialization program as well as consideration of how to recruit for our developing Master's in Technical Communication program. Developing the student-base will include meeting with teams from companies that have previous experience with our co-op students and meeting with those seeking a certification or an advanced degree in Technical Communication. Currently, the Admissions Department and the College have supported this possibility. The next step is to implement and fund such an initiative.

Karen Kuralt and George Jensen
Department of Rhetoric and Writing
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Adding New Ph.D. Programs to a Growing Field

As the MLA Job List teems with technical writing positions—a number of which go unfilled or are filled by only marginally qualified candidates—our field appears to be growing at a pace rapid enough to support several more doctoral programs. At the same time, program administrators should consider two concerns. First is the issue of whether the enthusiasm generated by the field's current growth might eventually spawn too many programs. We can support them now, but when the growth spurt fades, will we be overproducing graduates? Second is the question of sustainability: if a department cobble together a Ph.D. program now, can it obtain the faculty, the resources, and sufficient numbers of students to create a high-quality, lasting program?

Our department has recently faced these questions. We are developing a doctorate emphasizing rhetoric, professional communication, and new media. Our drive to create this new program is partly generated by economic and academic conditions in our state: we are getting strong signals from the state university system and our own Graduate School that if we ever want to have a Ph.D. program, now is the time to launch. At the same time, we recognize our responsibilities to the discipline not to overcrowd the market with too many graduates with similar credentials and to provide a high-quality education.

One way that we hope to distinguish our program is through its extensive focus on new media. The working title of our program is PhD in Rhetoric, Professional Writing, and Digital Media. We intend “rhetoric” to acknowledge our roots, “professional writing” to cover technical writing as well as other areas (such as creative nonfiction, publishing, and possibly even entertainment), and “digital media” to indicate that the focus of the program will be on technology.

One problem we have encountered in developing our degree proposal is that new media is—new. Similar programs are rare and have emerged only recently, most in the past five or six years. Existing programs in technical writing, professional writing, and composition studies have not neglected technology; even the most traditional programs have begun to offer some coursework related to new media. However, we hope to implement a program that trains writers and teachers to become leaders in multimedia authoring and publishing. While the need to address technology and new media is widely acknowledged, programs that currently focus on new media do not agree on much else, including titles of degrees, nature of the curriculum, and the mix of faculty.

We are currently disseminating an Advance Notice (an abbreviated proposal) through channels on campus. As we develop the full proposal, we are interested in feedback on everything from the title of the degree, the curriculum, and the kind of faculty we need to hire. Based on our research, we believe this is the right time in the growth of the field for this kind of program and others like it, and we are willing to share our decision process with other programs who are considering similar moves.

Michael Albers
English
East Carolina University

Technology in Technical Editing Courses

As currently taught, most technical editing courses, at both the undergraduate and graduate level contain minimal technology. The primary technology currently taught is the use of track changes in Microsoft Word. However, surveys of professional technical editors reveal that many of them are now working on distributed teams and on web-based projects, which require online editing and a solid understanding of the relationship between technology and editing.

At the University of Memphis, as at other universities, our professional writing students have strongly expressed a desire for more technology in their courses. While they tend to equate technology with learning tools, an editing class has the potential to expose them to multiple technologies and relate those technologies to both editing skills and rhetorical skills. More importantly, since the class requires spending more time editing/critiquing texts, rather than producing it, this exposure to technology can be beneficial in helping them see technology's position within the bigger picture of document production.

Within a technical editing course technology-based learning objectives must be integrated with the current (conventional) technical editing course objectives. Technology issues covered may include:

- Editing assignments using Microsoft Word's track changes and comments.
- Editing and commenting within PDF files.
- Editing for adherence to styles using Word and PageMaker style sheets.
- Learning comprehensive editing of web documents which includes checking links, verifying effective link wording, and verifying page structure.

By using different software programs with very different implementations, the students will be able to gain a clearer understanding of the underlying technology, rather than just how to use one software package. Understanding how features are implemented differently will contribute to the student having a better grasp of the fundamentals and be better able to apply those concept to other programs they will encounter in the future.

On the other hand, this strong focus on using technology for editing does come at the expense of time to focus on foundational skills such as grammar and basic copyediting techniques, not to mention the rhetorical needs of comprehensive editing. Although it is not an either/or situation, balancing these does require the instructor to make serious decisions about what constitutes "good enough" with respect to both the student's fundamental writing knowledge and technology knowledge. Too often bipolar positions tend to be taken with the student expected to either have a very strong grasp of English grammar or to have strong technology skills to satisfy the job market. Missing from both of these arguments are the contextual issues of relating technology use, the document, and the audience. Confounding the arguments is the fact that the students often do not take an English grammar course and most undergraduate students only take one editing class. The result is a single course tasked with doing everything within a time span where many instructors are pressed just to teach fundamental (traditional) editing skills.

Dr. Stevens Amidon
Department of English & Linguistics
Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne

Preparing students to manage technical communication projects in a global economy

During a recent series of interviews partially funded by a 2005 CPTSC research grant, Dr. Stuart Blythe and I talked to managers of communication organizations. During these interviews we noted significant concerns expressed by these managers about the challenges they faced working in the global economy. One of the managers we interviewed described working with “virtual companies with minimal physical presence and extensive networks maintained via digital and electronic communication.” He also described a project where he was managing the work of technical writers from Poland and software engineers from India, for a US client. He expressed frustration dealing with language and cultural differences, particularly when working with individuals from non-Western cultures.

My session will focus on the preparation of students for this type of complex management work. While I don't have any easy answers, I would like to raise a series of questions for discussion among CPTSC members about this important curricular task—that of preparing students to manage communication projects in the global economy. Some of these questions include:

- Is there an International English Style we should be teaching to help our students to better work with foreign students? If so, how do we best teach such a style?
- Is there an ethical problem when companies ask managers who speak only English to conduct sensitive communications with individuals who do not speak English well?
- Are style guides such as the SEC's Plain English Handbook suitable for international audiences?
- How do we teach our students to be sensitive to the developmental challenge facing workers in third world countries—how to preserve local values and identities while working for global audiences often (falsely?) characterized as homogenized, pro-Western, and eager for increased interaction with both multi-national corporations and mid-sized American businesses?

Dave Yeats
Department of English
Auburn University

Developing a technical writing style workshop for undergraduate students

When dealing with the issue of technical writing style, many programs take one of two approaches: either style is treated as a secondary issue in the context of courses designed around specific genres (reports, proposals, writing for the Web) or, as is sometimes the case in master's or PhD programs, excellent writing skills and an understanding of style is assumed rather than treated as a specific topic of instruction. As some programs increase an emphasis on areas of technical communication like project management, single sourcing, content management, and globalization issues, the issue of technical writing style is especially important because above all else, employers looking for technical writers who have excellent writing skills. Even though job advertisements specify experience with and expertise in specific software packages, the one thing that does not change as software tools come and go is the ability to understand rhetorical situations and resolve communication issues with an effective command of the language.

Some schools do teach style as a subject of its own. The University of North Texas, for example, lists a course called Style and Technical Writing in its catalog of graduate courses. Though I don't have any information about how the course is designed and delivered, the description on the UNT page mentions that the course requires students to study the "principles of technical style with intensive practice in writing and analyzing technical prose."

The goal of many technical communication programs at both the graduate and undergraduate level is to equip students with the theoretical and practical skills that will enable them to be flexible and productive technical communicators in the workplace. Toward that end, students are introduced to a number of specialized topics that introduce them to a number of rhetorical situations and samples of wood writing. However, in order to be flexible, students should be instructed on how to produce solid writing outside of the genres of reports, computer documentation, or writing for the Web. Undoubtedly, students will encounter writing situations that instructors may never have anticipated. Instruction in writing style will give students the ability to both self-critique and accept the critiques of others with a focus and precision that is sometimes not possible in a course focused on a specific topic or genre.

In the spirit of foregrounding the instruction of style, I plan on introducing a technical writing style workshop course at the undergraduate level at Auburn University modeled after creative writing workshops. Specifically, the course would be largely a careful look at student work by both the instructor and peers in the course. Students would take turns submitting their work to the entire class for evaluation, and would silently observe a discussion of their work that highlights both the successful and unsuccessful aspects of their prose. Teaching a course on technical writing style as a roundtable workshop will hopefully result in a few benefits for the students:

- Students will gain insight into their own writing by receiving many independent analyses of their work rather than only the instructor's comments.
- Students will get exposed to a wider variety of potential style issues because of their careful reading of their peers' work and by hearing the instructor's recommendations to their peers.

- Students will become more comfortable listening to and responding to critiques of their work— hopefully developing an ability to recognize and effectively use constructive criticism.
- Students will be able to direct more attention to word choice, sentence structure, and other stylistic issues for specialized purposes such as persuasion, instruction, and writing for content reuse.

I would argue that the ideal placement of this course in a sequence of courses would be early in a student's career (perhaps by the junior year for undergraduates), I believe that instruction in style may be beneficial at any point. I anticipate that my class will largely be made up of upperclassmen.

Another potential benefit of such a course would be the goodwill of the English department as a whole. At this point in the field of technical communication, many departments find themselves either making permanent separations from departments of English or making some kind of official or unofficial agreement to operate independently while remaining under the English umbrella. Even in departments without such formal separations, various disciplines within English studies tend to operate in discrete, independent ways rather than exploring potential collaborations with colleagues. Teaching a course in technical writing that so freely borrows from traditional creative writing pedagogy may offer a new way to strengthen bonds within a department and provide an opportunity to work with creative writing faculty in developing guidelines, course policies, and procedures.

At the conference, I hope to discuss the merits of adopting such a course structure and gather advice about choosing assignments and delivering course content.

Karla Saari Kitalong
English
University of Central Florida

The More Things Change...: Issues in Tech Comm Program Administration from the ADE Journal, 1974-1985

One way to define healthy growth or to assess progress in technical and scientific communication programs is to examine how the discipline was represented in historical published works.

During the decade spanning the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, the ADE Bulletin, the journal of the Association of Departments of English, published more than 20 articles concerning the emerging academic specialty of technical communication. Many of our discipline's most prominent members, as well as some others whose names have blended into the past, wrote pieces designed to orient English department chairs to this mysterious new world.

Many of the issues remain salient today. Then, as now, the academia/workplace divide needed to be bridged, both by job-seeking English majors and by faculty members seeking to understand the practice of technical communication so that they could teach it effectively (Barnum, Turnbull, Babinsky, Driggers, Bickley, Merrill, Norman, Raymond).

Other questions that occupied the chairs' attention back then, and that we still entertain today, include:

- How technical communication programs should be designed (Pearsall)
- Where they should be situated within academic institutions (Rivers 1980, 1985).

Coney, Ramey, and Souther, then as now associated with a prominent technical communication program sited in an engineering department, specified certain conditions that must be in place for technical communication programs to succeed, regardless of where they are placed in the institution.

Several authors discussed the cultural divide between the humanities and the technical disciplines (Zentner, Buchen), while S. Michael Halloran offers a primer for department chairs. In so doing, he dissects the distinction between technical communication and technical writing, raising a question about programmatic nomenclature that still surfaces to this day.

Scientific and technical expansion in the business world (Whitburn, Crow) is cited as the impetus for incorporating technical content and style into humanities disciplines. Corbett advocates a WAC-like approach that engages first-year students in critical reading while putting off the intensive writing course until the junior or senior year.

And the list goes on. In the time allotted to me, I will briefly lay out the issues explored in the series of articles, highlighting what's changed and what's stayed the same over this 30-year period.

Questions we might explore in the follow-up discussion include

- What long-standing assumptions about the profession and its place in academia remain valid and viable today?

- Which initial misconceptions have we managed to counter? Which persist?
- Are there any hobbyhorses that we can or should finally put to rest?
- What ideas or innovations were proposed and perhaps forgotten about that could still work today?
- What has been the effect—if any—of the increase in rhetoric and technical communication programs as disciplinary training grounds for academic technical communication scholars?

Dale Sullivan
English
North Dakota State University

What's in a Name?: Philosophical Musings and Political Realities of Program Development

C. S. (Clive Staples) Lewis announced when he was six years old that his name henceforth was to be "Jack," and that name stuck among his family and close friends throughout his life, even though his professional identity was always tied up with the name C. S. Lewis. Is a name something that we find or something that we create? Is it, as Ernst Cassirer says it should be, a recognition of an other's self disclosure, or a definitional act of violence and constraint?

These philosophical questions seldom present themselves as such in day-to-day efforts of program development and political negotiation. Nevertheless, naming a program is often one of the major issues in contention during the approval process. Consider the negotiations that must have gone into the names of programs in the field of technical communication: "Rhetoric and Writing," "Rhetoric and Technical Communication," "Texts and Technology," "Rhetoric and Professional Communication," "Technical Communication and Rhetoric," "Communication, Rhetoric, & Digital Media."

This paper narrates the history of negotiations involved in attempts to gain State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) approval for a new Ph.D. program in technical communication. In this familiar story, I will describe the relatively stable vision of the curriculum of the degree proposal over a four-year period and then discuss the major point of contention over the same period--the program's name.

In 2002, the administration at North Dakota State University (NDSU) encouraged the English department to develop a Ph.D. program proposal in the general area of "practical writing." This area had been specified in negotiations with the University of North Dakota (UND) at the level of provosts and presidents as an area that UND would not contest. The first proposal drawn up by the English department was an attempt to accommodate all specialties represented by faculty members, and it was named "English Studies." UND objected, claiming duplication of programs. The proposal was rewritten in December 2003, changing the program of study to emphasize technical, professional, and disciplinary writing, and it was named "Rhetoric, Writing & Culture." In two succeeding years, the proposal failed to win SBHE approval partly because of UND's objections and partly because of political wrangling among higher executives in the state. During these years, the degree's name and program of study remained unaltered. Finally, in the summer of 2007, the provost at NDSU, who had made strong commitments to bringing the degree to the SBHE again nine months earlier, approached the English department with the request that it change the degree name to match the name on the legacy document that had granted NDSU the authority to develop a Ph.D. in "Practical Writing." The rest of the narrative discusses the English department's response to the request, subsequent negotiations at the state level, and the final outcome of the summer 2007 efforts.

Although this story will sound familiar to many of the participants at CPTSC, it should stimulate discussion about the naming of the field in general and about the function of degree names in positioning programs locally, regionally, and nationally.

David Alan Sapp
English
Fairfield University

Program Sustainability and Faculty Sabbaticals: Challenges for Lone Ranger Program Administrators

The challenges facing lone ranger faculty who direct technical communication programs have been discussed in CPTSC proceedings (see Carnegie, 2003; Hea, 2003; Nardone, 2003) as well as other published venues (Latterell, 2003; Sapp, 2006). These discussions have addressed issues regarding untenured junior faculty in our discipline who are hired to run small programs in which they are the sole full-time faculty. However, not yet addressed by this literature is what happens after lone rangers earn tenure and begin planning their first sabbatical leave. When they accept a half- or full-year research leave, what is the impact of their absence on their program's students, part-time faculty, curriculum, and assessment efforts? At this important juncture of their young careers, lone rangers must face a threat to their program's sustainability.

Of course, we all believe that the world will fall apart without us to hold it together. When we change institutions, for example, it's natural for us to worry about how our absence will impact the students and colleagues we mentored, or the campus committees on which we served. But, in almost all cases, the world continues to exist—our classes get taught, our students and colleagues find other mentors, and campus committees grind on (and on). However, what happens when we are our programs? In other words, what happens when lone ranger faculty-administrators leave programs—permanently, or even temporarily—without any oversight? This is a dilemma faced by many of our discipline's lone rangers.

A cursory glance at our conferences' attendees suggests that some of the extensive growth in our discipline is in one-person programs, and further study is needed to determine to what extent these types of programs can prove sustainable. While one of the attractive features of the lone ranger career is the relative autonomy that our circumstances afford us, it is clear that stronger support systems must be developed for lone rangers, not only to sustain those individual programs, but as a long-term disciplinary sustainability tactic.

In this position paper, I will offer some concrete strategies for lone rangers and suggest ways that professional organizations such as CPTSC can play a role in making these small programs sustainable (e.g., helping programs identify visiting faculty to serve as sabbatical replacements; using organization's programmatic standards to leverage resources from institutions). The outcomes of this discussion will prove important not only for lone rangers building careers at small universities and colleges but also to our discipline's large doctoral programs where effective career planning should be provided for doctoral students, some of whom will end up directing these one-person programs.

References

Carnegie, T. (2003). Going wireless at the border. Paper presented at the meeting of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication. Potsdam, NY.

Hea, A.K. (2003). Teaching as a conduit: An interrogation of the educative function of the untenured, sole professional writing faculty member. Paper presented at the meeting of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication. Potsdam, NY.

Latterell, C. (2003). Technical and professional communication programs and the small college setting: Opportunities and challenges. *The Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 33(4), 319-335.

Nardone, C.F. (2003). 'Who are you, and what is it you do again?': Struggling for identity in small technical communication programs. Paper presented at the meeting of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication. Potsdam, NY.

Sapp, D. (2006). The lone ranger as technical writing program administrator. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 20(2), 200-219.

Wanda L. Worley
Design & Communication Technology
Purdue School of Engineering & Technology, IUPUI

Journey of a Program Administrator: Lessons Learned

I'd like to preface my position paper with this statement: I love my job, and I do not consider myself a seasoned technical communication administrator. However, I have a story to tell that I believe is worth hearing by veteran and non-veteran program administrators, and anyone thinking of entering the program administrator ranks. In my paper, I will discuss the challenges I've faced and the lessons I've learned as an untenured tech comm program director in a tenure-track position. Finally, I'll offer survival strategies to those thinking of taking on program administrative duties and to those who chair departments with tech comm programs.

Unlike the "lone ranger" director of a tech comm program in an English department described by Sapp (2006) in his article "The Lone Ranger as Technical Writing Program Administrator," I've been a "lone ranger" director of a tech comm program in a school of engineering and technology. Unlike the "young" doctoral graduate just out of college, I was the "old" doctoral graduate just out of college.

My journey began as a technical communicator, although that title had not yet been invented. Fresh out of college with a bachelor's in English, I was hired as a Forms & Procedures Analyst by a medium-sized utility gas company. Soon after being hired, I began my master's program and started teaching writing in the English department as an adjunct. I continued in that role for several years while working in full-time positions outside academia. Many years later, I completed a PhD and found myself once again an adjunct teaching writing classes in the English department. When a full-time, non-tenured track lecturer's position opened up, I applied and got the job.

At the time, the tech comm program was a joint program in the English department and the engineering and technology school; however, the joint part was limited. In other words, the tenure and promotion process of the tech comm faculty was administered by the English department, but the program was physically located in the engineering and technology school. When the director of the program retired, I applied and got the position. When I took on the position as director, the program was moved completely into the engineering and technology school. I reported directly to the dean of the school.

The tech comm program has been a standalone service program until recently when the school of technology was reorganized. Now the program is in a department, Design and Communication Department, and I was offered a new title and new responsibilities—Associate Chair—in addition to being Director of Technical Communication, which I accepted, of course.

I'm starting my fifth year as director, and tenure is looming in the very near future. What should I have done differently? Many things. What challenges have I faced? Many. What lessons have I learned? Many. Will I survive the tenure process? I don't know. Novice administrators and department chairs of novice administrators can learn from hearing about the challenges I've faced and the lessons I've learned in these four years.

Tracy Bridgeford, University of Nebraska at Omaha
Bill Williamson, Saginaw Valley State University
Karla Saari Kitalong, University of Central Florida

Beyond the Water Cooler: Proposing a Scholarly Journal that Emphasizes Programmatic Issues in Technical and Scientific Communication

One of the hallmarks of sustainable growth in a discipline is the establishment of a journal. Although technical communication hosts a number of journals (TCQ, Technical Communication, JBTC, JTWC), no journal exists for the purpose of disseminating theory and practice concerning the administration of academic technical communication programs. And we believe the time has come to devote a journal to programmatic issues in Technical Communication (and all of its name variants).

In this presentation, we will outline a proposal for a new academic journal, tentatively titled *Programmatic Perspectives*, to be sponsored by the Council of Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC). This online journal will provide a venue for the discussion and exploration of issues relevant to creating, administering, and sustaining academic programs.

We invite discussion about the need for and desirability of the proposed journal, stories about publication successes (and failures) related to the scholarly discussion of programmatic issues, and feedback on the proposed journal's content and publication logistics.

WHY NOW?

Perspectives from the last three or four decades reveals an evolution in conversations from a strict focus on practical issues such as writing in professional contexts or teaching genre characteristics to more theoretical discussions. The last two decades brought more theoretical discussions into perspective, focusing on humanist, narrative, activity, social, and critical theories into our conversations in ways that made technical communication an academic force in English departments.

From our perspective, program administration is the new, emerging practice that demands practical and theoretical attention. A journal devoted to such issues could further enrich the field by expanding on the theoretical models we use to explore its various dimensions. Systematic thinking requires that we look beyond the context of individual classrooms or courses to see the complete vision of how programs help shape current and future professionals.

By creating this journal, we see its scholarship following the example the CPTSC community has already set for such discussions: looking for the broadest and most diverse range of intersecting discussions. How far ranging are the topics, issues, challenges, theories and practices that inform our work as program administrators? Bringing our work back to a programmatic focus—from both a practical and theoretical perspective—is really just another way of examining the core of the profession itself. It is through program administration that we craft environments within which we foster the growth and change of the profession and the support and encouragement of new and experienced program directors. Journal publications are the spaces where academics have the greatest influence, can make the most difference. And because the journal will be housed online, publication (and conversations) will be faster, more cost effective, and more immediate—much like the elation one feels during those intense discussions at the annual CPTSC meeting.

A CONSPICUOUS GAP

With technical communication program directors facing challenges as diverse as shrinking budgets, enrollment fluctuations, legislative mandates to demonstrate accountability, and the effects of a changing global marketplace on student job placement rates, the current supply of insightful articles is insufficient. Juxtaposing this dearth of sustained publication in technical communication program administration against the growth of CPTSC and the importance of the annual conference to the development and sustainability of the community, we believe it's time to launch a peer-reviewed journal to help build and sustain this vibrant community and facilitate the sharing of research, ideas, and information.

Although several scholarly venues offer spaces where programmatic issues relevant to TSC might be explored, the available literature seems woefully inadequate to support the many technical communication teacher/scholars who take on program administration roles at some point in their academic careers. The comparatively few relevant articles that have been published are scattered among several journals (primarily TCQ, JBTC, CCC, and College English), the mission statements of which lack specific reference to programmatic issues in TSC. Technical Communication Quarterly (TCQ) is typical of these journals; its mission statement states that it “publishes research focused on technical communication in academic, scientific, technical, business, governmental, and related organizational or social contexts,” and that acceptable topics include communication design, pedagogical approaches, the role of digital technologies, ethics, the rhetoric of workplaces or professions, the practices of publication management, dialogue between academics and practitioners, research methods, and connections between social practices and organizational discourse.

Other journals similarly exclude program administration as a relevant topic. One might expect to rely upon edited collections and electronic for a such as the WAC Clearinghouse to carry the heaviest load in disseminating program-related scholarship for the technical and scientific communication community, but in fact the bulk of program-related discussions appear to be ephemeral, taking place on listservs and around department water coolers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some technical communication program administrators have had difficulty placing articles about their scholarship of administration, despite the fact that in other sectors of our field, program administration scholarship is flourishing (consider, for example, the WPA Journal and the WAC Journal, both of which are available electronically). Topics of interest to program administrators in general include curriculum and program design, student job placement, the establishment of corporate and community alliances, professional certification, and the writing across the curriculum movement, not to mention historical accounts that situate the current state of the field within a sustained context. However, these topics are seldom addressed in journals or other publications directed at technical communication faculty. Only in the important area of assessment has the volume of articles aimed at technical communication program administrators seemed more adequate and timely, with many publications of general interest to faculty across rhetoric's sub-disciplines.

The annual meeting of the CPTSC emerges like a beacon of hope in this dark world of technical communication program administration scholarship. Its proceedings, which are underutilized and undervalued as scholarship, nonetheless serve as an important archive of relevant issues and workable solutions. Programmatic Perspectives would strengthen that beacon's signal, and thereby illuminate more dark corners for more technical communication program directors.

PUBLICATION LOGISTICS

In the tradition of scholarly publishing, Programmatic Perspectives will follow standard editing practices employed by print journals. But by publishing on the Web we see a variety of opportunities for additional and evolutionary conversational spaces that can potentially revolutionize communication practices (and thus scholarly practices).

Academic values demand that any sanctioned scholarly venue meet certain long-standing criteria.

- Peer review. The journal content will be peer reviewed to meet academic standards for promotion and tenure, among other things.
- Academic rigor. The journal content will meet standards for academic rigor, as they are defined and refined by the scholarly community.
- Timely content. The journal content must be timely, meeting the needs of the community to build its academic discourse.

Electronic publishing on the Web enables features not available in print publications. Although the Web welcomes hypertextual writing and publication, we propose that articles be published in PDF format—at least in the beginning. Editing hypertextual articles requires a more rigorous technical knowledge, energy, and time not feasible at this time. Publishing the journal in PDF format establishes a scholarly identity quickly and efficiently.

PROGRAMMATIC PERSPECTIVES JOURNAL

Each issue of Programmatic Perspectives may include several content features:

- Scholarly articles (3-5). Articles will focus on programmatic issues from both theoretic and practical perspectives. During the first year, we plan to solicit articles about specific topics that will identify gaps in scholarship.
- Developing scholars' forum. The developing scholars' forum will highlight one graduate student's research in each issue. This column provides space for graduate students to describe their research.
- Special columns. Special columns will provide new a forum for discussions or continue discussions begun at the annual meeting, including a directors' column, a professional development column, and an editorial board column.
- Topical wikis. Topical wikis will offer the community opportunities to contribute directly to the building of community knowledge.
- Community response forum. Academic discourse includes both discussion threads that play out in series of articles, perhaps over several years, and response to work that is more immediate. Programmatic Perspectives will foster both.
- Program showcases. Program showcases will highlight one program per issue. This feature provides space for program directors to describe their programs in a public forum. These descriptions can potentially help directors of both established and new programs conceptualize their offerings.
- Book reviews. Book reviews will focus on work of particular interest to administrators of writing and design programs.

Alice I. Philbin
Institute of Technical and Scientific Communication
James Madison University

A Handbook of Technical and Scientific Communication Administration: Transmitting Administrative Knowledge for Sustainable Growth

This proposal addresses bulleted item two, “What have been the trajectories of administrative careers, and what narratives can seasoned administrators offer to help the influx of novices learn from their experience?” I propose an alphabetized online manual that addresses the topics of technical communication program administration. I use “technical” inclusively here to include programs in scientific and professional communication as well.

Rather than preach from the armchair about my twenty years of technical communication program administration, I propose to develop a handbook that will address the topics I encounter daily and the topics participants in this session will advise me to include. In short, the product I develop can be a single-author or multiple-author guide that will serve constituents of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication. As with any handbook, the alphabetical arrangement will allow a novice administrator to look up terms by name rather than by a taxonomy that represents only one or several approaches to the field. In such a manual, the term “faculty development might precede the term “FTE” or the term “access plan” might precede “annual report.” Ideally, as the product grows, links will be included.

During this session, we can address some of these questions:
Can we live with an alphabetical classification?
What topics do experienced administrators think we should include?
What topics do new administrators want to include or ask about?

To my knowledge, no such text exists for directors of technical communication programs, particularly for those who direct independent departments of technical communication. I have studied the literature of Writing Program Administration, I have explored various Webs, and I follow the archives of the ATTW. I also study the STC journals and Webs. I suggest that a handbook would be a real service to members of the profession, and I think CPTSC is the appropriate venue through which to explore this topic that unites both experienced and new program administrators.

My paper will explore this idea in more detail, including a preliminary list of topics for review, and if the idea of the Web handbook receives the group’s endorsement, we can begin work on the project at the Institute of Technical and Scientific Communication at James Madison University. The Institute would be a good starting point because of our reputation as a successful independent program with an emphasis on pedagogy. I envision the handbook as a multi-departmental project eventually, and again, the maintenance of this resource for the profession could unite programs at various colleges and universities.

Elizabeth Pass
Institute of Technical and Scientific Communication
James Madison University

Assessing Progress in Technical and Scientific Communication Programs: Do We Need National Guidelines for Student-based Outcomes

How do we, collectively or individually, define healthy growth or progress in technical and scientific programs?

That programs assess is a given. We assess to evaluate our students, our faculty, and our program. According to the University of Central Florida Academic Program Assessment Handbook (February 2004), effective program assessment starts with setting the mission (or purpose), goals, and objectives (outcomes): “One of the primary purposes of student learning outcomes assessment is to provide feedback to determine how the program can be improved to enhance student learning” (28). But if technical and scientific communication programs are conducting outcome-based assessment, on what are they basing the outcomes? Are there some over-arching guidelines or standards?

There aren't any over-arching guidelines or standards for outcome-based assessment, but if there were, from whom would it come? ATTW? CPTSC? STC? Many would say that because we do not accredit in this field we do not need to have guidelines or standards for outcome-based assessment; however, could it be that by not having over-arching guidelines or standards we are repeating many of the same conversations at the conferences and in our journals? For example, how many years have we heard the call for more rigorous research? Why has that call gone unheeded? Could it be that if programs were more consistent with student-based outcomes, there would be healthier growth in the field? Does a field have to have an accrediting body, to agree upon student-outcomes in general from a technical and scientific communication program?

When I looked at the ATTW website (the organization for teaching technical communication in the field), the website doesn't have an explicitly stated mission, but does have purposes (cms.english.ttu.edu/attw/organization/constitution). The CPTSC website (the organization for programs in the field) has no mission statement, but does have goals (www.cptsc.org/). And STC (considered the largest, all-encompassing professional organization for our field) has a mission and goals (www.stc.org/about/). None of these bodies has objectives or outcomes for their organization. Is it appropriate for them to have objectives or outcomes?

I would like to entertain the discussion of creating guidelines or standards for national student-based outcomes for technical and scientific programs. Why can't we have these without having accreditation? Is it possible? Another issue for discussion is who best would be the organization for developing these guidelines or standards? Would it be a new organization of program representatives or an elected body of representatives? Or should it be an existing body from one of our organizations in the field? CPTSC? ATTW?

Can a program define healthy progress without a standard, other than the one it set for itself?

Kay Harley
English Department
Saginaw Valley State University

Assessment Challenges for an Evolving Program

Sustainable growth in scientific and technical communication demands responsible assessment of current programs. However, assessing an evolving program presents several challenges. Saginaw Valley State University's pilot assessment of its relatively new undergraduate program in professional and technical writing (PTW) has revealed many of these. I will briefly share the rubric developed for evaluating student electronic portfolios and discuss the challenges that have emerged.

Developing and refining the assessment instrument

Since our program is housed in an English department which offers emphases in several areas, assessment of the PTW major needs to reflect both the broad English department goals and those specifically developed for the PTW program. We initially developed a rubric that scores twelve qualities and characteristics across six categories of student learning objectives (audience, purpose, genre, context; language and conventions; document design; collaboration; project management; tools and technology). In our pilot, we were unable to adequately assess collaboration and project management; we need to refine our instructions and/or explore alternate assessment methods for these objectives.

Accommodating changes in requirements, course content, and faculty

During the last two years, we have added 4 new courses, revised 3 courses, and added stronger prerequisites and a clear sequence of core requirements. We have also added faculty with new areas of expertise and lost faculty instrumental in initially creating the program. The student portfolios we are currently assessing reflect these changes and will continue to do so for several years as many of our students are part time, have entered the program under different requirements, and may choose to graduate under old or new catalogs. While our assessment rubric should be valid for all majors, it most strongly targets current requirements and course content, which may put some students at a disadvantage or skew comparative results. We also have to decide whether to connect the portfolio to a particular course and/or make it a graduation requirement. The pilot was linked to a particular course, which we viewed as a capstone to be completed in students' final semester; however, we found students might be taking the capstone as much as two semesters (spring/summer and fall) prior to graduation, so portfolios varied significantly depending on how many courses and program requirements students had met.

Valuing diversity

Our students choose the PTW major for divergent reasons and their work after graduation represents a wide range of interpretations of "professional and technical writing." We have encouraged students to tailor their portfolio to their own graduate school or professional interests. However, the diversity in what they have included has posed problems for assessment. We need to develop clearer guidelines, but want to maintain student ownership and responsibility for selecting what they feel best represents their work.

Technology issues

Joe Strange and Molly K. Johnson's ePortfolio Land poster at last year's CPTSC highlighted the technology and institutional issues that complicate electronic portfolios: options (Webfolios, open source or custom software or personal portfolio tools for course-management software); storage (including security, access and proprietary content); and viewing/using multiple software modes for graphics, text, and multimedia content). Our initial attempts using Sakai revealed students had many problems in how to submit material, as did faculty in accessing it. We need to solve the technology issues and provide more refined and detailed instructions on how to submit materials "at the same time, valuing the variety of materials that students may opt to include. The challenge is significant.

Making faculty time for assessment

A recent Higher Learning Commission re-accreditation visit highlighted program assessment, so such efforts have become an institutional priority. However, neither in our department nor in our PTW program has time or resources been allocated directly to this effort. With a 4/4 course load and multiple preparations, we need to develop reasonably time-efficient assessments that don't put an undue burden on the faculty. Our pilot effort involving six faculty and six portfolios has been fairly time intensive; we have a long way to go to find pragmatic, efficient, and professionally responsible ways to manage ongoing assessment.

Using information gained from assessment for multiple audiences and stakeholders

Ann Brady and Patty Sotirin summarized three intersecting goals for portfolios: first, to give students a way to collect, display, and reflect on their work; second, to monitor growth of the students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes' (Vavra); third, to evaluate curricular design and the development of programs themselves" (CPTSC 06). In addition, electronic student portfolios, the assessment rubric, and assessment results are potentially powerful ways to showcase the work of our students and the PTW program to the rest of the English department, the university, the community, and potential employers. However, we need to think carefully about whether the same assessment can meet these different purposes, looking particularly at issues of student permission and access by groups (possibly alumni or an advisory board) other than program faculty.

Don Cunningham
English Department
Radford University, Radford, Virginia

Quantifying Quality and Core Competency Skills

As scientific and technical communication increases as a career specialization, a logical prerequisite is effective and well-designed curricula capable of effectively establishing a significant knowledge base. Yet there is much disagreement regarding the essential characteristics of post-secondary educational programs designed to develop scientific and technical communication professionals. Determining the appropriate pedagogical emphases first requires identifying and quantifying effective and consistent workplace qualitative measurements for information products as well as essential core competency skills for practitioners.

This paper examines the challenges of identifying and quantifying information product quality and measuring professional communicators' value-added contributions in industry. It also looks at attempts to identify and assess core competency skills for scientific and technical communication practitioners and the implications this may have on determining pedagogical emphases in scientific and technical communication programs at the post-secondary levels.

Han Yu
English
Kansas State University

Resist Fallouts from International Technical Communication Development and Realize Sustainable Growth in the Global Economy

With the increasingly globalized economy and communication network, to realize sustainable TC growth, we need to develop and envision international technical communication (ITC) as an integral part of our program. But as we seize on the opportunities presented by this emerging sub-field (in research, teaching, and education partnership), we should also actively resist the fallouts from its rapid development—notably, the stereotyping of culture and subtle Orientalism. And a case in point, the development of TC in China.

Our earliest studies on this topic date back to the 1980s. Since then, North American delegations have traveled to China, Chinese educators traveled here, education partnerships emerged, and over 20 studies focused on the topic, including field reports from China, comparative studies of Chinese vs. American discourses/practices, and China's TC education initiatives. These efforts are making "TC in China" a distinctive and promising topic, and helping our researchers, teachers, and students to become sensitive to Chinese cultures. But with rapid development also came our (un-intentioned or even well-intentioned) stereotyping of that we call Chinese culture and subtle Orientalist arguments.

Because we are urged to be culturally sensitive, we have been tempted to discover "cultural differences" where there are none or where they are not so significant. Or we make superficial correlations between phenomena and "tip-of-the-iceberg" cultural factors, factors that we easily see (and thus stereotype) as being Chinese: face saving, guanxi, Mao's political influences, etc. Or we rely on second-hand materials or translations that are several steps away from the original (and several steps closer to our assumptions). Although none of us intends to generalize, when we do not make efforts to examine China's sub-cultures or individual Chinese people's cultural uptakes, we continue to generalize (a short step away from stereotyping). These limited understandings of the Chinese context, coupled with our desire to develop TC in China, lead to subtle Orientalism. For example, while we quickly spot and dismiss downright Orientalist arguments, we will, for instance, equate China's technical writing (or the lack thereof) and ESL education to a "deficiency model" and sincerely discuss how we may "help," "assist," and "influence" the Chinese based on the default U.S. model.

These fallouts, if ignored, can hinder our research and teaching of TC in China (or TC in other cultures, regions, and countries), the development of ITC as a sub-field, and the long-term development of TC in the global economy. It is essential that we, as individuals and as a program, be aware of and actively resist these fallouts. As teachers and researchers (as opposed to, say, well-intentioned tourists), we should be culturally sensitive in a much deeper sense: be willing to modify our methodologies for the international context, widen research perspectives, refine (or reject) cultural assumptions, and bring these sensitivities to our ITC classrooms. As a program, we should invest to build more in-depth and long-term international/intercultural teacher training or exchange programs, build more multi-dimensioned ITC curricula (even if it means introducing students to

contradictions and unsolved questions), and encourage more culturally diversified presences in our students, teachers, and administrators.

Prof. Kevin LaGrandeur
English Dept.
NYIT

How Has Offshoring Affected Technical Communication Departments?

In a relatively recent (2003) article in *The Times of India*, technical communication experts from that country note that, although "the demand for technical writers in India is rapidly rising...universities in the country do not offer any certificate courses in technical writing." One expert, Makarand Pandit, the organizer of the India chapter of the STC, goes so far as to say, "A graduation and flair for writing suffice for qualifying to be a technical writer" in India.

Aside from how this situation may affect the quality of technical communications in the business world, how has this situation affected the technical communication departments across the globe and, especially, here in North America? This question really has two parts: first, has this lack of educational resources and training influenced enrollment in our programs (especially online courses) by overseas students? Secondly, has the rise in offshore, professional writers in need of training had the opposite effect of causing a rise in offshore Technical Communications programs that will compete with ours? Third, have North American, online universities picked up on this need, and if so, how do their programs compare with more traditional university programs?

Jeff Grabill, Stewart Whittemore
Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures
Michigan State University

Building Programs Around Ideas

We teach in a relatively new professional writing program. Prior to that we taught in an English department in a large, dynamic city and watched enrollments in technical and professional writing explode as information industries grew rapidly.

In these different settings, there were interesting market pressures on growth. In the late 1990s, there was a market demand to produce more students trained in narrowly construed skills. Today, we look at our very different local economy and are concerned about how many professional communicators the market can bear. While we respect market logics as indices of value that shouldn't be ignored, we recognize that they do enforce short-term thinking. Had we attended carefully to the market in the 1990s, we might have produced an overabundance of students with the software skills "the market" told them they needed. Similarly, today we might make equally short-term choices in a context that we perceive as constricting.

Our point in this position paper is to reflect on issues of permanence and change in programs and curricula. That is, what, precisely, matters in terms of how we educate professional communicators? What intellectual practices "travel" well?

Some of the issues in the current political economy of technical and scientific communication programs that concern us are:

1. The meaning and practice of globalization. What globalization means in general and for our programs remains unclear, although we are fortunate to have a number of scholars working on this and related international issues. Still, the impact of distributed work, its related language practices and politics (which are often English and US-centric), and its often quite different cultural practices should mean something for the intellectual work we ask students to do. But what?
2. The meaning and use of theory. When we refer to what "travels," we are using a metaphor for theory. What makes our programs intellectually coherent? For some programs, this is clearly some version of rhetoric—but which ones? And what about those programs who orient differently? If we want to educate our students to adapt to change, then they need to understand and be able to articulate their work as intellectual work. What in our programs enables these habits of mind?
3. The meaning and use of theory, part 2. Or, how do we understand learning in our programs? In our program, we give lip service to helping students learn how to learn. We understand, we think, that our best efforts are likely focused on helping students leave us with the habits of mind that will enable them to pose meaningful problems, ask good questions, and help their organizations find solutions. This habit of inquiry seems essential, but we are vague, at best, in our ability to point to curricular and programmatic strategies that facilitate learning.

We suspect that members of the audience at CPTSC will have good answers to these questions, and while we will bring some of our own, the value of this position paper may very well be the questions posed and conversation that results.

Steve Benninghoff
Dept. of English Language & Literature
Eastern Michigan University

Sustainable Development: With Great Power comes Great Responsibility?

The question of what “sustainable growth (SG)” would mean for scientific and technical communication programs is a tricky, if interesting, one. Actually, the choice of terms, of SG versus “sustainable development,” I think can be argued is a mistake, depending on how the terms are understood. The core definition of “grow” is to get larger, and I don’t think tpc faculty really believe that our programs should get larger indefinitely, like Bill Cosby’s “chicken heart,” consuming all in their path until all degrees are tpc. Of course what is meant by sustainability here is a “collar” of sorts, for how fast or controlled tpc would grow. But what we’re after here, it seems to me, is potential answers to the questions of how, and in what ways, tpc programs ought to “develop”—how to change themselves and others—than just an issue of increasing size. It is more of a question about the situational constraints of particular programs, their schools, the local economies, and the nation or world they serve.

Thus for me the question of our sustainability levers around an old opposition between the ever-growing toolbox of skills and new communication applications we seek to support and the critical and social values goals we all find so important. The weight of employment and a growing diversity of skills is, to say the very least, substantial. A considerable amount of our sustainability comes from the pressure of supplying skills older members of the workforce have not had time to invest in—new capabilities. But there is quite a burden we should be careful of there, as well. We all know well that the latest whistles and bells do not necessarily, in and of themselves, improve the communication products or, prominently, the results of them. Time and experience provide us with case studies of communication disasters, or simply mistakes, that have had consequences both large and small, and we teach these studies of the social effects of technological and communication practices to our students along with the new capabilities that will get them jobs and help their employers. The interesting questions become which sorts of new areas and approaches are various programs developing in, but in tandem with such new areas of specialization and new “tools,” how and in what way are different programs contextualizing these practices in social spheres that do not necessarily assume their positive effects. We must always be careful that the cutting edge will always cut in at least two ways.

Far from trying to strike a luddite tone here, what I am trying to emphasize is that the real difficult questions we work at, appropriate to our field, have to do with the wide variety of applications, of relevances, of capabilities and consequences, for the communication powers that we teach. At my own institution, we are working on re-arranging and spreading some of the core skills of the field around more courses, and renaming courses appropriately—a sustainability activity I will share as a lead into a discussion that I hope will touch on:

- What skills areas are various programs adding or shifting around?
- What forces are driving these shifts—economic, certainly, but social or critical?
- What ways of incorporating social/critical views are programs developing?
- Where do programs find support for such contextualizing?

Darla-Jean Weatherford
Harold Vance Department of Petroleum Engineering
Texas A&M University

Bridging the Gap to Other Disciplines: How Will Technical Communicators Negotiate the Development of Responsible Programs for Writing in the Disciplines

As an increasing number of universities campaign for increased opportunities for students to develop writing skills within their major disciplines, technical communicators face the challenge of negotiating the opportunity to teach those courses and, if they succeed, developing programs that satisfy the needs of both the subject matter experts (SMEs) and the technical writing specialists. This may not be as straightforward as it sounds; subject matter experts may distrust the technical writing community, and technical writing specialists may have limited—if any—real understanding of the subject matter.

The early stages of these developing programs have frequently been problematic. In some cases, the writing courses are taught by SMEs who have little or no background in technical communications or rhetoric and who may not understand the value of that background to their teaching. In others, SMEs have insisted that student writing products maintain traditions within the discipline that are contrary to the best of technical writing expertise, and writing teachers have lowered their standards to meet the “traditional” standards of the discipline rather than work with the SMEs to try to affect the discipline’s writing. In some, the writing teachers have attempted to adapt technical writing service courses into the disciplines in ways that consume students’ time and distract them from the SME’s course objectives.

Solutions to these problems will not be easy, and they may challenge the argumentative skills of the writing instructors. A primary challenge in many universities will be convincing administration to fund positions for writing experts across the curriculum; many will find supporting SMEs less complicated and potentially less expensive than adding writing specialists. Additionally, the writing instructors whose education has been in liberal arts may have little or no appreciation for the complexities of the disciplines where they may be hired to teach; degrees in the arts often have limited study of mathematics or sciences, and liberal artists may have inaccurate models of the realistic tasks or challenges of disciplines like engineering and physics that rely heavily on those subjects.

Where writing specialists are hired to work with the science and engineering programs, they may be housed in writing centers rather than within a specific department. Although they may become conversant with the writing style and approaches of the discipline or disciplines participating in these centers, the writing teachers may still be somewhat limited in their ability to evaluate the technical merit of the work, which limits their effectiveness in guiding students to better writing. To overcome that shortcoming, writing teachers may need to undertake sophisticated efforts to develop a working vocabulary in and understanding of the workplace and research writing needs in the disciplines.

Addressing issues such as these will be imperative if technical writing specialists are to assume meaningful, active roles in intradisciplinary writing programs. The objective of this discussion will

be to share some of the strategies in use and to identify best practices in building sustainable, effective programs.

Bruce Maylath
English
North Dakota State University

Language Awareness panel: Building Language Awareness in the Technical Communication Curriculum

Addressing the Twin Cities STC chapter at its June 2007 luncheon, the president of Prisma International began by pointing out that native English-speaking technical communicators managing documentation for international markets (by hand count, about half of that day's attendees) make big and costly mistakes by not being aware that their native English differs, often dramatically, from the languages targeted for their documents' translation projects (Thompson). In so doing, she identified by inference a gaping chasm in the curricula of most technical communication programs in the U.S., yet one that does not exist in programs in Europe.

"Language awareness" is a term and movement with much more currency and visibility outside the U.S. than within it (White et al.). Cummins defines it as "both...the sense of knowledge of how language works...but also...[of] the intersections between language and power." Considering how central language is to technical communication, the lack of language awareness among U.S. professional communicators is astounding.

The industry advisory board for the University of Wisconsin—Stout's technical communication program has been persistent in pointing out that a technical communicator's chief tool is not software but language. Many of the board members employ Stout tech comm majors as interns. Many expressed initial delight with their interns' competence with documentation technology but surprise and concern that their interns arrived consistently lacking even basic language awareness. For this reason, in its 2004 curriculum update, the program added a new required course, *The Structure of English*. Long standing in the university catalogue as an introductory linguistic course, the instructor now tailored it for students majoring in tech comm. With a view to managing translation and localization projects in particular, course objectives and assignments were emphasized to acquaint students with the English language's variations and the nature of its relationships to other languages.

The course has now been offered in this new form for three years. Many students say that it became their favorite, not only among required courses in the tech comm curriculum but throughout their entire college careers. Interns and graduates report that they reflect on the course daily, none more so than a 2006 graduate who landed a job as a translation project manager for Lionbridge in Seattle, where she manages many translation projects for Microsoft's documentation. The course also has become a reference point in other tech comm courses.

The lesson for tech comm. programs generally is that language awareness is obligatory in a global market where translation is commonplace and that it can be developed in students rather quickly and easily through a well-tailored course in introductory linguistics. This presentation will prompt discussion of precisely what can be included in such a course and how its lessons come into play in subsequent courses.

Works Cited

Cummins, Jim. Interview. *California Reader* (Spring 2001). 12 June 2007.
<http://www.iteachilearn.com/cummins/calreadinterview01.htm>

Thompson, Terri. "Cost-Effective Writing for Global Audiences." Society for Technical Communication—Twin Cities. Minneapolis, MN. 8 June 2007.

White, Lana, Bruce Maylath, Anthony Adams, and Michel Couzijn, eds. *Language Awareness: A History and Implementations*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000.

Aimee Whiteside
University of Minnesota

Using Social Presence as a Curricular Strategy: Motivating Learners in the Technical Communication Curriculum

It is fundamentally important for future technical communicators to have a keen awareness of language--grammar, structure, and nuances (White, Maylath, Adams, & Couzijn, 2000). An essential part of that awareness is social in nature. Integrating a concept called social presence into the technical communication curriculum can be a rewarding curricular and instructional strategy.

Social presence involves five integrated elements that together determine a learner's motivation to take an active role in their own and their peers' construction of knowledge (Whiteside, 2007). The five elements are affective investment, cohesiveness, interaction level, knowledge and experience, and instructor involvement. When curricular stakeholders and instructors understand and nurture social presence, learners' motivation in their own and their peers' construction of knowledge can increase (Whiteside, 2007).

This presentation focuses on strategies to integrate social presence into the technical communication curriculum. One example involves creating communities of practice (CoPs), or "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger, 1999). When technical communication students form a CoP, they enter into what Lave and Wenger (1991) coined as legitimate peripheral participation. In the legitimate peripheral participation, novice learners may not actively participate at first, but they become integrated into the CoP as they absorb the knowledge and experience from the more "expert" senior technical communication students. Wikis, Drupal, Moodle, and Listservs could all be potential tools for helping to nurture social presence within a Technical Communication CoP.

A key component of nurturing social presence in a CoP involves integrating it into the technical communication curriculum through community building and other curricular activities. Community building may involve leadership activities throughout the technical communication program. Other activities may include a mentorship program where a new student entering the technical communication program is paired with a junior or senior in the program. Also, students may be assigned to discover, explore, and connect to important technical communication resources, such as the TC Server, professional organizations, and landmark works.

Because social presence can be an essential component in determining learning outcomes, this presentation will generate a fruitful discussion of ideas regarding how to nurture social presence throughout the technical communication curriculum.

References

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York: Cambridge UP.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP.

Wenger, E. (2004, October 6). Communities of practice: A brief introduction. Retrieved November 10, 2004 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.ewenger.com/theory/index.htm>.

White, L., Maylath, B, Adams, A., and Couzijn, M. (Eds.). (2000). *Language awareness: A history and implementations*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Whiteside, A. L. (2007). Exploring Social Presence in Communities of Practice within a Hybrid Learning Environment: A Longitudinal Examination of Two Case Studies within the School Technology Leadership Graduate-Level Certificate Program. Unpublished dissertation.

Matthew Livesey
English and Philosophy
University of Wisconsin-Stout

Language Awareness Panel: Controlled Language in Technical Communication Curricula

The need for effective technical communication across cultures and languages—and the resulting need for academic technical communication programs to prepare students thusly through their curricula—has resulted in efforts to simplify documents, particularly procedural manuals used by companies and consortia whose products and processes cross borders. Efforts to codify and deploy limited vocabulary and usage rules (controlled language, or CL) began in the 1930s and have reached their most widely adopted form in the Simplified English (SE) standard of the Association Europeene de Constructeurs de Material Aerospacial (AECMA). Spyridakis et al. found that the use of SE significantly eased translation of documents into Spanish, while it did little to help translation into Chinese. The authors of that study postulate that SE's emphasis on words that are clear cognates of the translation target language and grammatical forms that are similar in the base language and the target language are likely the contributing factors to this difference. Graduates of technical communication programs increasingly are expected by their employers to arrive with an awareness of languages and their distinctions. Tech comm programs need to respond through their curricula.

Little research has been published on the effectiveness of using SE on translation efficiency since Spyridakis. But as writing for translation is a larger and larger focus of technical communicators, even in industries which, unlike aerospace, have previously had little reason to translate their materials, the need to provide translated documents quickly and efficiently exerts pressure on technical communicators to write simplified base language texts. Writers in these companies may not follow a systematized protocol such as SE, but may simply follow guidelines specifying a CL: limited vocabulary, maximum reading level index scores, or other such measures.

The Technical Communication Program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout campus has the distinct advantage of enjoying a relationship with six European universities with translation studies programs. In a variety of tech comm courses, Stout students exchange documents with their counterparts studying translation. In one such example, Stout students in the technical writing course write 500-word step-by-step procedure documents in English, then deliver them to students in a translation class at the University of Paris 7-Denis Diderot, who then provide translations in French. The value to the Stout students is not the gratification of seeing their prose rendered into proper scientific French; most do not have any ability to judge the final product. But they do have an opportunity to communicate about their texts with the students in Paris, both by discussion board postings and videoconference. As a result, the American students get the chance see their writing from the perspective of an intelligent reader from another culture, which deepens their understanding of what effective communication really means.

As Maylath has argued, students must have instruction in cultural and linguistic differences if they are to be effective in preparing documents for translation. However, simply telling students to avoid language that is colloquial or otherwise culturally specific (sports-related metaphors, for example) is not enough; students must be made aware of the efficiencies that may be realized by communicating

clearly in a CL. Students who are given a brief explanation of CL and its rules are able to generate text, and edit existing texts, in ways that increase the efficiency of the translation process. Pedagogically, this mechanism of heightening language awareness is effective regardless of whether the students themselves have had experience with other cultures, and therefore has value to student populations who do not have access to such intercultural experience.

Works Cited

Maylath, Bruce. "Writing Globally: Teaching the Technical Writing Student to Prepare Documents for Translation." *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 11.3 (July 1997): 339-352.

Spyridakis, Jan H., Heather Holmback, and Serena K. Shubert. "Measuring the Translatability of Simplified English in Procedural Documents." *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* 40.1 (March 1997): 4-12.

Jen Osborne, Ritu Raju, Emil Towner
St. Philip's College, Houston Community College, Texas Tech University

Our Work/Our World: The Role of Technical Communication in Social Justice

Panel Description:

Technical, scientific, and professional communication affects many aspects of daily life, and consequently, it has great potential for creating and sustaining fairness, equality, and dignity in the global economy--not only those whom we serve directly, but for their stakeholders as well. According to the Society for Technical Communication's Ethical Guidelines for Technical Communication, "We seek to promote the public good in our activities." What is, however, "the public good" and how do we "promote" it? This panel explores these questions, particularly as they relate to social justice issues in technical communication.

Technical communication's strong roots in social justice is evident in influential articles such as Steven Katz's "The Ethic of Expediency." However, as the international director of BorderLinks, Rick Ufford-Chase, states: social justice is "often defined less by words and more...by the direct actions and work of those that strive for it." By answering the call to directly work toward social justice, programs in technical, scientific, and professional communication can achieve healthy, principled growth, as well as address our ethical obligation to promote "the public good."

Jen Osborne
CTSLO Assessment Coordinator and English Faculty,
St. Philip's College
Doctoral Student, Technical Communication & Rhetoric,
Texas Tech University

Assessing Ethics in Technical Communication Graduates

Are technical communication programs graduating students who have adequately learned and practiced the Society for Technical Communication's Ethical Guidelines for Technical Communication? How do we know the degree to which technical communication graduates know ethical guidelines for this field? If ethics in technical communication are important, then technical communication programs should include assessments of ethics as part of its student learning outcomes assessment plan.

Assessment specialists commonly say that if a particular skill, ability, or principle is not assessed, it's not important. However, the perception that ethics are not only important but crucial in the field of technical communication is evidenced in STC's guidelines, in the many textbooks that focus on ethics, in textbooks that include ethical considerations of particular skills, and in conference proceedings. What is not readily apparent, though, is students' knowledge and practice of these important principles.

This presentation aims to generate discussion about ways that technical communication programs can conduct meaningful and manageable assessments of students' ethical attitudes and behaviors regarding their practice of technical communication. In particular, I believe such assessments would

be made easier by converting STC's Ethical Guidelines for Technical Communication into a rubric. A common rubric—either holistic or analytical—promotes consistency across the field and reduces the burden of developing individual program rubrics or other tools for evaluating ethics.

In *The Impact of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment on Technical and Professional Communication Programs*, Jo Allen reminds us that “With well-constructed assessments that measure student learning and abilities, the faculty have hard data, rather than anecdotal perceptions, of their programs’ strengths and weaknesses.” The data generated by such assessments can then be used to strengthen further students’ understanding and practice of the Ethical Guidelines for Technical Communication. This type of assessment aligns with Margaret Spellings’ Commission on the Future of Higher Education and regional accrediting agencies’ mandates for colleges and universities to be held accountable for the quality of learning of their graduates.

Assessment of ethics student learning outcomes should be conducted within a framework of curriculum mapping that shows an organized, cohesive plan for introducing, developing, and assessing ethics student learning outcomes. And the results should be used by programs to strengthen the quality of student learning that focuses on ethical standards for technical communication. The key to meaningful and manageable assessment, however lies in the assessment tool and its use.

Robert Barr and John Tagg state in their much-quoted article, *From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education*, that “Certainly some learning is difficult, even impossible to measure. But it does not follow that useful and meaningful assessment is impossible.” A common rubric based on STC's Ethical Guidelines for Technical Communication is an important instrument that could make this important assessment possible.

Ritu Raju

Professor- Department of English, Philosophy, and Foreign Languages
Houston Community College.

Doctoral student, Technical Communication & Rhetoric - Texas Tech University

Beyond Outsourcing: The Need for Technical Communication Programs in India

The outsourcing of business processes to India has generated much discussion, apprehension, and even invective. India is one of the major recipients of the outsourcing pie, on account of its vast English-educated workforce, low operating costs, and the presence of a well-organized software industry. Offshoring and outsourcing have also brought to the forefront the intercultural aspects of technical communication. Researchers have studied extant procedures for documentation and opportunities for technical education in India.

Anthes and Vijayan (2001) mention that offshore developers are “meticulous about preparing documentation, planning for alpha and beta releases, establishing user acceptance procedures, regression testing procedures and the collecting metrics during development.” King (2006) refers to the trend of major offshoring vendors such as Wipro and Infosys recruiting engineering students in their last year of school and providing them with job-related course material in an attempt to ensure a steady supply of knowledge workers. Fay (2005) cites a study by AT. Kearney that offers the following information: “India graduates 2 million proficient English speakers with strong technical and quantitative skills. India's top engineering schools pump out high-quality knowledge workers

who are no longer simply coding software but moving up the value chain to high-level analytics and consulting.”

However, one aspect of offshoring that remains under-scrutinized is the actual documentation process that accompanies and consummates the completion of outsourced projects. Wang and Baake (2006) examined the existing state of technical communication education in India and concluded that online technical writing programs could fill a vacuum in this area.

My proposal aims to examine in greater detail existing avenues for technical communication education in India, and the programmatic gap presented by the extant practice of utilizing programmers to write technical documentation. Specifically, I will examine the role of ethics courses as a vital component of such programs, not only as a means to infuse the element of ethical practice into outsourcing, but also as a long-term strategy to augment the corpus of social capital in India.

Emil B. Towner
Texas Tech University

Apologia: Exploring How Wrongs are Discussed and Reconciled

Social justice is founded on the belief that all individuals and groups who make up a society deserve fair and just treatment. This concept is so pervasive that it cannot be contained within political borders, geographic regions, or even academic disciplines. Consequently, scholars from a wide variety of disciplines are currently focused on studying wrongful acts and reconciliation efforts that have occurred throughout history and across the globe. Technical communication, however, has yet to make explicit contributions to this growing field of social justice.

The 2006 book “Taking Wrongs Seriously: Apologies and Reconciliation” provides an interesting example. Edited by Elazar Barkan and Alexander Karn, it strives to go “beyond disciplinary boundaries” and national borders to offer a window into the realm of ethics. True to its mission, it features 14 chapters focusing on the roles and impact of apologies in reconciliation efforts. Each chapter is written by a scholar from a different discipline, including history, crisis management, French studies, law, philosophy, public policy, and psychiatry. The field of technical communication, however, is noticeably absent--despite the fact that many of the chapters focus on subjects that are considered important areas of study in technical communication (such as commission reports, ethics, cultural issues, and even visual rhetoric).

Based on the presence of these topics, it is clear that technical communication is not foundationally divorced from apologia or reconciliation. Just the opposite, apologetic rhetoric seems directly in line with the ethical, process-oriented, and documentation studies in technical communication. For example, as Nicholas Tavuchis states in his groundbreaking book, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation*, apology is a “moral expedition.” Moreover, Barkan and Karn note that apologies “can create a new framework in which groups may rehearse their past(s) and reconsider the present.” These moral expeditions and frameworks are eventually cited in influential reports and are even documented as policies or reconciliation processes.

Based on this, I suggest that technical communication as a field is already implicitly involved with the study of apologia and reconciliation; however, it has yet to realize its full potential. By directly

engaging in the study of these important areas in the future, technical communication scholars and practitioners can more deeply uncover and discuss new ethical and technical considerations, as well as take a prominent role in topics that eventually manifest themselves as commission reports, public policies, and processes.

In this presentation, I offer a discussion of how and why apologia and reconciliation should be explored in technical communication. In doing so, I will discuss the history and current state of apologia scholarship in general, as well as in technical communication. From there, I will offer examples of work that technical communication scholars and practitioners can pursue in the future.

Thomas Barker, Sally Henschel
Department of English
Texas Tech University

Sustainable Growth in Practitioner Relations: A Discussion of Survey Results

In a recent survey of 109 academic practitioners, 97% of respondents agreed with the following statement: “The experience of practitioners of technical communication is of value to technical communication students.” Clearly, the experience of practitioners is seen as an asset to any technical communication program; not so clear is the nature of that involvement. Our research, which includes a survey conducted in May of 2007, is an attempt to bring this experience into focus.

Many professional fields--in business, industry, government, or education--can yield experience to use in teaching; however, the current survey attempted to capture a picture of how the experience of technical communication practitioners in particular is reflected in classroom teaching and the curriculum. For example, many teachers use workplace documents, but how many use workplace codes of ethics, workplace standards, or invited workplace speakers?

Respondents were asked to identify elements of the technical communication workplace that they routinely use in their teaching. They were asked to report only those teaching practices that they believe contribute to their effectiveness as a technical communication teacher and that they use regularly--once a week, in conjunction with specific assignments, or once a semester as appropriate.

This survey contained one main question, and a demographics section. Analysis of the question may indicate a correlation between a profile of industry involvement and the degree of the respondents' practitioner experience.

The survey results raise a number of interesting questions for discussion:

- In what areas can programs grow connections with practitioners?
- What are the most common models of practitioner relations among current teachers?
- What characteristics of teachers lead or don't lead to more involvement of practitioners?

Huatong Sun
Grand Valley State University

Promoting professional writing in a blended writing department with internship program

In the efforts of developing a home department for the writing faculty outside of the English department, one solution is that the professional writing faculty allies with the faculty from creative writing and composition/rhetoric to form a “unified”(though actually “blended”) writing department. This is what we did when our department separated from the English department at Grand Valley State University seven years ago. As an independent writing department, we offer academic writing courses to the whole university and have an undergraduate major of writing. The writing major consists of two tracks, creative writing and professional writing. Students take four same core courses before choosing a writing track of nine specialized writing courses either in professional writing or creative writing, and then conclude with the same capstone course. The major curriculum was designed with a philosophy of regarding writing as part of the liberal arts and aiming to help students develop well-rounded “knowledge and skill in rhetorical and artistic production of texts” (Royer & Gilles, 2002) in either area of creative writing and professional writing. However, in reality, cases of inconsonance have emerged during daily teaching practices, more or less, due to the fact that the two fields (professional writing and creative writing) hold different assumptions on audience, writing processes, writer’s identity, publication, and career paths, to name a few (Vandenberg, 2004). Such examples include: while a professional writing professor tries various ways to help students understand writing as a collaborative process, students would cling to the slogan from a creative writing professor that writing is a solitary process; while professional writing courses approach genres as a manifestation for social actions and teach students explore the dynamic interactions between the function and format of a writing genre, creative writing courses are more interested in its format. So a question arises: How could one promote the pedagogy and scholarship of professional writing strategically and politically in this context?

In this presentation, I will introduce an approach of using a writing internship program to promote professional writing in a blended department since both professional writing and creative faculty agree on the importance of professional writing experiences for a writing student’s post-college career. I will discuss a variety of activities we have found effective including having a writing internship open house, offering students networking opportunities with local professional writers, hosting career nights with alumni visits, introducing career discussion in different levels of professional writing courses, and launching professional writing competitions and awards. These activities introduce students to writing in the workplace and show different facets of writing lives outside school, which helps develop career awareness among students and faculty, influence the curriculum development of our writing major, and eventually promote the professional writing program.

I am interested in knowing from the audience how other methods could be used to promote and develop a professional writing program and recruit more professional writing students in a department under a big umbrella of writing. I seek answers to the following questions: How should a professional writing faculty partner with a creative writing faculty to offer students a coherent view of writing? Or is it possible to develop a unified view of writing by drawing from different strands of pedagogy and scholarship in professional writing and creative writing at all? How should

we develop a balanced curriculum for two different tracks while still promoting professional writing? What improvement could we bring to the internship program to better serve both professional writing students and creative writing students?

References:

- Royer, D.J. and Gilles, R. (2002). *The origins of a department of academic, creative, and professional writing*. In P. O'Neill, A. Crow and L.W. Burton (eds), *A Field of Dreams; Independent Writing Programs and the Future of Composition Studies* (pp. 21-37). Logan, UT: Utah State UP.
- Vandenberg, P. (2004). *Integrated Writing Programmes in American Universities: Whither Creative Writing?* *International Journal for the Practices and Theory of Creative Writing*, 1(1), 6-13.

Judith Shaul Norback, PhD,
Director of Workplace & Academic Communication
Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering
Georgia Institute of Technology

Making a Program Work: Integrating Workforce Presentation Instruction into Capstone Design

In recent years, technical communication instructors and program coordinators have continued to face the problem of providing relevant, just-in-time teaching of technical communication skills and strategies for engineering students. The model program and TA training at the Georgia Tech Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering (ISyE) are one way to address the problem.

Since 2004, the Stewart School of ISyE has incorporated instruction about workforce presentations with the senior capstone design course. A Workforce Communication Lab is used to give instruction to small groups of students in parallel with the course. The instructional materials have been developed based on interviews with industrial engineers, managers, and CEOs about the most important communication skills and strategies needed by industrial and systems engineers entering the job market. The goal of the instruction is not only to increase academic success but also to enhance the job competitiveness of graduates and quicken their ascent up the career ladder. The instruction is motivational—because it is relevant to the students and enhances their transfer of the communication skills and strategies learned in the Lab and in class to their jobs.

The program has been supported by funds from the National Science Foundation, Georgia Tech alumni, the Stewart School of ISyE, and the Georgia Tech College of Engineering. The Lab has had over 7,000 student visits since the opening in 2004; student improvement in presentation skills has been documented.

This presentation will provide a snapshot of (1) the model used to integrate workforce presentation instruction into the engineering capstone design course and (2) the TA training involved.

Model

The model includes six components: (1) TA training, (2) a tutorial about 15 selected workforce presentation skills, (3) practice in the Lab before the presentation to the faculty committee, (4) the proposal presentation to the faculty committee, (5) practice in the Lab and review of video after the presentation, and then, finally, (6) presentation to the workplace client. The sequence of Lab visit before/faculty committee presentation/Lab visit after/client presentation cycle occurs a total of three times—for the students' proposal presentation, interim presentation, and final presentation. This sequence will be shown in a flowchart on one side of a handout.

TA Training

A snapshot of the TA training, as it connects to the steps in the model, will be included on side two of the handout. The TA training prepares TAs for these tasks:

- Giving feedback in each lab visit before the three faculty committee presentations
- Videotaping the three faculty committee presentations
- Editing the presentation video and slides for these presentations

Giving feedback with video review in each lab visit after each presentation.

We hope the discussion stimulated by the presentation encourages technical communication instructors and program coordinators to consider this as well as other innovative approaches to incorporating critical workforce presentation instruction into capstone design engineering courses.

Tim Giles
Writing & Linguistics
Georgia Southern University

Rhetoric of Science and the First-Year Composition Classroom

What role can the rhetoric of science play in the first-year writing classroom? This question is one that I seek an answer to as I prepare to teach for Fall Semester 2007.

In 2007, my institution was awarded a \$5.5 million National Science Foundation grant to nurture the teaching of science. First-year students who are interested in science majors will be channeled into core curriculum classes with students with similar interests. I, for example, will be teaching the first semester of the composition sequence to chemistry majors. I have been told that the students tend to be either prospective public school chemistry teachers or pre-med majors. Very few are thinking about entering industry as chemists since my institution does not offer a chemical engineering degree. While the opportunity to teach such a class intrigues me in a number of ways, especially with my background in science studies, I am most interested in discussing writing assignments for such a class.

I typically teach the first semester of the composition sequence with an essay collection and leave the rhetorical and grammatical readings to the Internet. For a reader, I have picked Richard Grinnell's *Science and Society*, which, like chemistry, touches upon a variety of science topics. Writing about ethics, for example, could easily be an assignment, and there are relevant essays in a section titled "Bodies and Genes." An issue with a core curriculum class, though, is that it should provide service to the university to some degree by focusing on academic writing; I think students should have some practice with writing arguments and with documentation, for example, and there are other rhetorical modes such as comparison and contrast that students would do well to learn to make them more competitive players in the academic arena. However, so long as we have science students being taught by a professor whose research interest is in science studies, we should do some science writing from a perspective useful to the students. One way of accomplishing this goal would be to give students some practice with writing about processes.

Though my liaison in the chemistry department has assured me that first-year students will not be writing lab reports, process writing is certainly something that they will do quite a bit as science students. A good way to introduce students to writing about process is to have them write instructions. However, a lab report is a process description, not a set of instructions. A process description is more difficult. With a set of instructions, for example, active voice is naturally created through the imperative mood; on the other hand, with a process description, the passive voice becomes a problem. Revising a set of instructions into a process description can be an answer to this problem.

My presentation will focus on nuances of these writing issues. In addition, I will consider how I will evaluate this class according to the portfolio approach, and I will be interested in hearing input from the audience.

Michael Knieval
English
University of Wyoming

Growing the Service Course: Anticipating Problems, Promise in the Technical Communication “Mini-Program”

In a period of intense disciplinary growth, the technical communication service course is a particularly rich site of contention, promise, and crisis—a bellwether for the field. This paper assumes a reading of the service course as a crucial programmatic site. In institutional contexts lacking formal curricular structures like minors, tracks, concentrations, majors, or graduate programs, the service course is the program, the only formal exposure that students have to our field; even at universities with robust undergraduate and graduate programs, the service course affects many, the majors and minors, few.

Results from a recent survey designed to profile the service course may help us begin to see sites of possibility, as well as sites of concern. I will limit my focus here to two clusters of potentially telling responses:

92% of respondents report the existence of a service course on their respective campuses.

37% of respondents reported no curricular presence in technical communication beyond the service course. This means, of course, that a significant percentage of service courses offered are the sole available representation of our field.

47% of all respondents report that they have no tenured or tenure-track faculty whose teaching and administrative responsibilities are limited to technical communication.

Of those institutions offering a service course, 77.4% report that English is the institutional home for the course.

70% of respondents characterize the rhetorical/humanities emphasis of their service courses as “strong” or “very strong”; only 50% of respondents characterized the technology emphasis of their service course as such.

What can we conclude from this small sampling of percentages? I offer two brief interpretations. Regarding the first cluster, it seems clear that the faculty shortfall usually associated with institutions offering majors and graduate programs that require deep, diverse faculties is likely affecting institutions that offer the service course and little more, potentially creating leadership vacuums. I would argue that such institutions, though they are less visible, are disproportionately affected by the faculty shortage our field faces.

Second, and likely related to the faculty shortfall, a high percentage of service course offerings located in English departments may be connected to a relative lack of confidence in the quality of technology instruction in such courses. It may be that traditional humanities strengths and weaknesses remain strong and that these characteristics are magnified in sites where faculty who specialize in technical communication are few, if they exist at all.

However incomplete, this picture of the service course challenges teachers and administrators to think creatively about what can be done to support this “mini-program” manifestation of our discipline. While in the present context “sustainable growth” in technical communication as an academic discipline may mean more programs or expansion of existing programs, at many institutions, this kind of growth will remain difficult or incremental. Teachers and scholars need to work together to ensure that the service course’s integrity remains strong regardless of institutional context.

Ben Xie, Assistant Professor; Ellen White-Khazrai, Assistant Professor
Department of English and Foreign Languages, Paine College

Passion, Identity and Skill-set: What Can Digital Rhetoric Do for a Developmental Writing Program?

Studies on the college developmental writing programs have concluded that these programs are overall effective. The studies by Stein (1982) at Minnesota Community College, by Ragland (1997) at Central Missouri State University, and by Weissman et al. (1997) at the College of Lake County, concluded that students who completed developmental writing courses were more likely to succeed in college-level writing classes than were students who did not complete remedial work. However, Jenkins and Boswell's research revealed that more than a quarter of developmental students nationwide failed to complete their college preparatory coursework (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002). Developmental writing programs, therefore, remain challenges to college instructors and administrators, especially in the digital age.

In the present position paper, we will explore how digital rhetorical strategies facilitate the learning process in a developmental writing program, evaluate some functional rhetorical devices over the others, and discuss the roles of an instructor in integrating the digital rhetoric in pedagogy so as to focus on the three basic components—passion, identity, and skill-set in a writing class.

Passion: digital rhetoric enhances analytical and critical thinking, thus arousing passion for a writing course, and writing skills with the assistance of tools like MS Word, MS Publisher (greeting card, sales notice, etc.), blogs, library online search, wikipedia, Blackboard, youtube.

Identity: digital rhetoric often serves as “dialogical rhetoric in printed and digital media” (Zappen, 2005, p.141), facilitates both monologue and dialogue, and encourages representation of “underrepresented voices” of communities such as a HBCU institution like ours through blogs, MySpace, review/comment tools of Web 2.0 (e.g., Amazon.com, eBay).

Skill-set: digital rhetoric helps develop the comprehensive and sometimes survival skill-sets for developmental students, such as online self-study of basic grammar, computer-assisted instruction, discussion topics, individual journal log in cyberspace, peer-editing and evaluation, reading assignment in virtual library, virtual tools, application like MS Publisher, MS Drawer, MS PowerPoint, Photoshop, Excel sheets for statistical assessment, and even db management (e.g., error-log or essay topic classification in Access db).

We are particularly interested in the strategies and practice of others at CPTSC regarding digital rhetorical devices for a developmental writing program: how have they coped with the challenges of time allocation, the integration of traditional classroom teaching and virtual tools application, and moreover, programmatic administration in a writing technologies intensive environment?

Tiffany Craft Portewig
English
Auburn University

Sustainable Curriculum in Technical Communication

To continue our growth and progress in the field of technical communication, we must consider how we fit into current sustainability initiatives in areas such as education, industry, and the environment. As technical communicators we have the rhetorical tools to communicate and argue for sustainability, but should this be part of our curriculum and our responsibility as professional communicators? This presentation will explore questions surrounding how we define sustainability in our field.

The first of its kind, the Dominican University of California formed a Green MBA, offering a degree in sustainable enterprise. Many other universities have followed and created programs that incorporate sustainability. The Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF), who “works to strengthen the capacity of colleges and universities to make sustainability and environmental literacy a major focus of teaching, research, service, and operations,” cites the following fields as offering degree programs or sustainable development as major theme: agriculture, applied science and technology, architecture and design, business, economics, education, engineering, environmental management, environmental studies, general or multidisciplinary studies, international studies, and law.

Many of these fields are the content of technical communication, so what part does our field play in their goal for sustainability? We have the responsibility to teach our students a variety of skills and rhetorical tools, so is sustainability something that we can weave into our curriculum, or should we leave it to fields such as those listed above to prepare future practitioners? If we do support it, how are we uniquely situated to contribute to the sustainability initiative? How do we balance both promoting sustainability within our field and communicating sustainability as practitioners?

These are some of the questions my presentation seeks to address and discuss. This presentation will report on current curricular development in the area of sustainability and explore how the field of technical communication can respond to this movement for sustainable growth and development.

Marian G. Stone
Arizona State University Polytechnic

The University as a Knowledge Entrepreneur and the Role of Technical Communication

Knowledge Entrepreneur

An entrepreneurial spirit is sweeping across college campuses today and Arizona State University has articulated its vision to be a knowledge entrepreneur. What universities teach, how they teach it, and how they operate is at the heart of the work in entrepreneurship. Programs in technical communication need to be a part of this business picture by continuing to understand and reassess how we operate.

This position paper reveals that in 2006 some scholars focused on business issues and their relevance to technical communication programs. By examining these ideas through the lens of the knowledge entrepreneur it shows us that we need to continually reassess how we operate. As Tom Duening, Director of the Entrepreneurial Programs Office of the Ira A. Fulton School of Engineering indicates, academics need to add market awareness, venture development skills and a venture growth orientation to our mix of skills.

In some respects we are already doing that in our programs. Last year, for example, the following ideas were shared with CPTSC:

- Wanda Worley from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis conducted research through surveys and usability testing to study students' perceptions and knowledge of the TCM Certificate and the usability of the Certificate Website. Her goal was to better market her program and grow programs.
- Kelli Cargile Cook at Utah State University and Carolyn Rude at Virginia Tech are conducting longitudinal studies of the academic job market in technical communication. Because an imbalance between faculty supply and demand is creating problems and compromising the development of the field, their work is enhancing our ability to predict and plan data on the academic job market.
- Michael Martin from University of Wisconsin-Stout discussed that moving courses online is one goal as state funding is shrinking. His work focused on examining application software and training for each faculty member and obtaining grant monies for release time.
- Susan Katz focused on reducing time to complete the MS in Technical Communication at North Carolina State University through replacement of the master's thesis with a projects course. This resulted in a reduced average time of degree completion from approximately 5 to 2.5 years.
- Diane Allen, Emil Towner, Pamela Brewer and Kendall Kelley, Ph.D. students from Texas Tech University, discussed responding to market forces by raising new revenues, employing

different media for institutions and equipping students with new knowledge and skills to compete in the workplace.

- Emil Towner discussed that online education offers economic incentives that go beyond cost savings for the institution. Towner says the incentives derive from three perspectives the technical communicators already in the workforce, the corporations who employ them, and the universities that offer online graduate programs.
- Diane Allen from Midland College discussed the necessity to rely more on external funding, instigating market and market-like behaviors in both faculties and administrations to enhance wealth production.

Yet, we need more emphasis on these business skills. Faculty and administrators need to work together to study and improve the business side of what we do, so that our programs and institutions grow and function more productively. By technical communication departments improving program marketing, predicting and planning data, enhancing revenues, reducing time to market, improving skills and training, and understanding current and future needs, we will successfully help our students, programs, institutions, and the workforce function as enhanced knowledge entrepreneurs.

Karl Stolley

Lewis Department of Humanities (Technical Communication)
Illinois Institute of Technology

Curricular Implementations of Sustainable Web Production

Many technical-communication instructors conceive of the Web as an information space experienced solely through a web browser on a personal computer. But this conception is based on outmoded fifteen-year-old practices and technologies—i.e., WYSIWYG web editors, “Save as HTML” functions in Microsoft Office, HTML table-based page design, to name a few—that are oblivious to current methods and standards of web production. This lack of awareness of new, innovative means of communication on and through the Web hinders the development of web-intensive and web-related courses in technical communication.

That is to say that neither “Save as HTML” functions nor WYSIWYG editors can fully engage students in web production that goes beyond the browser—and therefore into other areas of technical communication. For example, students in an editing or (print) document design course might work with an XML editor to produce web-available, single-source materials for an organization needing to simultaneously deploy and update print, web, and kiosk versions of their documents. Students in a visual rhetoric course might examine the use of CSS for styling a single webpage for different audiences and devices (projectors, handhelds, print) to explore the potential for visual *rhetorics* in different mediums for differently abled users—not just PC-based browsers for users with good vision.

A sustainable web curriculum must feature a core sequence of web-intensive courses that extend the rhetorical and theoretical preparation students encounter across their program of study. Each course in the sequence should introduce increasingly intensive technological production activities, grounded in the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)-standard languages of the Web (e.g., XHTML, CSS, and the Document Object Model, or DOM; XML and its applications). This web curriculum must encourage students to explore and strive for:

- Production literacy at the language/code level
- Software and platform independence, including familiarity with free/open-source alternatives to proprietary software (e.g., Dreamweaver)
- Backward- (as appropriate) and forward-/sustainable compatibility
- Single-sourcing of text, image, media, and code.

To build and implement such a curriculum, technical communication programs must develop a sequence of web-design courses, rather than just a single course (as is now common). One course cannot cover the expanding range of web discourse (from pages and sites to web-based applications), particularly for the “semantic Web,” which demands a new literacy of production goals, techniques, and standards that involve more than the visual design of a webpage or even a website.

Ideally, there must be productive, program-wide discussions to determine an appropriate emphasis and to provide suitable opportunities for hands-on experiences with web-oriented production across all or most courses in technical communication. This radical move might entail:

- Positioning the web design courses earlier in the curriculum, so that students may bring a shared production literacy to other courses
- Encouraging instructors of non-web courses to establish a flexible consensus as to the place, in each course, of web-oriented production as it relates to the subject matter and the instructor’s expertise.

- Ensuring that instructors of the web-specific courses adequately prepare students for the program's wider curriculum.

Cynthia McPherson
English
University of Alabama at Huntsville

Enhancing a Technical and Business Writing Program Through Distinct Courses

Writing programs which offer both technical writing and business writing may be pressed to make a strong distinction between the two courses. The principles of clear, concise writing, correct grammar, thorough audience analysis, and good document design apply to both technical writing and business writing. Even genres cross the technical-business writing line (e.g., correspondence, reports). So the question becomes how can a program distinguish its technical writing class from its business writing class, especially when the courses are taught by the same people? This paper explores some of the ways, and reasons, to distinguish technical writing from business writing in a program which offers both courses.

Distinctness in the courses can be accomplished by providing sample documents with clear technical or business content, selecting textbooks which address technical or business writing, not both, and assigning writing and reading tasks that focus on technical or business content. Reasons to distinguish the two courses include better prepared students for material they will encounter in the workplace, greater opportunity to meet student needs and interests, and stronger professional image of the program.

Rebecca E. Burnett, Andrew Cooper, Karen Head
School of Literature, Communication, and Culture
Georgia Institute of Technology

Reshaping Careers for Teaching and Administration in Technical and Scientific Communication

The job market demand for more professionals with PhDs in technical and scientific communication and cognate disciplines continues to outpace the number of graduates specializing in these fields. This dearth of highly qualified candidates with training in technical and scientific communication is compounded at the administrative level with even fewer qualified candidates.

While many people are quite capable of managing declining budget resources, scheduling classes, and dealing with personnel issues, what else does the administrator of a technical and scientific communication program need? Expertise in rhetoric? Experience as a practitioner of workplace communication? Experience as a teacher of technical and scientific communication? Knowledge of pedagogy? Knowledge of technology? Knowledge of workplace culture? Expertise in program assessment?

This panel has a two-part task: First, the panel members will share a broad job description for program administrators in technical and scientific communication, which can be borrowed and modified, particularly by programs working to define administrative roles. Second, the panel members examine various career trajectories that bring people into the administration of programs in technical and scientific communication and explore three common trajectories:

Speaker 1 comes to technical and scientific communication program administration with a PhD in rhetoric.

Speaker 2 comes to technical and scientific communication program administration with a PhD in literature.

Speaker 3 comes to technical and scientific communication program administration with a PhD in creative writing.

Specifically, the panel members propose provoking discussion about the following questions:

1. What should be included in a job description of an administrator of a technical and scientific communication program?
2. What benefits/advantages come with program administrators who have academic preparation in rhetoric, literature, and creative writing?
3. What problems/disadvantages come with program administrators who have academic preparation in rhetoric, literature, and creative writing?
4. How can programs in technical and scientific communication make administration interesting and productive as a career path?

5. How can success in administering programs in technical and scientific communication be assessed?

Doug Eyman, Byron Hawk, Susan Lawrence
English
George Mason University

Principles of Sustainability for Professional Writing Programs from an

Principles of Sustainability for Professional Writing Programs from an
Ecological Perspective

The three presenters in this panel are currently in the process of revising both BA and MA curricula for degrees in Professional Writing and Rhetoric as preparation for the development of a new PhD program. This new program will be housed in an English department, alongside programs in literature, linguistics, and creative writing. Although there is a growing trend toward a separation of Writing and English departments, we hope to leverage the intellectual and material resources available within an environment that houses a diverse range of communities. This panel will present a heuristic framework that draws on principles of ecology; we have found this framework useful for helping us negotiate competing interests of the department that impact program design issues.

An Ecological View of Professional Writing Programs
Douglas Eyman

Although there is a growing trend toward the establishment of stand-alone writing departments as separate(d) from traditional English departments, there are still a great number of writing programs that are (and will likely stay) within departments of English. My focus is on finding new ways to communicate with and interact with the other communities within the department in ways that highlight shared goals and interests rather than focusing on differences; one way to do this is to move from a political framework to an ecological one.

In an ecological terms, the departments in which we operate can be viewed as distinct ecosystems in which professional writing programs act as both producers and consumers (in terms of resources) that must interact with the other species in the system (e.g., literature, creative writing, linguistics), all in competition for limited resources. For a healthy ecosystem, the goal is to resolve this competition through symbiosis. An ecological view reinforces the notion that the programs that comprise the department are interconnected and that a sustainable infrastructure requires that attention be directed toward enacting mutual or commensal relationships with all of the inhabitants of the system.

Posthuman Rhetorics and the Grounds for Sustainability
Byron Hawk

A posthuman perspective that sees the human as a part of a larger system is a more sustainable model for professional writing programs. A perspective on editing as an individual human enterprise doesn't create a long term model for change in relation to rhetorical situations. A program focus on rhetoric as both a theoretical as well as practical enterprise, on the other hand, enables a program to change with developing economic, cultural, and technological situations.

Designing an MA/PhD Research Methods Course for Mutualism

Susan Lawrence

Scarce instructional resources dictate that at GMU we design and teach a Research Methods course that will serve both MA students in English/Professional Writing and PhD students in Rhetoric. One approach to this design problem might be to theorize and focus on the similarities in these two groups' research activities. But rather than elide the differences here, we might instead adopt an ecological metaphor, delineating the unique features of each "species" and exploring ways of developing a relationship of mutualism, in which each organism benefits from its proximity to another, distinctly different one. This paper reports on a research methods course that adopts such an approach.

Mark Nunes

English, Technical Communication, and Media Arts
Southern Polytechnic State University

"2+2"=Growth: Lessons Learned from an International Dual Degree Program

In the fall of 2007, the English, Technical Communication, and Media Arts Department at Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU) admitted its first 14 students into a dual degree program co-sponsored by Northeast Normal University (NENU) in Jilin Province, China. We will admit an additional 14 students this coming fall. This dual degree "2+2" program admits NENU students to SPSU with approximately 54 transfer credits. Once the students complete their Technical Communication coursework at SPSU, they graduate with two degrees: a BS in Technical Communication from SPSU and an equivalent degree in "E-Commerce" from NENU.

Since we are currently a department with fewer than 100 Technical Communication majors, this program promises a significant increase in students enrolled in our BS program. In our first year, we have already felt this enrollment increase. This summer, we are offering twice as many upper level TCOM courses as we did last year. For the coming academic year, we are having to offer core courses every semester, (rather than once a year), and we are doubling sections of courses that we previously offered only as single sections.

As might be expected, this rapid growth presents an equal share of challenges and opportunities. While a 15% increase in majors is certainly "healthy," the fact that all of these students come from the same foreign country, and as such, share similar cultural and language-based assimilation challenges, raises some concerns for faculty and students alike. We have worked hard this year to respond to the increased need for advising and registration support, expanded major orientations, and career counseling. We have also attempted to manage course enrollments for our NENU students, since offering a course in which 50%-75% of the students are Chinese alters classroom dynamics and may very well alter instructional practice. At the same time, this significant growth in international students, if managed intentionally, creates a wonderful opportunity for SPSU to expand and intensify its focus on international technical communication. As a TCOM program with an established academic relationship with a university in China, we are uniquely positioned to address the growing need for international technical communicators, both with our dual degree program students and our native U.S. students.

In this position paper, I will summarize the challenges SPSU faced in developing this program, along with the ongoing efforts to coordinate an international dual degree program. I will share "lessons learned" during our first year, and how we are managing our enrollment growth. I will also discuss where we see this program going in the coming years.

Gerald Savage
English
Illinois State University

Taking Action for Diversity in Technical Communication Programs

The increasing importance of international technical communication has forced us to recognize the need to embrace certain aspects of diversity in our technical communication programs. Commitment to diversity is now vital to sustained relevance for our field. However globalization is not the only rationale we must accept. We have a broader obligation, which is to social justice, and this obligation should, and can, be realized in technical communication program design. This need was addressed with great enthusiasm in the 2004 annual business meeting of CPTSC, thanks to a challenge by Cindy Selfe. It resulted in the formation of an ad hoc Diversity Committee, which prepared a proposal that was accepted the following year. But relatively little has happened since. I am convinced that the lack of action is not a problem of indifference but rather a lack of understanding where to begin and what a commitment to diversity should entail at the programmatic level and for CPTSC. Fortunately, a significant amount of research has been done in the area of diversity studies that can inform our thinking as we seek to develop sustainable policies and practices for diversity in our programs. My presentation is grounded in a review of such studies, including Kalev et al (2006), Gandz (2001), and a number of papers presented at the Seventh International Conference on Diversity held in July 2007 in Amsterdam.

Following are some questions I hope to address in this presentation:

- 1) What do we mean by diversity?
- 2) What philosophical and political stance should we take toward diversity?

After briefly framing the discussion in relation to these two questions I will outline five pragmatic perspectives from which technical communication programs need to conceptualize diversity planning and implementation. These perspectives include:

- 1) Student diversity
- 2) Faculty diversity
- 3) Curricular diversity
- 4) University policies toward diversity and the current status of diversity in the university
- 5) Diversity in the ranks of professional practitioners

In relation to each of these perspectives I will discuss one or two challenges and possible courses of action. Discussion will, I hope, bring out further questions and examples of effective action.

Christian F. Casper
Program in Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media
North Carolina State University

The Graduate Student on the Hiring Committee: Contributions and Cautions

To help graduate students prepare for responsibilities as future department citizens, programs are involving graduate students more deeply in administrative tasks. A fairly high-profile and potentially risky responsibility is membership on a search committee seeking to hire a new faculty member. Serving on a search committee provides the graduate student with first-hand experience of the job market and the inner workings of a department. At the same time, the duties and perspective required on a hiring committee can be contrary to the immediate experience, interests, and responsibilities of the graduate student. I had the opportunity last year to serve on a search committee when the Department of English at North Carolina State University searched for a new associate professor in the rhetoric and technical communication division. In this position paper I will argue that graduate students have a valuable role to play on search committees but that certain cautions should be heeded as well.

Involving graduate students in search committees holds several advantages for both the committee and the student. The committee gains the perspective of a member of an important constituency that is often unrepresented in committees of this type and the student gains valuable experience in departmental administration that can ease the transition into committee work when she or he becomes an assistant professor. The student also gains insight that can be valuable when she or he is on the other side of the table, interviewing for her or his first faculty position. Additionally, I personally enjoyed working with faculty from my department in an activity other than coursework and research, as it allowed me to get to know some faculty members with whom I might not have become acquainted otherwise.

An important question about the best role of graduate students on search committees concerns whether they should have an official vote or if they should serve in a strictly advisory role. The choice is frequently not the committee's or even the department's to make (at NC State, graduate student members of search committees are not granted voting privileges), but the question is important for two reasons: for the message it conveys about the place of graduate students in the department and, in a related issue, for the material input of the graduate student on the committee. In my case, I did not have an official vote, but I found this not to be a great detriment, for reasons that I will discuss in the paper.

The advantages of involving graduate students in search committees are significant, but some cautions need to be heeded. First, from the perspective of the graduate student, the time commitment can be tremendous. This is true, of course, for faculty also, but significant committee work is not usually expected of graduate students, and their schedules are not constructed to accommodate it. In addition, graduate students are not long-term members of the department, nor are they paid to participate in department service. Furthermore, the flip side of one of the advantages discussed above is that because graduate students have not been on the other side of the table, some of the protocol may not be clear to them. In particular, some briefing or training needs to be done to ensure that the graduate student does not ask inappropriate questions. (Making small talk about family, for example, could inadvertently violate some anti-discrimination laws.) These

concerns, however, are relatively easy to address, making graduate student membership on search committees a potentially valuable experience for all involved.

Menno de Jong
Technical and Professional Communication
University of Twente

A Communication Design Perspective on Technical and Professional Communication

One of the challenges academic programs in technical and professional communication have to face is the need to combine practical relevance and a strong emphasis on communicative skills with the typical academic competences of reflection, knowledge of and access to the academic literature, and methodological knowledge and skills. These academic competences have an attitudinal and a skills dimension. At the University of Twente, advanced master's students are encouraged to try to contribute to the academic knowledge in their field in their master's thesis.

However, an overall perspective to integrate these demands is still lacking. In this contribution, I propose that a communication design perspective may be a fruitful overall perspective on technical and professional communication.

Communication design can be defined as “the systematic, research-supported process of solving communication problems in a professional and organizational setting.” The competences of technical and professional communication students must not be limited to communication skills and creativity. It is important that they learn to use the results of academic research to inform their design decisions, which requires sufficient insight in the strengths and weaknesses of various research designs. It is also important that they are aware of the gamut of applied research techniques that can be used in various phases of the design process, and that they can judge the validity and reliability of these techniques. And finally, it is important that they develop thorough knowledge about the characteristics, the options and the problems of communication design processes: professional strengths and weaknesses, collaboration, phasing, etc.

In this contribution, I will discuss the demands a communication design perspective would place on academic programs in technical and professional communication. I will use the communication design courses that form part of the Communication Studies program at the University of Twente as an example.

Alan Chong

Engineering Communication Program, Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering
University of Toronto

Growing into our Collaboration with Engineering Design: Sharing Vocabularies, Values and Processes

The integration of communication and engineering design teaching at the University of Toronto has provided an intriguing set of challenges and opportunities, both on a programmatic and a pedagogical level. Working with engineering design specialists to deliver writing and oral presentation training within subject courses has demanded non-traditional approaches to communication curriculum design across our program. This paper describes one significant set of adjustments to the standard process model for writing that takes advantage of an engineering design context, and addresses some of the implications of appropriating design vocabulary and blurring disciplinary borders.

Engineering design focuses primarily on teaching the design process and introducing tools for facilitating that process. Because of that, engineering design and communication have a strong affinity: the two processes are also strikingly similar, with many parallel stages. Writing begins, for example, by determining purpose and analyzing audience, design by defining a problem to solve, requirements gathering, and stakeholder analysis. Drafts are essentially prototypes, and both need to be tested and revised before being finalized.

But the efficacy of process-based models for writing instruction remains questionable. Students reminded of the importance of audience analysis, outlining, and revision still often fail to actually engage these activities, focusing most of their time on drafting. This is especially true in engineering, where writing is often seen as a peripheral exercise of secondary importance. In contrast, design educators have a much easier time establishing student “buy-in” for the importance of the process model. Informal, in class surveys, for example, show that equivalent stages in the design process – user analysis, requirements gathering, and testing/revision – are treated much more seriously, both in terms of perceived importance and time allotted.

We can take advantage of this enthusiasm for design by erasing the gap between the two processes, a gap that is itself largely artificial, the product of discipline specific vocabularies rather than any substantive difference. In this context, students are taught that writing is an act of design, that a report is equivalent to a designed product. Substituting the language of design, we can give essential and often neglected stages in the writing process much greater currency. When framing revision as a process of testing against established audience and document requirements, for example, we move beyond an intuitive sense of what “sounds better” and towards a more concrete and scientific method for evaluation that engineering students are comfortable with.

As technical communication programs continue to deepen their collaboration with content courses, we need to search for and take advantage of these points of intersection. Yet as we move this strategy of blurring disciplinary lines from a pedagogical technique in a single class to a programmatic level, there are significant implications for the identity of technical communication programs, especially those housed within other disciplines. What we gain from sharing – greater currency with our students – is clear, but blurring those lines may also threaten disciplinary identity.

Our efforts must be informed by both a desire to explore these opportunities and a deep awareness of the complications of such collaborations.

Mark Hannah
English
Purdue University

Legal Discourse: An Area of Potential Growth for Scientific and Technical Communication Programs

Scientific and technical communicators write in a world that Bernadette Longo describes as being contextualized with a number of political, economic and ideological tensions (8). Accordingly, a goal of scientific and technical communication programs is to prepare their students to manage such tensions effectively and ultimately develop clear and concise written documents. In meeting such a goal though, are scientific and technical communication programs considering the full scope of tensions that Longo describes? More specifically, are these programs preparing their students to handle the legal implications that inhere in their writing(s)?

Though not representative of all scientific and technical communication program practices, Herb Smith in his article, “Technical Communications and the Law: Product Liability and Safety Labels,” articulates a common response scientific and technical communicators make to legal issues in their writing. Smith argues that “as information managers who function as important intermediaries between major companies and the public, technical communicators need to stay informed about the legal implications of what they write” (307). Though there is value in Smith’s words, questions remain. First, do scientific and technical communicators have the proper training to “stay informed,” and second, do Smith’s words demand enough action from scientific and technical communicators? Specifically, is a general level of “informedness” of potential legal implications enough, or should scientific and technical communicators explore such issues further and engage with them more critically? Due to the ever-increasing complexity of the corporate and legal environments in which our students will work, there is a need to prepare students to undertake this critical engagement in its many forms.

In order to encourage critical engagement with legal issues, scientific and technical communication scholars can extend the borders of their pedagogy to include theory and practice in training their students to think like lawyers—not in a judicial sense but rather in a rhetorical sense. To accomplish this, at the undergraduate and graduate level, scientific and technical communication students should learn to operate within, and manage, ambiguity effectively. This can be accomplished, as Beverly Sauer suggests in *The Rhetoric of Risk*, by instructing students how to think in non-linear manners (123). In addition, students should be introduced to and begin analyzing areas of the law that are unpredictable and often evolving, such as risk management and intellectual property. Learning to analyze rhetorical arguments in such unstable environments should help students to recognize the ambiguity and incompleteness of their own arguments, as they will be forced to consider, or rather create, alternative positions for their claims. Finally, introducing the Socratic method in classroom discussions could help teachers guide the development of their students’ critical thinking abilities, since the give and take that results from this teaching style invites a multi-vocal dialogue that incorporates many different perspectives. Ultimately, the implications of this pedagogy are that scientific and technical communication students will learn to use rhetoric differently—employing legal rhetorical strategies that will prepare them to address the complexity of the varying legal issues that arise in their work.

Works Cited

Longo, Bernadette. *Spurious Coin*. Albany: State U of NY P, 2000.

Sauer, Beverly. *The Rhetoric of Risk: Technical Documentation in Hazardous Environments*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003.

Smith, Herb. "Technical Communications and the Law: Product Liability and Safety Labels." *J. Technical Writing and Communication* 20.3 (1990): 307-19u.

Michael J. Salvo and Jennifer Bay
Program in Professional Writing, Department of English
Purdue University

Semester @ SEA: Student Engagement and Activism

The Semester @ SEA is a new program in the undergraduate Professional Writing Major. Funded by a generous grant through PLACE (Purdue Liberal Arts Community Engagement), the Semester @ SEA emulates elements of a study abroad semester and service learning project. Like study abroad, the students work with others in their major, taking a set of intensive thematically linked classes. Following the model of service learning initiatives, the students work locally, engaged with a community organization.

This presentation briefly describes the creation of the Semester @ SEA program, ongoing activities during the fall 2007 semester, as well as preparation and registration for spring 2008 when the program is scheduled to run. We especially encourage attendance among CPTSC attendees who have participated in study abroad, service learning initiatives, and/or extended community. We welcome your advice and experience. While the Semester @ SEA has elements in common with a variety of existing programs, putting these elements together to create an immersive learning environment remains a challenge to our planning.

Professional Writing Majors will have the option of co-registering for two or more classes simultaneously, including a professional writing internship class (488), advanced professional writing (515), rhetorical theory (480), and writing center practicum (390A/B). In order to foster student engagement in an extended community partnership, students will be required to register for the internship and at least one of the other three classes offered, but can register for all four if scheduling allows. Students will attend meals, seminars, go on field trips, and prepare documents for use by a community organization in order to engage the Lafayette Community and extend their learning experience beyond formal classroom time.

During the spring 2008 semester, the Semester @ SEA will be working closely with the Tippecanoe County Historical Association (TCHA) at the Fort Ouiotenon Historical Site. Students will be designing museum displays, site signage and navigation, creating documents for paper, web, and electronic distribution about the site's history, archeology, as well as a number of fund-raising events held through the year on the site. Students will have the opportunity to earn credit for organizing, designing, managing, and presenting large-scale projects that are generally beyond the scope of individual courses.

The Semester @ SEA program seeks to enrich the educational experience of the English Department's Professional Writing Majors by extending their educational experience beyond the formal classroom. Engagement with a committed community agency offers advanced undergraduate students opportunity to analyze, research, and build solutions for community problems. Extending engagement beyond the boundaries of individual formal classes will allow students to experience an immersive educational experience where their studies are transformed from learning about community issues to engaging and addressing community need, ultimately serving as a resource for the grater Lafayette community. Faculty will also have an opportunity to work with undergraduate students beyond the confines of formal classroom instruction, fostering a

greater sense of program camaraderie. And finally, the community will have an engaged and committed partner: this program moves beyond limits imposed by classroom and semester limits of instruction.

David Fisher and Cindy Nahrwold
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Virtual Case Environments (VCEs): Implications for a self-sustaining, project-oriented curriculum

What is a VCE-driven curriculum?

We've developed a content management system (CMS) called MyCase that enables the rapid development of virtually represented situations/organizations (virtual case environments, or VCEs). Virtual cases are enacted over time by faculty, students, subject matter experts, and stakeholders outside the university and are mediated by the MyCase CMS. The goal of these virtual cases is for students to engage in the kinds of activity/communication prompted by the situations as they evolve during modules' progression, with the implication that by engaging in these types of activities, they're developing competencies as well as theoretical perspectives that will be transferable to their lives outside of school.

A project-based curriculum with virtual cases at its center has numerous consequences for curricular change, including

- integration of course-materials development, both vertical integration (i.e., advanced students contributing materials to cases used by novice students) and horizontal integration (collaboration among departments and community stakeholders)
- consultative teaching (i.e., students seek help when they need it, using the instructor as a resource in their time(s) of need, rather than having information fed to them)
- online representation of situations, as opposed to online "delivery of materials" (a subtle, but important, difference from traditional e-learning configurations).

How does the VCE-driven curriculum work?

Faculty and subject matter experts across the disciplines along with advanced students help develop simulations of situations/organizations in which newer students will participate. The artifacts included in these simulations include information sources (video footage of meetings, video/audio interviews with characters, access to organizational documents, access to an organization's intranet, etc.) and

collaboration tools (discussion boards, polls, surveys, email and chat) that students can use to communicate with each other and with case characters (role players: actual clients, faculty members, or advanced students) about the scenario.

While a radically project-based curriculum like the one in place at Carnegie Mellon West (<http://west.cmu.edu/>) serves as proof that such an arrangement can work, more traditional instructor accountability and student assessment practices can map onto a virtual-case-driven curriculum by helping define student's roles in ongoing virtual cases as well as the case-development process. For example, students in a technical editing course can work on revising and editing the content for one of the future cases. Likewise, grant writing students can respond to an exigency identified in a simulation or develop materials to help fund the ongoing case-development effort.

What are the research implications for the VCE-driven curriculum?

Transfer studies: Concentrate on the impact such environments have on students when they begin working outside of school. What transfers? What doesn't?

Assessment studies: Explore ways in which we might assess collaborative, project-based work. How would such a curriculum change the way we currently assess?

Networks-of-learning studies: Consider how teaching and learning practices like the ones detailed in this position paper may affect post-secondary education—both negatively as well as positively—especially how we develop and maintain course content as well as how we evaluate and reward those involved in various aspects of development and delivery.

What are some other important implications?

Consider how to get higher administration to “buy into” this idea, given that such curriculum makes it more difficult to quantify teacher time in separate departments (if consultive teaching is used).

Or would embracing such a curriculum result in the “weeding out” of instructors who don't have the requisite technological skills or who don't teach on the “technical” side of a program? (At the master's level, UALR [University of Arkansas at Little Rock] currently offers two concentrations—technical and nonfiction—and is putting in a third one in editing.)

Furthermore, what about students who don't wish to be involved in such a program? What options do we offer them?

Diana Ashe, Anthony T. Atkins, Colleen A. Reilly
English
UNC Wilmington

Predator and Prey: Keeping the Technical Writing Program from Becoming an Endangered Species

Ours is the typical story: untenured professors initiate a professional writing program in an English department and encounter a number of problems along the way, including but not limited to: making appropriate hires, updating curriculum, and bringing cutting edge technology into the department. Our efforts are hindered in a number of ways. Our panel proposes to begin a conversation about our situation that is not, we believe, idiosyncratic, but rather representative of other programs in similar departments. Our goal is to create a sustainable ecology that reflects the current values/trends found in successful programs. In other words, programs should create curriculum consistent with the tools available for pedagogical and intellectual rigor. As it stands at our institution, faculty navigate their way through a maze of options for attaining proper resources for reaching programmatic standards and meeting classroom goals. Both the navigation and search for proper resources have created a curriculum useful for students but increasingly difficult to duplicate from semester to semester.

To illustrate these tensions, our poster will offer profiles of four major “predators” that put programs like ours at risk of becoming endangered species: the *Ludditus maximus*, a creature known for its deep aversion to technological innovation; the *Fiscalus tentativo*, which kills its prey slowly and torturously, by avoiding financial commitments and jerrymandering hiring processes; the *Alouatta belzebul* (or red-handed howler monkey), a shrill, bullying sort who considers any attention given to technical communication to be attention taken away from his or her own goals; and the *Elitistum superiorum*, whose views of what creatures can coexist in the English department habitat restrict anything so pragmatic as technical communication. Each profile will describe the predator’s unique characteristics, preferred habitat and methods of trapping its prey. In addition, we will offer suggestions for proper handling of each predator species so that all members of the departmental food chain can flourish.

For example, the tale of the *Ludditus maximus* details the extraordinary measures taken by faculty who want to initiate technology-rich projects and attempt innovative digital pedagogies, efforts largely invisible to students. The *Ludditus maximus* has as its ultimate prey the students, who are often unaware of the roadblocks to developing sustainable new media writing initiatives that it imposes; the defenseless students, though, are certainly cognizant of the personal consequences of these impediments: inadequate resources, inconvenient or irregular technological access, and inconsistencies in the educational experiences of peers in the same degree program. We cannot help but believe that the *Ludditus maximus* sends students a message that the university or, even worse, our department or program does not consider developing technological expertise to be important for their work as students or for their future plans and goals. Thus, the *Ludditus maximus*, lurking in budget meetings and clinging to tradition to camouflage its predatory behaviors, counteracts our efforts toward sustainability in our technological plans and initiatives.

Kaye Adkins
English
Missouri Western State University

Grabbing the Brass Ring: Technical Communication and Applied Learning

Technical Communication often seems to be neither fish nor fowl. At first glance, it appears to be professional preparation. (And this is how we often market our programs: “You can write and still earn a good living!”) At the same time, it remains a deeply humanistic field, solidly grounded in rhetoric. While this schizophrenia has sometimes caused problems for our programs, we should also be prepared to make use of our unique dual focus to grab opportunities when they arise.

One such opportunity presented itself to our program in 2005, when Missouri Western State University announced that it had been designated as Missouri's “Applied Learning” campus. Western identified Applied Learning as a way for students to transfer what they are learning in the classroom to other settings, both on and off campus. Four types of activities were soon identified as Applied Learning on our campus:

- *Undergraduate Research
- *Internships and Practica
- *Service-Learning
- *Study Away

While many humanistic departments have had to put a great deal of time and energy into developing Applied Learning programs, the English department, thanks in large part to existing Technical Communication internships and service learning activities, was able to take immediate advantage of administration support for Applied Learning. Since then, we have added undergraduate research activities, and we have been exploring study away opportunities. My poster will provide an overview of Applied Learning, explain it as Missouri Western has defined it, and offer examples of how we have implemented it in Technical Communication.

I hope to encourage those attending CPTSC to find opportunities to use technical communication's traditional professional preparation as a way to build support among administrators and legislators, who have become very interested in marketable degrees, for what is (or can be) essentially a humanistic endeavor.

Jonathan Buehl
Department of English
University of Maryland

New Species of Professional Writing Courses: Sustaining Novel Adaptations in an Evolutionary Process

This poster will describe the evolution of professional writing courses at a large public university. The poster will explain how pressures from administrators, instructors, and other forces within the university affect the orientation of existing courses and the development of new ones. The poster will also discuss the programmatic challenges of administering novel courses as they transition from the pet projects of individuals to regular program offerings.

Since 1980 our students have been required to complete an upper-level course in professional communication. The mandate of these courses is to prepare students for the writing tasks they will encounter in the workplace.

Initially the professional writing course was offered in two forms: a general advanced composition course and a technical writing course. Early on it became clear that further specification was needed to effectively engage some student populations. Business writing, legal writing, and medical writing courses were added to the core pair of professional communication courses.

Recently the program has expanded its offerings to include science writing, writing about the environment, writing for the arts, writing for non-profit organizations, writing about economics, writing case studies and narrative, and writing non-fiction narratives. Each of these new courses is the result of an evolutionary process of identification, adaptation, and speciation.

Instructors identify students with specific professional aspirations who are not engaged by the assignments and experiences of the courses that would logically attract them. For example, students planning careers in law enforcement often enrolled in legal writing courses, but they rarely felt a strong exigency for assignments designed for aspiring lawyers and paralegals. If the existing course cannot be adapted to meet the needs of both the special population and the core population, then a new course is developed. The poster will trace how our most recent course offerings evolved from existing courses to become distinct curricular species.

Fostering the evolution of novel courses provides significant benefits for both instructors and students. Novel courses provide instructors with new pedagogical challenges; students are more engaged when their professional writing courses appear immediately relevant to their careers.

This kind of organic growth also offers programmatic challenges, including issues related to marketing, development, staffing, and sustainability. The poster will offer lessons learned and best practices that have emerged from our experience with curricular evolution in professional communication.

Don Cunningham
English Department
Radford University, Radford, Virginia

Magic and Metacognitive Strategies

The reporting of technical information requires more than good grammatical or terminology skills. As a process, technical communication requires abilities to research information, to identify and assess assumptions, to solve multiple problems, and to effectively arrange and present information. To face the challenges of a growing and more dynamic role in industry, professional technical communicators must be prepared to combine working technical knowledge and terminology with information manipulation skills and abstraction abilities. To gain increased recognition, status, and legitimacy within industry, technical communication practitioners must transition from craftspersons to professionals.

Traditional lecture formats are typically ineffective for teaching the critical thinking skills necessary to face the challenges students will likely encounter after graduation. Ill-structured problems offer opportunities for students to learn to construct and defend reasonable solutions. An ill-structured problem is one which is incompletely defined and not easily resolved with any degree of certainty. Furthermore, it has multiple solutions with none clearly superior. Cognitive psychology suggests three types of knowledge interact during critical thinking when addressing ill-structured problems: (1) declarative knowledge; (2) procedural knowledge; and (3) metacognition. While the curricula of scientific and technical communication programs are effective for teaching both declarative and procedural knowledge, the challenge for the future is teaching students the metacognitive strategies essential for career success.

This poster describes an in-class exercise intended to engage students in using metacognitive strategies. By analyzing their observations, carefully examining what information is missing, and considering various alternatives to solve the mystery, students are challenged to develop a reasonable explanation of how a magic trick works. Although the problem does not appear to have any real world context, students gain experience and insight solving ill-structured problems they will likely encounter after graduation. The poster also presents qualitative observations of scientific and technical communication student responses to this unique classroom exercise

Linda Driskill

Professor and Director, Cain Project in Engineering and Professional Communication
Rice University

Tech Comm across the Curriculum: Growth and Sustainability Factors

Institutional mandates for curriculum and writing-intensive requirements have been thought necessary to ensure program sustainability since individuals may leave the institution or lose interest. Rice University has had no institutional mandate, but its communication across the disciplines program in natural sciences and engineering grew over the last nine years as over 100 courses initiated or extended communication-intensive assignments. The experiences of two departments, Bioengineering and Biochemistry/Cell Biology, the two largest majors in the schools, respectively, illustrate complex factors that appear to influence whether communication instruction spreads to multiple courses in a major and whether a communication program is sustainable.

The Department of Bioengineering introduced its undergraduate major at approximately the same time that the communication program began. The communication program contributed to development of the bioengineering curriculum as it was “rolled out,” beginning with introductory courses and then with graduate courses and upper-level courses. At the end of four years, the communication faculty were involved in the review and further development of the curriculum.

The Biochemistry chair was strongly in favor of communication instruction and in the beginning asked for the communication program’s collaboration with one graduate course and one introductory course. Beyond that, individual faculty began asking for collaboration on their own initiative, so that eventually, all but one of the required courses in the major was communication enhanced. It appeared after five years that both individual faculty members’ initiative and curriculum planning produced the same result.

However, both departments lost their forceful chairmen. One died; the other was recruited to another university. A new dean of engineering was recruited. The new chair of bioengineering moved the curriculum and research to a new focus on global health. Communication instruction no longer figured prominently in her leadership of the department, but individual professors continued their use of communication intensive methods in courses that had been developed earlier. In the biochemistry department, the new chair continued a mild advocacy for communication instruction. Where peer advice or individual initiative had motivated the use of new assignments, communication instruction continued. However, when new faculty came into the department or faculty were given new teaching responsibilities, they did not choose to use communication-intensive assignments or to continue the assignments of their predecessors.

The strongest factor affecting adoption of communication instruction in individual courses appears to have been word of mouth influence, although a chair’s leadership was also an initial influence. The strongest influence on sustainability in courses appears to be turnover in personnel and whether communication instruction was part of the initial development of a course. However, the emphasis on research as an institutional priority seems to have influenced the allocation of financial resources, and the communication program will be terminated when its grant funding runs out in spring 2008.

Dr. Susan Feinberg, Anna Wilkins
Usability Testing and Evaluation Center
Illinois Institute of Technology

Using Focus Group Research for More User-Focused Usability Studies

Current programs in technical and scientific communication include instruction in usability studies as part of the curriculum. This instruction usually includes research methods such as usability testing, ethnography, field studies, and heuristics. One item typically missing or only briefly touched upon is focus group research. This deficiency was discovered during the semester in which the course in research and usability testing was being taught. Running concurrently with the course was a usability study that required detailed knowledge of the users' needs and goals.

The public (users) may have questions, needs, and opinions that are unknown to facilitators or usability test experts, but these are precisely the items that should inform the usability tasks before the tasks are generated by the usability research team. Traditionally, focus group studies have been employed only in marketing and public opinion research. Focus group research can enhance usability studies by collecting group information regarding a specific topic, such as health information websites designed for the public.

The Usability Testing and Evaluation Center (UTEC) at Illinois Institute of Technology, part of IIT's Technical Communications program, will present a poster that illustrates the process for conducting focus group research leading to task generation for a usability test. This research will include the following methodology:

- Identify the objectives for the focus group sessions.
- Identify the goals (questions we asked) for the focus group sessions.
- Identify the population(s) best able to answer these questions.
- Conduct the focus groups.
- Analyze the data.
- Generate usability tasks.

This approach is a new way to use focus group research to make usability studies even more user-centric. The research retrieves information from the user even before the usability test begins, and should be more heavily emphasized in the curriculum of programs in technical and scientific communication. Our poster will illustrate the importance of focus group research from the perspective of a graduate student who served as research assistant on this project. The discovery of the need for this type of research may lead to the redesign of courses in usability research.

Jay L. Gordon
English
Youngstown State University, Youngstown, OH

Please DO Sweat the Small Stuff: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Font Choice

Please DO Sweat the Small Stuff: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Font Choice

Among the many rhetorical choices one makes when building a document for a professional or technical audience, that of the font or typeface is deceptively simple. We may spend relatively little time selecting a font, but the choice itself is very important. Typographical choices can facilitate or hinder efficient reading, complement or compete with a document's content and purpose, and enhance or detract from an author's perceived credibility, authority, and sense of genre appropriateness. When we make typographic choices, we are building the "design rhetoric" of any document containing text.

But how do we approach these "choices" as teachers and practitioners? What do we know about history and cultural conditions surrounding the palette of "standard" fonts such as Times New Roman, Arial, Palatino, Verdana, and so forth? How will we come to understand the new "standard" fonts on the horizon, such as Microsoft's Calibri?

Although readers are expected to read a document, not ponder its fonts, we as teachers of professional and technical communication are obligated to understand why we choose the fonts as we do, where the "standard" fonts came from, and how certain fonts become "standard" in the first place. We are also obligated to cultivate our students' critical perspective on their own typographical choices.

The aim of this poster, which is based on an article I am currently writing, is to offer two ways toward this understanding. First, it will present a historical view of certain fonts adopted as "official" by national and corporate entities that became culturally legitimated and ultimately viewed as "normal" or "standard" by readers and writers. Second, it will present a comparison of the relative advantages, in terms of both readability and aesthetics, of "corporate" fonts such as Times New Roman and Calibri, as well as open-source fonts such as SIL's Gentium.

In this time of rapid growth among programs in technical and scientific communication, it is important that we retain a critical eye on even those details of our pedagogy that seem relatively trivial, such as font choice. I hope that this poster will serve as both a source of information and as a launching point for discussion of how we present and teach our students to understand and use their rhetorical and design tools.

Margaret N. Hundleby
Engineering Communications Centre
University of Toronto

Fluid Relations: Assessing Programs in Context

I am proposing a poster presentation that looks at a key aspect of program assessment—assessing a program in context. However comprehensive and incisive a program assessment approach may be, it can often be found to downplay or ignore the crucial element of the context in which the individual program plays out its design and works toward its goals. It goes without saying that all assessment (and assessors) strive for accuracy of evaluation and satisfactory results. Focusing on methodology and outcomes may, however, mask the need to ensure that an assessment is fully grounded in the context in which it rises and the key relationships it must account for in order to be both effective and meaningful (Guba & Lincoln, 1983; Lynne, 2004). The poster argues for the benefits of replacing a global measurement methodology going from start to finish without concern for the local and particular dynamics of the program to an approach keyed to purposes of both the program itself and of carrying out the assessment.

There are three areas to be considered: (1) the structure of the setting in which the program exists; (2) the relationship among the elements in the setting; and (3) the activities required to capture (describe) the characteristic make-up of the program at the same time as it is being judged. The poster will first highlight a process for analyzing a setting to understand its structure, including a schematic showing the positioning of four major players—courses, departments, disciplines, and institutions. The remaining graphics and supporting text feature representations of how and why any program is both framed by the elements of its setting and operates reflexively with them to produce the outcomes being sought.

Rather than being a challenge to the recent discussions of assessment, especially of programs, that have taken place at CPTSC and on ATTW-L, the claim I put forward here is one that considers how the increasing fluidity of relations between a program and its setting leave the rigid and outdated concept of context as “background” far behind. This poster comprises a story of the fluid and newly sophisticated understanding we have of setting as an active agent in carrying out an assessment that is both accurate and meaningful.

Dr. Natalia Matveeva
English Department
University of Houston-Downtown

Preparing Future Technical Communicators for Working in the Changing Global Economy: Suggested Classroom Activities

In the rapidly changing global economy, technical communicators need new skills and knowledge that would help them work with foreign counterparts or within local, but multicultural environments. What kind of practical skills and knowledge would they possibly need to be successful communicators? What kind of activities, exercises, and projects would better prepare them for potential new challenges?

The field of intercultural training offers various types of experiential exercises and activities that target specific skills and can enrich technical communication classes. In my poster presentation, I give an overview of various types of activities and discuss how they can be adapted for teaching the skills of effective intercultural communication and other topics.

Specifically, I offer an overview of prevalent types of exercises available in current technical communication textbooks and discuss possible directions for revisions. I argue that a healthy combination of training and teaching methods is an absolute must if we want to enhance our students' technical communication skills.

Mialisa Moline
English
University of Wisconsin - River Falls

Breaking the Luddite: An EQ Strategy for Reducing Resistance to Change

The Luddites of cyberspace, curmudgeons of electronic communication: what motives drive their behavior? How can we reduce their impact on positive growth in the field of technical communication? Luddites may be found lurking in the academy in such soft, quiet spaces as corner offices in traditional college English departments, lingering around water-coolers of industry, and reveling in red tape of government offices. The Luddite opposes technological change; he/she resists new methods for accomplishing work. Understanding the motives behind such resistance can help our programs achieve growth by reducing resistance through the execution of well-informed and well-planned rhetorical strategies. The old-world attitudes of the Luddite cannot stand long in the new-world order of technology against a targeted rhetorical attack. But approaching the Luddite's prejudices requires the utmost subtlety and discretion (Corbett & Connors 1999). To best determine an effective approach for removing prejudices, we must first understand where the Luddite's sympathies lie. Finding the right combination of appeals to logos, pathos, and ethos evolves from extensive audience analysis, and part of that analysis involves understanding motives behind the actions. Motive, some need or desire causing a person to act, is "a philosophical [study], not ultimately to be solved in terms of empirical science" (Burke Grammar of Motives xxv). Improving our understanding of motive informs our rhetorical practice. The field of psychology's EQ (emotional quotient) reveals motive through examination of Burke's pentad elements and ratios, but in different terms.

The Luddite holds potential to mire down the young field of technical communication and its subsequent growth through the field's reliance on technology, its obvious relationship with business and industry stakeholders, and through the perceived threat to a Luddite's degree of power held within the academy. Stakeholder interest in the growth of the field of technical communication and the production/consumption relationship between the two for successful graduates holding knowledge of both tools and theory drives the Luddite's fear of change and loss of power. Gaining understanding of motives, both logical and emotional, is key to breaking his/her resistance.

Using our knowledge of the structure of argument and appeals to logos as experts in rhetoric is a significant tool for breaking the Luddite's hold. Combining that approach with an understanding of emotions driving the Luddite and countering their emotional motives affords better odds for successful persuasion. Capitalizing on psychology's concept of EQ offers us a valuable tool in gaining understanding quickly and efficiently and strategizing an effective appeal to pathos.

Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to be aware of and in control of one's own emotions as well as empathic with others; to motivate one's self, and to be effective in intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Gardner 1993, 1999; Goleman 1995, 1998; Mayer & Salovey 1997; Stein & Book, 2000; Weisinger 1998). Additional understanding of emotional intelligence (EI) or the emotional quotient (EQ) is possible by contrasting it with cognitive intelligence or the intelligence quotient (IQ) (Hill & Rivera 2001).

We already use EQ implicitly through appeals to pathos. Should we use it in more explicit ways? Several tools for measuring and improving EQ exist, including the EQ-I™ and the EQ Map® (Hill & Rivera 2001). This poster argues for putting those tools to work in breaking the Luddite's hold on positive growth in the field of technical communication.

Joe Strange and Molly Johnson
Department of English
University of Houston Downtown

Infusing the Study of Ethics into Graduate Programs

Infusing ethics into the core of an established graduate program of professional and technical communication without adding hours to the degree has challenges. Surely many have added an ethics module to a course from some sense of need, but to infuse an entire program core with meaningful ethics education is a more complex proposition. At the center of the discussion for PW/TC faculty has to be what and how to teach ethics

Rhodes (2003, p.59) argues that “specialists in each discipline can often serve as the most effective facilitators of ethics education.” He explains that ethics pervade every aspect of our disciplines, whether we are practioners or theoreticians. Who better to teach technical writing ethics to technical writing students than technical writers? Technical writers face the ethics of the discipline daily, and thus have a thorough working knowledge of what “ought to be.” Conversely, ethical theorists are examining moral questions from an analytical or scientific perspective and often know “what is” (Rhodes, 2003). Neither perspective is adequate by itself. Meaningful ethics education is juxtaposing “what is” with “what ought to be.”

At the University of Houston Downtown, a National Endowment for the Humanities Grant provided the venue for the masters program faculty to add the theoretical aspects of ethics to their practical understanding of ethical conduct in professional and technical writing. With our understanding of theoretical ethics refined, we incorporated four case studies of regionally important events and their implications concerning ethics into our four core courses: Rhetorical Theory, Visual Design Theory, Project Management, and Pro-seminar.

At the seminar series conclusion, we developed modules of ethics based on the case studies for each of our core courses. The seminar series brought the formal vocabulary of meta ethics into the vocabulary of practioner teachers. And as Henderson (2002, p.7) points out, “best place for practioner and theorist to meet is language.” Further, Rhodes (2003) suggests that teaching ethics in the disciplines is fostered by removing our academic impediments. And armed with an enriched vocabulary we added ethics to our core.

Our poster will present a pictorial narrative of our process: the seminars, the cases, the ethics modules in our core, and our recommendations for those looking to add ethics to their courses or programs.

References

Rhodes, Bill. (2003). Ethics across the curriculum and the nature of morality: some fundamental propositions. *Teaching Ethics*, 3(2), 59-65.

Henderson, Bernard. (2002). A reminder on recognizing ethical problems are practical: Distinctions in teaching theory and practice. *Teaching Ethics*, 2(2), 1-18.