Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication



CPTSC

36th Annual Meeting
Aarhus, Denmark
August 19-21, 2009

## Executive Committee

*President*

**Jan Tovey**

East Carolina University

*Vice President*

**Elizabeth Pass**

James Madison University

*Secretary*

**Nancy Coppola**

New Jersey Institute of Technology

*Treasurer*

**Karen Schnakenberg**

Carnegie Mellon University

*Immediate Past President*

**Kelli Cargile-Cook**

Utah State University

*Chief Information Officer*

**Tracy Bridgeford**

University of Nebraska at Omaha

*Members-at-Large*

**Stuart Blythe**

Michigan State University

**Teena Carnegie**

Eastern Washington University

**Julie Dyke Ford**

New Mexico Tech

**Donna Kain**

East Carolina University

## 2009 Program Committee

Stuart Blythe, Co-chair

Julie Dyke Ford, Co-chair

## 2009 Local Committee

Peter Kastberg, Chair

Helle Houlby

## 2009 Logo & Program Design

Tracy Bridgeford & Stuart Blythe

## 2009 Proposal Reviewers

Ken Baake

Timothy Giles

Molly Johnson

David Hailey

Tyanna Herrington

Richard Johnson Sheehan

Constance Kampf

Clinton Lanier

Becky Jo McShane

Rick Mott

Carroll Nardone

Susan Popham

Kirk St. Amant

Michael Salvo

David Sapp

Jennifer Sheppard

Julie Staggers

Karl Stolley

Jason Swarts

Meredith Zoetewey

# Program at a Glance

**Aarhus School of Business | Aarhus, Denmark | August 19–21, 2009**

## Wednesday, August 19

| | |
|---|---|
| **All Day** | **Excursions. LSP and CPTSC are co-hosting three excursions.** **For information, go to http://www.asb.dk/article.aspx?pid=21507.** |

## Thursday, August 20

| | |
|---|---|
| **7:30-2:30** | **Sign in and registration. (Conference Secretariat, M Wing)** |
| **8:30-10:00** | **Session 1: Welcome. Plenary Talk. (M209)** |
| **10:00-10:15** | **Coffee Break** |
| **10:15-11:15** | **Session 2: Panels A (M206) & B (M207)** |
| **11:30-12:30** | **Session 3: Panels A (M206) & B (M207)** |
| **12:30-1:45** | **Lunch** |
| **2:30-3:30** | **Session 4: Panels A (M206) & B (M207)** |
| **3:30-4:00** | **Coffee Break** |
| **4:00-5:00** | **Session 5: Panel A (M206) & Poster sessions (M209)** |
| **6:30-7:30** | **Guided tour through the Old Town** |
| **7:30** | **Dinner in the Hobro Huset in the Old Town;** **(dinner prepared by Prins Ferdinand)** |

## Friday, August 21

| | |
|---|---|
| **8:00-10:00** | **Breakfast, Annual Business Meeting, Awards (M209)** |
| **10:15-11:30** | **Administrator's Roundtable (M209)** |

# Program in Detail

| Session 1<br>8:30-10:00 | **Plenary Paper & Discussion** | |
|---|---|---|
| | Location: M209 | |
| | Peter Kastberg, Aarhus School of Business<br>Knowledge Communication: Formative Ideas and Research Impetus | |
| **10:00-10:15** | **Coffee Break (between lecture rooms M2–M3)** | |
| Session 2<br>10:15-11:15 | **Panel 2A: Complementary Disciplines and Their Potential Contribution to Programs in Professional Communication** | **Panel 2B: International Perspectives in Scientific & Technical Communication I** |
| | Location: M206 | Location: M207 |
| | **Jan Engberg**<br>Language for Special Purposes | **Kevin LaGrandeur**<br>International Collaboration: Adapting NYIT's Professional and Technical Writing Degree for Use in China |
| | **Peter Kastberg**<br>Knowledge Communication | **Jude Edminster**<br>Integrating an International (Global and Local) Language Emphasis in Your Technical and Scientific Communication Program |
| | **Dale Sullivan**<br>Rhetoric of Science | **Susan Lawrence**<br>Incorporating International Perspectives into the Study of Technical and Policy Discourse |
| | **Jeff Grabill**<br>Technical Communication | |
| Session 3<br>11:30-12:30 | **Panel 3A: Media, Usability, Design** | **Panel 3B: International Perspectives in Scientific & Technical Communication II** |
| | Location: M206 | Location: M207 |
| | **Nancy Allen**<br>Programmatically Engaging the Medium-Message Conundrum: Critiquing the Media We Use | **Doug Eyman**<br>Building Networks: Local Contexts, Global Connections |
| | **Steve Benninghoff**<br>Programmatically Engaging the Medium-Message Conundrum: Medium as Disciplinary Challenge? | **Michael Day**<br>Graduate Program Recruitment Strategies: From Local to International |
| | **Michael Salvo**<br>Beyond Usability: Rhetoric of Emplaced Use | **Diane Martinez**<br>Modern Cultural Studies: A Call for Extensive Research of Globalization in the Online Classroom |
| | **Pavel Zemliansky**<br>Teaching the Language of Participatory Web Design and Communication | **Joseph Jeyeraj**<br>Cultural Literacy and the Engineering Curriculum: Teaching Engineers International Technical Writing |
| **12:30-2:00** | **Lunch (served in the Main Hall)** | |

| Session 4<br>2:00-3:00 | **Panel 4A: Teamwork, Collaboration, Project Management**<br>Location: M206<br>**Constance Kampf**<br>Project Management as a Global Trend for Organization Work: Implications for Technical Communication<br>**Birthe Mousten**<br>Power between Virtual Team Members: Balancing between Product or Process Know-How and Local Market Insight<br>**Keith Comer**<br>Bringing Academic Journal Peer Review Practices to Local Writing Programs: Collaborative Assessment and Distributed Grading | **Panel 4B: Serving Students**<br>Location: M207<br>**Teena Carnegie**<br>DISing Service: The Language and Discourse of Program Administration in Academe<br>**Gerald Savage & Natalia Matveeva**<br>Increasing Diversity in Technical and Scientific Communication<br>**Christine Hubbell**<br>We're Just Not Seeing It: New Challenges in Teaching and Preparing Students with Disabilities |
|---|---|---|
| 3:00-3:30 | **Coffee Break (between lecture rooms M2–M3)** | |
| Session 5<br>4:00-5:00 | **Panel 5A: Positioning A Technical Writing Program Inside an English Department: Creating an Exception to the Rule**<br>Location: M206<br>**Miriam Mara**<br>Hybridizing Literature and Rhetoric<br>**Andrew Mara**<br>Minding the Gap<br>**Bruce Maylath**<br>Finding a Workable Structure and Balance: Contrasting a Tech Comm Program in an English Department with Alternatives at Other Universities | *Poster Sessions*<br>Location: M209<br>**Nicole Brown**<br>Self-Sponsored Technical Communications: Sustaining Global- and Local-Community Life<br>**Emily Thrush & Susan Popham**<br>Online Education and Multicultural, Multinational Student Populations |

# Abstracts

## Panel 2A: Complementary Disciplines and Their Potential Contribution to Programs in Professional Communication

This panel consists of four panelists, each giving a seven-minute talk on one of four complementary disciplines:

**Language for Special Purposes**

>  **Jan Engberg**
>  *University of Aarhus*

**Rhetoric of Science**

>  **Dale Sullivan**
>  *North Dakota State University*

**Knowledge Communication**

>  **Peter Kastberg**
>  *University of Aarhus*

**Technical Communication**

>  **Jeff Grabill**
>  *Michigan State University*

Each presenter will represent a disciplinary perspective, describing how it contributes to research into practical communication and suggesting what graduates from that discipline could contribute to degree programs in the other areas. The panelists will also explore the intellectual connections and gaps between these fields in an effort to explore international relationships and collaborations. The overall goal of the panel is to encourage program directors to consider conducting searches for faculty in disciplines that they have not yet explored. We believe the panel will do this by articulating these closely related disciplines, describing their approaches to research and teaching. Ample time will be reserved for discussion.

## Panel 2B: International Perspectives in Scientific and Technical Communication (I)

### Possibilities for Technical Writing Programs: International Study Abroad Collaborations

>  **Jan Engberg**
>  *University of Aarhus*

As many universities move to a more "market-based" model, instructors in our field have had to adjust, which often means proving that each assignment in our courses supports some higher learning objective that will add value to the students' educations. One such "value added" topic is internationalization and localization. The need for technical writers to be able to function in a multi-cultural and international job market has been well-documented. However, can students really understand how different cultures approach rhetoric and writing differently if they do not have the chance to see the documents in use in that particular culture? Is merely introducing the cultural dimensions of Hofstede and Hall and other "culture-generalists" enough?

Some market analysts and cultural commentators would argue that no one can truly understand their own culture, let alone other cultures, without one immersion experience. Martin Gannon (2008, p.39) stresses the fact that many companies, which may be the future employers of our students, will not even consider a candidate for management if he or she hasn't lived or studied abroad. This drives home the fact that in order for our students to become valued assets in their companies, they may have to take that next step and go abroad.

As a result of these market forces across the disciplines, Angelo State University, a small, regional university located in West-Central Texas, has moved to ensure that all of our students are offered discipline-specific opportunities to study abroad. As a result, Nicole Madison (Assistant Professor of

Professional Writing) and Gabriela Serrano (Assistant Professor of Literature) have collaborated to form a study-abroad opportunity in conjunction with the University of Torcuato di Tella in Buenos Aires, Argentina for professional writing and English students from Angelo State University. During the study abroad experience, students will have the opportunity to study examples of technical and professional writing in its cultural context, as well as to read Argentina's great literary works in its native setting.

In relation to the conference theme of globalization and crossing borders, this presentation would discuss the benefits, pitfalls, and strategies for negotiating the creation of a study abroad program for technical and professional writing majors in these times of limited budgets. The planning and creation of such a program may take 18 months to 2 years at the least, and knowing the logistics of creating a program, how to negotiate the proposal through the multiple administrative layers, and how to recruit and guide students through the application process would be valuable topics for other administrators who wish to create a similar program.

Reference:

Gannon, M. (2008). *Paradoxes of Culture and Globalization.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage

## International Collaboration: Adapting NYIT's Professional and Technical Writing Degree for Use in China

### Kevin LaGrandeur
*New York Institute of Technology*

NYIT and a major Chinese technical university, NUPT in Nanjing, have recently formed a joint venture in which NYIT programs and degrees are offered at the Chinese university.  This has entailed actually building a new, separate section at the Chinese campus for the joint school.  Monetary obligations are shared, but the programs and their courses are taught and administered by NYIT personnel in cooperation with the Chinese government and the local university administration.

Some of our programs need to be adapted to fulfill the different cultural, governmental, and institutional needs of China.  Right now, we happen to be trying to adapt our Professional and Technical Writing major (which is one emphasis in our English degree) to fit the NUPT administration's and the Chinese government's needs.  This has brought up some interesting issues and problems, which we are still in the process of trying to resolve:

- Chinese universities, in general, are interested in very pragmatic programs.  They like to focus, for instance, on preparing students for jobs as translators.  So it is unclear where any non-linguistically-oriented classes, like literature, creative writing, or even some forms of professional or technical writing would fit their needs, because they are not interested in having their students produce original documentation, so much as teaching them how to convert communication from one language to another.

- Also, based on conversations with Chinese faculty and administrators, it seems that the provincial government in China dictates what kind of English major can be offered at what kind of school.  They tend to limit their degrees based on the mission of the university.  NUPT is labeled as a technical college, which restricts what we can offer. Since their focus is on providing technical students (like engineers) with practical skills, like English translation ability, some classes for technical writing may be limited.

- The Chinese administration is, for cultural and bureaucratic reasons, reluctant to commit themselves to giving specific outlines of what they want to do.  This has made planning difficult.  Our Dean has tried to solve this problem by presenting them with a series of options and asking them to indicate what they like or do not like about them. That way, the Chinese government is prompted to act more quickly.

- Because the Chinese campus is technically an extension of our home campus, NYIT cannot alter its own English/Professional Writing program too much in order to tailor it to the Chinese campus. This would cause accreditation problems in the U.S.

- Because NYIT has other foreign campuses in the Middle East and Canada, whatever program we devise has to be flexible enough to be usable in those places, as well as at home in the U.S.

Right now, it seems our best option is to use some form of the Professional Writing track of our English program as a starting point or template for fashioning a workable program for the Chinese technical university (as well as the other campus sites around the world), but we still are not sure which road to take. It would be useful for us, and interesting for those at the international meeting of the CPTSC to hear of these issues in cross-cultural curriculum-formation, and we certainly would be interested to hear ideas for how other universities deal with some of these issues and problems.

## Integrating an International (Global and Local) Language Emphasis in Your Technical and Scientific Communication Program

### Jude Edminster
*Bowling Green State University*

Three years ago, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences informed Bowling Green State University's Scientific and Technical Communication Program that its Master's Program would be suspended for two years (no applications taken), ostensibly because the program lacked 'vibrancy'—administratively defined as a higher quality applicant pool. Obviously *all* of our accepted and funded applicants possessed sufficient 'quality' to meet the program requirements; however our several international students often were not deemed qualified as first year composition teachers, the standard assignment for funded students in the English Department—an element we felt factored heavily in the Dean's decision. The 'suspension' was merely a means to the slow death of a program which did not contribute sufficiently to the instructor pool for the first year composition courses, and at the end of the two-year period, our graduate program was officially terminated.

In the meantime, however, another colleague and I had developed a fully online Graduate Certificate Program in International Scientific and Technical Communication consisting of our four core graduate courses, which had steadily been acquiring both applicants and graduates over the two-year suspension period. This program was mercifully left intact. We had succeeded in devising a way to continue teaching our graduate courses (and thereby maintain our graduate faculty status) by creating a niche online graduate certificate designed for non-traditional, domestic and international students already in the workplace—a program focused on the many international issues germain to careers in the field of Scientific and Technical Communication. My presentation will reveal the primary constituents of our success, so that other programs faced with similar exigencies in these tough economic times, may rise as we did from the ashes of what would otherwise have been our demise.

## Incorporating International Perspectives into the Study of Technical and Policy Discourse-

### Susan Lawrence
*George Mason University*

Located near Washington DC, we are developing a programmatic emphasis in public and professional rhetorics. Students in our MA program work for government agencies, Congress, and associations that lobby Congress. Through technical writing course projects, special topics courses, internships, and thesis and capstone projects, we encourage students to study the relationships among technical and deliberative discourses in these institutions.

To study genres of deliberation, of course, is to study how discourse articulates with political change. In our program, then, students interpret how technical and policy discourses together may support, provide the occasion for, and otherwise shape the human activities and institutional practices by which political change occurs.

Although these articulations are rhetorically situated, it can be difficult to see them as localized practices in the US political institutions least likely to be considered "local." We seek to incorporate international, comparative perspectives into these lines of inquiry both to foreground the situatedness of the practices we are studying, and to expand our understandings of the reciprocal relationships that may obtain among technical and deliberative discourses, political action, and change.

This presentation seeks to generate discussion about how international perspectives may be incorporated into studies of technical and deliberative discourses, and invites partners who wish to pursue similar lines of inquiry.

## Session 3
## Panel 3A: Media, Usability, Design

**Programmatically Engaging the Medium-Message Conundrum: Critiquing the Media We Use**

### Nancy Allen
*Eastern Michigan University*

"Tasks become texts become tools. It's like the refrain of an old song for technical communicators, but one we need to continually work to unpack. New media for communicating are seemingly being invented every week. The problem is, as these new media are more-and-more web- and technology-enabled, they rapidly move to 'tool' status." Media become tools we believe we should be able to automatically connect to technical tasks for use with specialized languages. We risk becoming obsessed with the need to learn and to teach the new technologies quickly. Soon we feel that we are losing the time to deal with the complexities of rhetorical contexts, the politics and ramifications so important to consider in each writing situation. It's a tall order for our programs to address the needs of both integrating new technologies and teaching effective writing.

 One approach that can offer help comes from well known Canadian scholar and communicator Marshall McLuhan. If we use his famous declaration that "the medium is the message" and substitute the term technology for medium, as McLuhan did himself, we find both a warning and an approach to apply to our medium-message conundrum. To keep technology from overwhelming and thereby undercutting our work with language, we need to stress the ways that technology and language work differently but together to help us reach our goals. To do this, we need not only to teach the uses of a new technology/medium but also to critique its effects on the ways we use language effectively in varied situations.  To help with doing such a critique McLuhan developed a tetrad of questions to apply to the technologies/media we use in order to understand how they both enhance and obstruct our messages.

- What does the medium enhance?
- What does the medium make obsolete?
- What does the medium retrieve that had been obsolesced earlier?
- What does the medium flip into when pushed to extremes?

As an example in this presentation I will very briefly show how this analysis can be applied to PowerPoint, which has become a lingua franca in the corporate world. I will suggest that a similar

approach can be used in evaluating other new media, courses or even programs, though we may want to include other factors as well.

## Programmatically Engaging the Medium-Message Conundrum: Medium as Disciplinary Challenge

### Steve Benninghoff

*Eastern Michigan University*

" Tasks become texts become tools. It's like the refrain of an old song for technical communicators, but one tech comm programs need to continually work to unpack. New media for communicating are seemingly being invented every week."  The problem is, as these new media are more-and-more web- and technology-enabled, they are moving to "tool" status too rapidly.

This presentation will briefly recount two initiatives in our undergraduate and graduate programs that illustrate the difficulties of new media and this medium-message conundrum for tpc programs that puts a new spin on thorny and old disciplinary issues, and problematizes issues in languages for specialized purposes.

The first initiative is the development of a critical digital literacies course. The story of the course's creation forms the beginning of a recognition of local-to-global, technology-to-social system perspective of writing technologies. It's a promising development for our programs in the drive to recognize and prepare students for the life-long learning and meta-technical and meta-writing roles we really need them to play--to situate them and engage them in between the development of technology and the social change it enables. So the story shows a beginning of a moment of understanding. But it also represents an image of the problem, as the moment of focusing this perspective into a single course also suggests a certain isolating of the perspective.

The second initiative is the beginnings of the revision of our master's program in professional writing. As the program is shared space among a collection of specialists in various areas of writing, the heuristic process we're engaging in is to detach goals and outcomes from particular courses, and then think through reformulating the course structure around activities or topics rather than fields. Sounds great. But the moment we began to engage in the negotiations, individuals began protective calls, looking to privilege particular areas and specializations. Clearly once specializations become disciplines and establish localized spaces, they have political imperatives to maintain their own language, their own "media."

Questions for discussion:

- Has anyone else found concrete strategies and tactics for shifting whole programs in a meta- or cross-disciplinary way?

- How do we develop tech comm as an umbrella over a wide variety of tool-centered work specializations when they develop own "specialized languages" and political imperatives?

- How might programs, as "new media", enact this unifying, almost anti-disciplinarity at their core?

## Beyond Usability: Rhetoric of Emplaced Use

### Michael Salvo

*Purdue University*

"Beyond Usability" is forward looking and asserts the next generation of technical communication curricula and methodology beyond user-centered design and usability.

Through the second half of the twentieth century, technical and professional writing research has redefined the relationship between producers and consumers of technology and, more generally, rearticulated relationships between stakeholders as a network of power and action. Usability has provided opportunities for professional and technical communication programs to develop new curricula, programs, and faculty expertise as well as professional opportunities for program graduates. While these programmatic constructions continue to bear fruit, development of research methodology continues. Reflecting on the exigencies motivating the creation and rapid development of user-centered rhetoric, asserting that many of the research problems usability raised have been addressed.

While not all the problems revealed by usability have not been adequately resolved, and they will not likely be left behind for some time. However, many key theoretical issues have been addressed and new methods are already being used to attend to emerging new challenges. This position paper presents emerging new constructions for emplaced use of technology, asserting new modes for renewed scholarly and professional attention, articulating critical methods for the user-centered development, design, study, and use of technologies. Drawing from a variety of disciplines, "Beyond Usability" asserts future development in such hybrid and emerging methods as Technology Ethnography, Place-based Research, and Interactive Media Design. This presentation will address questions such as:

- What promises and perils do developments in methodology hold for programs just establishing themselves in usability?

- How can these new methodologies be used to construct new curriculum and professional identities?

- What new partnership might such rearticulation and realignment enable?

- How consistent are these emerging methods with usability and other existing rhetorical approaches? Where are they inconsistent?

User-centered design has changed the way technical communicators articulate audience. Becoming user-centered has changed the way the field represents itself to the world, to our home institutions, to our prospective students, and to each other. This presentation asks the audience to reflect on those changes and to articulate emerging challenges to technical communication programs in an age "Beyond Usability."

**Teaching the Language of Participatory Web Design and Communication**

**Pavel Zemliansky**

*James Madison University*

My proposed position paper directly addresses two of the conference's themes: discourse and collaboration and visual language/the language of new media.

Writing in the March 2009 issue of CPTSC's journal *Programmatic Perspectives*, James Zappen and Cheryl Geisler argue that "newer approaches to experience design and new communication technologies…emphasize total user engagement with the technology and richer collaboration among users." (Zappen & Geisler, 2009, p. 3). Zappen and Geisler describe what they see as a shift in web design from "system performance" and "user satisfaction" to "the quality of the user's engagement with the system." (Zappen & Geisler, 2009, p. 7).

Traditionally, training of technical communicators in computer mediated communication and web design has focused on usability and efficient fulfillment of specific communication and design tasks. These traditional skills will always be important. However, with the advent of the social web

communication and collaboration technologies, and with increasing use of those technologies in workplace settings, TSC programs need to incorporate the kinds of web design and communication training that take into account the changes brought about by the so-called "social web."

TSC programs might move in three directions in order to implement such changes:

- Give students new conceptual knowledge about the role of web designers as communication enablers.

- Encourage the critical meta-study of the use of social web in professional, social, and recreational settings with the purpose of understanding of best design practices.

- Train students in new software tools and skills that include but are not limited to AJAX and content management systems (CMS), including open source ones.

## Panel 3B: International Perspectives in Scientific and Technical Communication (II)

**Building Networks: Local Contexts, Global Connections**

### Doug Eyman
*George Mason University*

The goal of this position paper is to ask participants to contribute to a range of approaches for finding and making opportunities to incorporate international and cross-cultural perspectives into professional and technical writing programs. Using the conference itself as a networking opportunity is one such approach, but it is important for programs to consider both local and global networking options and also to seek partnerships in a wide range of contexts that might support curricular development in this area.

Following the theme of this year's CPTSC conference, a 2006 report by the Association of American Colleges and Universities highlights the challenges of bridging the local and the global in terms of programmatic application

> despite widespread agreement among colleges and universities about the importance of global learning, AAC&U's investigation of college practices reveals a disturbing disconnect … too few colleges and universities offer structured educational opportunities for students to acquire knowledge, both theoretical and experiential, about the rest of the world, about America's place in the world, and about the inequities and interdependencies that mark current geopolitical relationships. (Assessing Global Learning: Matching Good Intentions with Good Practice, Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), 2006 (Author: Musil, Caryn McTighe)

The availability of resources (funding, programmatic support, faculty) may also play a significant role in the extent to which this disconnect can be addressed. One of the keywords that defines the culture of my institution is "entrepreneurial," but the definition, at least locally, roughly translates to "we support innovation but not with funding or material resources." In other words faculty and programs are encourage to pursue new curricular and pedagogical approaches, but any resources required to do so must be appropriated by the faculty who are interested in such innovation (none will be provided by the university itself).

University-wide global education initiatives are often highly resource-intensive, and this is no less so for individual professional and technical writing programs that want to develop curricula that include global, transnational, or cross-cultural emphases. At my university, there is a push to provide global perspectives across the curriculum, but to truly engage the global within the local context requires more than just adding a few readings or a unit on localization of documentation or cultural implications of language use or visual rhetoric. In an ideal world, our program would be able to add a

faculty line whose specialization is in international/cross-cultural technical communication, as well as establishing relationships and study-abroad programs with institutions across the globe. However, while there would be little political or institutional impediment to building our program in this way, we don't have the resources to develop a strong global-perspectives facet for our professional writing program; thus, if we want to even consider expanding the program, we need to do it "entrepreneurially."

Our university is surely not unique in its approach (particularly in the current economic climate) ; the challenge then, for our program and for other professional and technical writing programs who wish to develop international and cross-cultural rhetorics in their programs, is to find and make opportunities that are programmatically sustainable while simultaneously not resource intensive.

The following are some initial questions that I hope will be generative, and I plan to record and share the answers (and example scenarios) in the conference proceedings:

- How do we find partners, make connections, develop global/inter/transnational initiatives?  This conference and other international conferences are certainly a good start. Could we, as an organization, support other mechanisms for networking?

- What local constituents are available? Our writing center is currently working with a wide range of international students and I am working with our writing center faculty on research relating to second-language writing and intercultural rhetorics. So one of the avenues that I am working on is how to bring the experience and expertise of our international student population into communication with our professional writing program.

- What local projects or opportunities would be of interest to potential partners (students and faculty) at extra-country institutions? For instance, at my institution, which is located in the Washington DC area, there are opportunities to study the US legislative process as applied technical communication; this may well be a selling point for students and faculty from abroad to connect with our program.

- What cross-cultural/international experiences or programs can serve as models for curricular development? The Stanford Cross-Cultural Rhetorics (CCR) project, which is primarily focused on first-year writing, may present one example of a program that technical and professional writing programs might tap into.

**Graduate program recruitment strategies: from local to international**

### Michael Day

*Northern Illinois University*

Recruiting the best students to our programs is an issue that concerns all of us, and in our current global economy we strive not only to internationalize our curricula, but also to increase the diversity of our programs with students from various backgrounds and nationalities. At Northern Illinois University (NIU), our graduate program in technical writing serves a fairly stable population of students, but most of them come to us from the Northern Illinois region. Like many other universities, we want to explore strategies to enrich our program by recruiting more international students.

The issue of student recruitment, for both undergraduate and graduate programs, has been discussed at past CPTSC conferences, and discussions tended to focus on individual programs' recruitment strategies (see the 2006 and 2007 CPTSC Administrative Roundtable discussions on recruitment) and methods for attracting specific potential student populations (including a 2004 panel on "Recruitment Strategies for Professional and Technical Communication Programs"). NIU is conducting an informal survey of graduate technical communications programs' recruitment practices, including those

geared toward local, national, and international prospects. Reporting on the results of the survey, this position paper will build upon previous work, moving discussion toward a set of strategies that graduate technical communication programs can share.

**Modern cultural studies: A call for extensive research of globalization in the online classroom**

**Diane Martinez**

*Utah State University and Kaplan University*

In the aftermath of books like Thomas Friedman's *The World is Flat*, the term globalization has gained tremendous popularity in practically all aspects of contemporary culture.  Industry is embracing the global opportunities that a flat world affords, and education is on board with this in preparing students to work in a multicultural environment that extends beyond national borders.  While academic efforts to add elements of globalization into curricula are evidenced in traditional face-to-face environments, such as foreign exchange programs, they are selective, time intensive, and sometimes costly.  Distance education, on the other hand, may be the perfect environment to immerse all students in a class in a cross-cultural experience that could have a lasting impression on them, as well as give them strategies to communicate effectively with several different cultures in their futures. Additionally, the time and cost to implement such experiences may be less than traditional initiatives. Furthermore, technical communicators most likely will have global experiences through electronic means in the workplace versus traveling and working physically in another country or culture; thus, it will be to their advantage to learn about globalization through this means via online education.

Before we can begin cross-cultural educational experiences in online education, it is important to understand the influence that culture has on different aspects of the online environment.  Not only must we look at how technology can be used to facilitate better understanding of culture, but we must understand how different cultures view online educational technology, as well as how they interact with it.  For instance, some studies have explored ways to use technology in disciplines that traditionally relied on face-to-face interactions regarding culture, such as in medicine and social work (Hawthorne, Prout, Kinnersley, & Houston, 2009; Collins, 2007), while other studies found that national culture influences interaction in online environments, such as approaches to problems, ways students engage with the instructor and other students, as well as how they use the discussion board, chat, etc. (Bing & Ai-Ping, 2008).  National culture also has been seen as a determining factor in expenditure on education and class size (Cheung & Chan, 2008).

A detailed and global research initiative must take place if we are to explore effective cross-cultural educational experiences in online environments.  Many times instructors use their own or their students' experiences to teach about culture, but that approach is limiting.  Instead, it would be prudent to explore the topic of globalization from a truly global perspective by working with several countries to discover their own teaching and learning outcomes in an effort to inform our own concepts and pedagogy regarding globalization.  Questions that arise from preliminary research include:

1.  Is there a common definition of globalization?
2.  What influences the way globalization is taught in online technical communication courses?
3.  What are effective strategies for teaching globalization in the online classroom?
4.  What opportunities exist for cross-cultural experiences in online education?

Along with pedagogical issues, because this is an online environment, technology has to be part of the research too. The two cannot be separated becaseu content and technology are already connected in the online classroom. Thus, further questioning includes:

1. Has technology really diversified the online classroom?
2. How do other cultures view the technology in an online classroom, such as discussion forums and synchronous activities?
3. How can we use technology to teach about and reach other cultures?

**References**

Bing, W. and Ai-Ping, T. (2008). The influence of national culture towards learners' interaction in the online learning environment. A Comparative Analysis of Shanghai TV University (China) and Wawasan Open University (Malaysia). *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 9(3), 327–339. Retrieved January 24, 2009 from Academic Search Premier.

Cheung, H.Y. and Chang, A. (2008). Relationships amongst cultural dimensions, educational expenditure and class size of different nations. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 28, 698–707. Retrieved January 22, 2009 from Academic Search Premier.

Collins, S. (2008). Open and Distance Learning in Qualifying Social Work Education in Britain and the USA: Celebrating Diversity and Difference? *Social Work Education*, 27(4), 422-439. Retrieved February 16, 2009 from Academic Search Premier.

Friedman, T. (2006). *The world is flat*. London, England: Penguin Books.

Hawthorne, K., Prout, H., Kinnersley, P., and Houston, H. (2009). Evaluation of different delivery modes of an interactive e-learning programme for teaching cultural diversity. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 74, 5–11. Retrieved February 27, 2009 from Academic Search Premier.

**Cultural Literacy and the Engineering Curriculum: Teaching Engineers International Technical Writing,**

**Joseph Jeyeraj**

*Liberty University*

As Teresa Kynell in Writing in a Milieu of Utility: The Move to Technical Communication in American Engineering Programs, 1850-1950 points out, Engineering programs since the last century have grappled with the issue of providing engineering majors the type of literacy that will make them write and speak fluently. Specifically, the conversation has revolved around whether one should do this by teaching Engineering majors, through the study of literature, culture or by teaching them writing in writing courses. Kynell argues that this tension has resulted in the formation of the technical writing course that, by teaching Engineering majors rhetoric, attempts to address these concerns.

For these reasons, the Engineering curriculum at major universities, among other things, typically includes the course sequence of freshman composition followed by technical writing. When students in engineering programs today follow this course sequence, the rationale for asking students to take these courses in this sequence is as follows: while freshman composition teaches students foundational writing skills, technical writing builds on these foundational skills and teaches them specialized forms of writing done in various specialized technical and professional communities.

However, despite what students learn in these courses, the issue of cultural literacy still remains unaddressed. When Kynell points out that including technical writing in the curriculum, through the teaching of rhetoric, addresses concerns about the need to teach engineers culture, she does not explain how this is done. One could argue that freshman composition, with its emphasis on basic foundational skills does not have the space to deal with the task of teaching cultural literacy comprehensively. Technical writing courses as well teaching, as in the case of various technical writing courses today, specialized forms of technical writing such as operational and procedural writing, also do not have the space to deal with the issue of cultural literacy comprehensively.

This gap is problematic because communication and culture are interrelated, and it is not possible to deal with one without dealing with the other. In other words, if one wants to improve communication

skills one also needs to teach culture, something of critical importance in the field of Engineering where students need to communicate with both specialists in their field and those in management, etc., who may not share their specialized technical knowledge. For these reasons I argue that, among the various ways in which one can develop cultural literacy and audience awareness in engineering majors, one can do so by introducing in the writing sequence of the engineering curriculum a third writing course focusing on International Technical Writing. This course, I argue has the potential to develop in students' cultural literacy, and, by doing so, build on what freshman composition and technical writing have to offer.

I currently teach an International Technical Writing Course in an engineering program. This course, while teaching the different categories of technical writing, discusses, among other things, both United States culture and overseas cultures. Students in this course do assignments related both to their culture and overseas cultures. For instance, for the assignment on instructional writing, students are required to produce an instructional document for a group of overseas students, in this case Korean students who happen to be in modest numbers at Liberty University. Before doing this assignment, students have spent a significant amount of time reading about International English and studying strategies they could use while writing for international readers. They read about ways by which students can remove from their language various culture specific elements that could confuse international readers. Students examine their own culture and decide not only on how to present information about their culture but also consider what information to present. Doing so enables students to understand the extent to which their language and ways of expressing ideas can be culturally situated.

When students begin examining aspects of their culture that international students should know, it can become a learning experience for them. For successfully identifying salient information, students should try to view their culture from an outsider's perspective. They need to ask what would be something about United States culture international students need to know. While doing so, they should also ask if this is something that could be different and alien for another culture. Viewing cultural information that they had usually perceived from an insider's perspective from the perspective of an outsider develops in them cultural literacy and communication skills in ways that are somewhat distinctive from skills they would acquire in freshman composition or technical writing. Wearing the spectacles of an outsider to examine information that they have always perceived as insiders has the potential for making students perceive the commonplace in a fresh manner and examine consciously what has possibly been for them unexamined knowledge. Examining consciously such unexamined knowledge enables students to understand how information they have always perceived one way can be perceived differently by others holding a different cultural perspective. In other words, if students, as engineers are wont to, view language as a tool that can easily communicate content to anyone as long as the language, in some universal manner, is clear, this exercise has the potential to make them aware of the extent to which language use and communication of subject matter can be culturally situated.

Furthermore, while not asking students to culturally change, such an exercise creates cultural literacy by making students aware that other cultures may view the world differently, and cultural literacy means understanding how to communicate with those wearing different cultural spectacles and who may not share their own values. Such awareness is based on new information about other cultures that students learn in the course. This new information, in making them compare information about their culture with that of other cultures, enables students to acquire a sense of perspective of their own culture. Developing these skills, in turn, will increase their audience awareness and improve their communication skills or, at least, make them aware of the need to improve their communication skills.

While the Engineering curriculum in engineering programs, in order to meet the goals of ABET (Accrediting Board of Engineering and Technology) for improving students' communication skills,

includes writing courses such as freshman composition and technical writing, including international technical writing as a part of the Engineering Curriculum, by having the potential to develop in students cultural literacy, addresses concerns about the need to teach engineers culture and can further develop skills students have acquired in freshman composition and Technical Writing.

**Reference**

Kynell-Hunt, Teresa. *Writing in a Milieu of Utility: The Move to Technical Communication in American Engineering Programs*, 1850–1950. Stanford: Ablex, 2000.

## Session 4
### Panel 4A: Teamwork, Collaboration, Project Management

**Project Management as a Global Trend for Organization Work: Implications for Technical Communication**

### Constance Kampf
*University of Aarhus*

Project Management tools and processes offer a visual approach to producing knowledge about a project in order to complete it.  As project management practices are used with increasing frequency in multination and global companies, understanding the power of visual rhetoric, genre and writing processes in the context of project management documentation can be an advantage for technical communicators.  In addition, project management tools and online documentation spaces are objects which cross-cultural teams use to function.  This presentation will explore the potential of Project Management to be tightly integrated in Technical Communication curricula through a communications approach to project management.  Questions for discussion include:

How tightly is project management integrated into different technical communication programs?

Can technical communicators use project management documents as a site for practicing visual rhetoric in order to produce knowledge about a project?

How does the connection between rhetoric, knowledge, cross-cultural teams and documentation genres offer a potential capstone subject for a technical communication curriculum?

**Power between virtual team members—Balancing Between Product or Process Know-how and Local Market Insight**

### Birthe Mousten
*University of Aarhus*

Power in global cooperation between virtual team members with different professional backgrounds is an issue of major importance. Data from such cooperation has been collected for a number of years from projects in several universities in Europe and the USA involving students of science and tech writing on the one hand and students of tech writing and translation on the other hand. In corporate environments, however, the question of power in interaction between work groups with different educational backgrounds has not been researched or discussed sufficiently in-depth in connection with cross-border, cross-linguistic text transfer. Questions of power will often surface in relation to questions of text adaptation in connection with technical writing where translation is involved. Who has the upper hand? The person in the sender culture with maximum know-how of the product? Or the person in the receiver culture with maximum understanding of the culture and insight in the local environment in which the product is going to be implemented and function? From the empirical material, examples will show the diversity of the problems as well as different paths to solutions. Moreover, the complexity will be illustrated by the differently defined approaches by different product

marketers to local influence. The solutions chosen and their frequencies will emerge from the examples and will point towards possible mediation strategies in the virtual team, which in turn will point towards different competence contributions and power distributions in the virtual teams.

**Sources:**

Dean, Burton V., Asbjorn Osland and Michael Solt. "Lessons Learned in the Implementation of E-Teams". Int. *Journal of Engineering Education*, Great Britain: TEMPUS Publications, 2005, Vol. 21. No. 2, pp. 222-227.

Gibson, Cristina B., and Susan G. Cohen, eds. *Virtual Teams That Work Creating Conditions for Virtual Team Effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.

Hubscher-Davidson, Séverine. "A Reflection on Action Research Processes in Translator Training", *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2008, pp. 75-92.

Maylath, Bruce, Sonia Vandepitte, and Birthe Mousten. "Growing Grassroots Partnerships: Trans-Atlantic Collaboration between American Instructors of Technical Writing and European Instructors of Translation." *Designing Global Learning Environments: Visionary Partnerships, Policies, and Pedagogies*. Eds. Doreen Stärke-Meyerring and Melanie Wilson. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2008. 52–66.

Mousten, Birthe, Sonia Vandepitte, & Bruce Maylath. "Theory and Practice of Intercultural Collaborative Pedagogy in the Trans-Atlantic Project." Doreen Stärke-Meyerring & Melanie Wilson(Eds). *Designing Global Learning Environments: Visionary Partnerships, Policies, and Pedagogies*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2008. 129–144.

## Bringing Academic Journal Peer Review Practices to Local Writing Programmes -- Collaborative Assessment and Distributed Grading

### Keith Comer

*University of Canterbury, New Zealand*

### Background

In many courses and departments, assessment remains only tangentially connected to programme outcomes and learning objectives.

As students often attest, writing assessments tend to be inconsistent and subjective. While writing pedagogy recommends "guide on the side" approaches, evaluation practices tend to put individual graders on center stage. But what could happen when groups of writing teachers employ technological assistance and bring academic journal peer review practices to local writing programme assessments? How would it be possible to have student writing assessed by more readers with greater reliability—yet in less time?

### Goals and Process

Beginning in the 2006-7 academic year, a collaborative review project was created to enable more consistent evaluations of writing and to integrate programme goals and learning outcomes with assessments. Software developed to foster this process was designed for use by diverse staff across a range of tertiary providers - to include teachers from universities, community colleges, and secondary schools with 'early college' programmes. All student essays were reviewed online in a process similar to that used by academic journals, with each submission evaluated by at least two reviewers other than the instructor of record for each student. If the initial reviewers disagreed by a preset margin, third readers were engaged. Instead of addressing the unique criteria of individual teachers, students became responsible for meeting the challenging standards of audiences composed of multiple reviewers. Further, every student's writing was typically reviewed by at least six different readers each semester.

### Results

This project transformed the review and assessment processes used to provide feedback for some 430 students in 21 sections of writing courses at three geographically separated institutions in the United States. Fourteen academic staff from a research university, a community college, and a secondary school with tertiary opportunities conducted nearly 2,000 reviews of over 800 student essays. Because

of the distributed grading process and software employed, and despite a doubling of the number of reviews carried out per person, the overall time teachers spent on assessments saw no increase on previous practice. Evaluation standards were applied more consistently, addressing long-standing programmatic concerns and student criticisms. Post-course surveys

indicated nearly two-thirds of the students participating found the feedback received to be superior or equivalent to that from other writing courses, and five of every six students regarded the approach as a useful and desirable way to achieve more balanced and consistent essay grading. The methods and resources established are readily scalable for use in small or large writing programmes, and applicable across disciplinary boundaries in writing-intensive courses or for portfolio-based approaches.

This brief presentation will explore how similar approaches could be employed with individual courses or entire writing programmes elsewhere and clarify some of the common pitfalls to be anticipated.

## Panel 4B: Serving Students

### DISing service: the language and discourse of program administration in academe

#### Teena Carnegie
*Eastern Washington University*

This position paper raises questions regarding the role of service in the administration of technical communication programs.  Of the three components of academic life (scholarship, teaching, and service) service is often the least valued. In academe, the language we use and the stories we tell about service downplay its significance. Time and time again, untenured, tenure-track faculty are advised to limit their service. Stories abound of untenured faculty being asked to take on extra service responsibilities (especially as it relates to directing, managing, and building programs) only to be denied tenure when their scholarship suffers as a result. But if we do not value or recognize service, where and how do we build experience and acquire training to effectively direct and manage programs? If service is not acknowledged or compensated, how do we recruit students, assess programs, manage enrollments and scheduling, build technological resources and complete the other work needed to sustain and grow programs?

In a climate in which the language of budget cuts is being combined with the language of productivity, the denigration of service becomes even more detrimental to small and medium size programs which rely on service contributions from faculty to maintain and develop themselves. In a recent 'new faculty orientation,' for example, the provost of my university warned newly hired faculty that they should minimize their service until after they had achieved tenure. The college in which my technical communication program resides recently revised the policies and procedures which govern departments and programs to state:

> Probationary faculty are expected to concentrate primarily on demonstrating effective teaching and establishing a record of professional and scholarly activity during the probationary period, but also to make appropriate contributions of service to the department, college and university. . . . It is the chair's responsibility to ensure that any academic or administrative assignments given to a candidate do not unnecessarily interfere with the candidate's progress in meeting expectations for teaching and scholarship.

The discourse makes it clear that service is not a priority. In addition, the categories offered in the policy and procedures place administrative service along side membership on a committee, support for student clubs, and activities such as speaking engagements and participation on advisory boards. In other words, a faculty could meet service requirements by sitting on a committee and advising a student club.  Administering a program would constitute far more work but would be considered

equal in terms of credit toward promotion.  It needs to be noted that at my university, 80% of the workload is assigned to teaching and the remaining 20% is to be divided between scholarship and service. Furthermore, there has been an unofficial policy at my university of denying and eliminating time reassigned to faculty for administrative purposes. So many of the faculty who direct programs do not get reduced teaching loads to do so. With recent state budget cuts, the unofficial policy has become a budget action item in which the university seeks to "analyze and eliminate unnecessary reassigned time for faculty."

 To make matters worse, the university has begun to implement a new "modified-zero based" funding model that uses data from the Delaware study to determine performance in order to allocate funding to departments. The language of this new budget model emphasizes productivity in terms of student credit hours generated. In such a discourse, service is not productive and administration of programs becomes even more invisible and devalued.

So the questions remain: how do we prepare faculty to direct programs and how do we give value to program administration? Do we need to change the language and discourse surrounding service or reposition program administration within the discourse of academe to ensure program administration is acknowledged and compensated?

### Increasing Diversity in Technical and Scientific Communication

**Gerald Savage**

*Illinois State University*

**Natalia Matveeva**

*University of Houston-Downtown*

**Overview**
As members of CPTSC's Diversity Committee, we have launched a study of the current status of technical and scientific communication (TSC) in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) in the United States. This study is important to the programmatic focus of CPTSC in several ways: at present no HBCU faculty or program administrators participate in CPTSC. Participation from these schools is important for the diversity goals of our organization. Not only would it greatly increase diversity in our membership, but we would also be likely to be able to begin a much needed dialog about ways to effectively recruit students, hire faculty, design curricula, and facilitate transition to professional practice for underrepresented groups in the field of technical communication in the United States.

As two speakers of the Panel on Increasing Diversity in Technical and Scientific Communication, we will report on findings resulting from our analysis of 80 HBCU and 31 TCU English Department websites. In cases where websites have insufficient information, we are contacting department chairs, program directors, or faculty by email to seek answers to these questions.

We believe the study relates to the 2009 conference theme by extending one of the suggested topics listed in the call for papers: "Opportunities for international collaborations." We interpret this topic more broadly as "opportunities for collaboration across cultural, racial, and ethnic boundaries" which encompasses not only the international but intranational connections and collaborations. Although the study on which this proposal is based is in fact a collaboration by a Russian and an American researcher, both of whom teach in American universities, and might be construed as an international collaboration, it addresses a concern specific to US culture and the state of technical communication in US universities and industry.

In the latter sense, it is not yet a collaboration; however, the purpose of the study is to lay a foundation of knowledge that should help us develop collaborative relationships for program and curricular

development not only to meet CPTSC's diversity goals, but equally to meet specific goals of all collaborating partners. We envision this study suggesting opportunities for cooperative relationships such as faculty and student exchanges, joint degrees, sharing of resources, program development research, and diversity-focused program review among other possibilities.

Seeking Inter-racial Collaborations in Program Design: A Report on a Study of Technical and Scientific Communication Programs in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) in the United States

**Speaker 1**

This speaker will report the initial set of results and answer the following research questions:

- What courses relating to TSC are offered in HBCUs and TCUs?

- What is the curricular function of TSC course(s) within English departments, in other departments? Required? Elective?

- Is there a major or minor in TSC?

Seeking Inter-racial Collaborations in Program Design: A Report on a Study of Technical and Scientific Communication Faculty Status in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)  and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) in the United States

**Speaker 2**

This speaker will address the following research areas:

- Who are the faculty (tenure-track, adjunct, full or part time, their TSC background)?

- What are the implications of our findings for further study, program development, and recruitment?


**We're Just Not Seeing It: New Challenges in Teaching and Preparing Students with Disabilities**

### K. Alex Ilyasova and Christine Hubbell
*University of Colorado at Colorado Springs*

Research in the field of technical communication, when it has addressed issues of disability, has typically focused on two different but related areas. The first has to do with what, as Jason Palemeri discusses, how disability studies theories can highlight the ways technical communication is both normalizing certain discourse practices and is normalized by them (TCQ, Winter 2006, Vol. 15 Issue 1). The second has to do again with disability studies theories but on a more pedagogical and practical level—how, as instructors, we can incorporate disability studies theories into the classroom, i.e., what kinds of writing assignments, readings, and projects help us and students understand and address how users with disabilities engage with technical communication.

Both of these areas, ultimately, foreground the *users* of technical information as they examine the role of disability studies theories in technical communication. In contrast, this project seeks to look at how technical communication programs teach and prepare students with disabilities to enter a field that might or might not be ready for them. Specifically, this project examines how one blind student has accessed and negotiated the curriculum in a professional and technical writing program. Additionally, we discuss her experiences of accessing information and technical language differently, and more importantly, what her experiences can teach us about meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

We take an ethnographic approach to this project, initially conducting interviews with this student as she moves through and completes courses in professional and technical communication. We examine her current access to university resources, and review and reexamine the role technology plays in facilitating access for this student to a curriculum that, at times, has been inaccessible to her. Our

presentation at the CPTSC conference will contain our initial findings based on our interviews with her and our evaluation of university resources available to her, with a focus on issues of accessibility and programmatic design, including the role that technology played in addressing the needs of this student.

## Session 5
### Panel 5A: Positioning a Technical Writing Program Inside an English Department: Creating an Exception to the Rule

Do programs in technical communication/professional writing thrive when administered within English departments or in other configurations of administrative units? This panel provides a glimpse of some of the issues that will be examined in the Summer 2010 special issue of *Technical Communication Quarterly* focusing on positioning programs. In particular, it explores issues raised in the Rentz, Meloncon, and Debs article "Getting an Invitation to the English Table—and Whether or Not to Accept It" and the Maylath, Gurak, and Grabill article "Intellectual Fit, Intellectual Futures: Professional/Scientific/Technical Communication Programs Administered Outside English Departments." The former proposes five conditions that need to be obtained for TC/PW program to operate successfully in an English department; the latter provides three structures alternative to English for TC/PW programs, before ending with a structure that has succeeded within the English at North Dakota State University. In their CPTSC presentations, abstracted below, the panelists reveal how NDSU has managed to obtain the necessary conditions for such success, from the perspective of faculty members both in TC/PW and in literature. They also identify points of tension and contention and describe how these are debated, negotiated, and reconciled. The last paper compares and contrasts NDSU's TC/PW program with three programs housed at some distance from their universities' English departments, with a view to their reporting lines, staffing, and funding while exploring the benefits and drawbacks of each.

**Hybridizing Literature and Rhetoric**

### Miriam Mara
*North Dakota State University*

Where do literature faculty fit in a professional writing / technical communication program lodged in a small department?  Members of the literature faculty grudgingly accept PhD programs in technical communication to gain prestige through the side door may quickly find themselves side-lined in a department that no longer values what they have to offer.  In his 2006 article, Patrick Moore describes a possible past where "literature faculty also created hierarchies of power and status in their own departments, and they relegated the faculty who taught the engineers to lower status."  In many Universities this practice of devaluing technical communication continued into the 1980s.  However, the recent focus for funding and development in many Universities is practical, workplace-centered programs and departments.  In English departments like North Dakota State University, the old hierarchy has changed and perceptions of literature faculty can be that it has flipped, making literature the low-status position in the department.  In the creation and implementation of the PhD program in Technical Communication / Professional Writing at NDSU, areas of dissensus provide spaces to improve the curriculum and the collegiality.  To allay such fears, the TC/PW program evolved with the input of faculty from the whole department.  In addition, the program rests on a humanistic base, encouraging students to embrace the humanities.  For example, the program contains an English Studies component, which asks students to complete literature course-work either in an earlier degree or when they arrive at NDSU.  Yet as Moore points out "professors must compete for scarce resources" such as "the right to supervise theses and dissertations."  Literature faculty in departments with graduate TC/PW programs can get left out of such resources or opportunities for

prestige.  Thus, the program and its development must work toward integration to avoid reifying departmental oppressions.

## Minding the Gap

### Andrew Mara
*North Dakota State University*

In "Reinventing Audience Through Distance," Edminster and Mara explore how an English department with distinct Literature and Technical and Scientific Communication programs addressed a loss in faculty lines through an online certificate program.  This solution to a Technical and Scientific Communication program contraction helped re-position a program housed in an English department unwilling to blur distinctions between programs.  This presentation will begin with that example and contrast it with a different way of "minding the gap" between distinct programs at North Dakota State University.  Rather than creating a more streamlined online presence, NDSU has opted to blend inter- and intra-departmental resources in a more traditional face-to-face Ph.D. in Technical Communication.  By finding useful overlaps in faculty expertise, department resources, and university strengths, NDSU has crafted an in-situ bridge to cover gaps in approaches and resources.  Through enlistment of literature, linguistics, education, and communication department faculty, NDSU has created a blended program to address the gaps that are often left by more research-oriented Ph.D programs.  In addition, this presentation will detail how the conversations between programs and departments might and can occur, so that the zero-sum calculations which cause tremendous rifts between disciplines do not end up exacerbating old antagonisms either through enforcement of the status quo or the mere flipping of power imbalances.

## Finding a Workable Structure and Balance: Contrasting a Tech Comm Program in an English Department with Alternatives at Other Universities

### Bruce Maylath
*North Dakota State University*

In "Intellectual Fit, Intellectual Futures: Professional/Scientific/Technical Communication Programs Administered Outside English Departments," Maylath, Gurak, and Grabill ask whether TC/PW programs are inevitably more successful by being independent of English departments. To do so, they examine the placement and structures of TC/PW at three universities: one where the program is housed at the college level but relies on departments, especially English, for teaching and service; another where the program began at the college level but has since been moved to a reorganized department outside of English; and a third where the program had always been housed in a department outside of English but has since been moved and reorganized to include the teaching-of-writing functions that formerly belonged to English. The authors assess the effectiveness of each structure and the factors that contribute or detract from their effectiveness. They end, however, with the example of the English Department at North Dakota State and its success in mounting and operating TC/PW programs at all degree levels. Drawing as well on Rentz, Meloncon, and Debs, this presentation identifies the factors and conditions that NDSU's English Department shares with successful TC/PW programs outside of English, as well as those uniquely required for TC/PW programs within English. It also comments on the absence of these conditions in many English departments elsewhere and will prompt discussion about how these essential conditions can be brought into place where they currently are lacking.

References

Adkins, Kaye. "RE: Faculty Recruitment." E-mail to ATTW listserv. 1 March 2005.

Cargile Cook, Kelli, Charlotte Thrall, and Mark Zachry. "Doctoral-Level Graduates in Professional, Technical, and Scientific Communication 1995-2000: A Profile. *Technical Communication* 50 (2003): 160-173.

Cargile Cook, Kelli. "Graduation and Hiring Trends for the New Generation of Graduates in Professional, Technical, and Scientific Communication: Survey Results." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing, Chicago, IL, March 2002.

Carter, Kellie Rae. "RE: ATTW sessions at MLA—new deadline." E-mail to ATTW listserv. 1 March 2005.

Edminster, Jude, Andrew Mara. "Reinventing Audience Through Distance." Parlor Press (forthcoming).

Maylath, Bruce, Laura Gurak, Jeff Grabill. "Intellectual Fit, Intellectual Futures: Professional/Scientific/Technical Communication Programs Administered Outside English Departments." *Technical Communication Quarterly* 18 (2010): (accepted).

Moore, Patrick. "Legitimizing Technical Communication in English Departments: Carolyn Miller's 'Humanistic Rationale for Technical Writing'" *Journal Technical Writing and Communication* 36 (2006): 167-182.

Rentz, Kathryn, Lisa Meloncon, and Mary Beth Debs. "Getting an Invitation to the English Table—and Whether or Not to Accept It." *Technical Communication Quarterly* 18 (2010): (accepted).

Rude, Carolyn, and Kelli Cargile Cook. "The Academic Job Market in technical Communication, 2002-2003." *Technical Communication Quarterly* 13 (1): 49–71.

## Poster Sessions

## Self-Sponsored Technical Communications: Sustaining Global- and Local-Community Life, Nicole Brown- Western Washington University

The proposed poster session historicizes the field of technical communications in broader cultural conditions, circulation, and effects than most historical accounts of the discipline. In general, the field of technical communications is historicized in relation to science, business and industry. Most recently, the advancement of computer technologies has led to an increase in both the teaching and professional practice of technical writing and its ties to technology and digital writing in the workplace. While these disciplinary roots are essential for understanding the socio-historical context that established technical writing as a field of study and employment, such histories do not illuminate the ways in which self-sponsored technical writing genres initiate and sustain civic discourse and social action in local and global communities.

As an instructor and program administrator in a small-scale technical communications program, I have documented trends in student-initiated projects towards writing that improves community conditions on a sustainable basis. In the past year, close to 50% of students (225+ students) enrolled in our introductory technical communications classes have initiated instructional projects that focus on some aspect of sustainability education. Project topics include: renewable energy, grassroots biofuel production, local wastewater treatment, sustainable food production, land use strategies, community-based economic models, etc. Students evaluate these projects with an astute awareness of the contribution they will make to their resume, writing portfolios, future careers, etc. However, most importantly, students tend to value the writing [and course project] based on the contribution it will make to local—community life.

As I searched for disciplinary models that merge technical communications with sustainability- and community- education, I was drawn to the Global Ecovillage Education Network, [GEEN] established by Gaia Trust in Denmark. The GEEN offers a network of innovative programmatic opportunities that make visible the importance of technical communications in ecovillage life, where self-sponsored about sustainable technologies, social inventions, ethical solutions, economic alternatives, land use strategies, and social governance is an essential part of community life. As we seek to develop 21$^{st}$ century opportunities for exchanging ideas and developing new programs in technical communications, it makes sense that we coordinate globally and develop regionally.

This poster session will present a range of internationally self-sponsored technical communication documents that provide education and/or instruction on matters of sustainability for global- and local-community. There is an extensive history of self-sponsored publications that utilize technical communication genres—dating from the 1700s to those supported by the GEEN today—that support

sustainable community initiatives, including almanacs, pamphlets, letters, catalogs, zines, and most currently web sites and online community forums. The poster session will raise questions regarding the pedagogical and curricular possibilities that are represented in the alternative history put forth by these documents, particularly as programs in technical communications find themselves shifting from being housed in the Sciences to the Humanities. In addition, the session will call upon participants to articulate the relationship between technical communication genres developed and taught primarily for business communication and the overwhelming use of these genres in global- community life and popular culture.

**Online Education and Multicultural, Multinational Student Populations**

### Emily Thrush
*University of Memphis*

### Susan Popham
*University of Memphis*

The online delivery of certificate and degree programs are expanding the possibilities for participation by technical communicators around the globe. Universities such as ours are starting to offer these online programs at flat-rates fees equivalent to in-state tuition at public universities. This poses new opportunities and challenges for the instructors of these courses, including the following:

How can assignments take advantage of the skills and knowledge of the participants from different countries and cultures? How can students learn from each other about communication practices in other places?

How do syllabi, materials and assignments need to be globalized? What are the expectations for documents such as resumes and cover letters? How do document design preferences vary from culture to culture? What persuasive strategies are most effective ?

What adjustments in guidelines for writing style need to be made? Are the Plain English guidelines effective for speakers of English as a second language? Are there specific ways of writing for translation into other languages?

Most importantly, does the instructor of a tech comm class need to be an expert in all these issues, or are there materials available that will guide students through these questions?

The poster will display what the presenters have learned from their experiences teaching online tech comm classes, and what they have learned about technical communication globally that can inform the design and implementation of an online course with a multicultural, multinational student population.

# Programmatic Perspectives

Journal of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication

Editors: Tracy Bridgeford, Karla Saari Kitalong, Bill Williamson

| Home | About | Submissions | Bibliography | Archives | Contacts | CPTSC | Blog |

Current issue

## Current Issue

Complete Issue

From the Editors

Articles

CPTSC Keynote 2007

Program Showcase

Editorial

In Memoriam

Book Review

Announcements

© 2009 Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication | Contact webmaster

Don't waste any time! Revise that position statement into an article now for CPTSC's new journal.

submissions:
kitalong@mtu.edu

www.cptsc.org/pp/

# ATTW

## Get involved!

**Association for Teachers of Technical Writing**

- Connect through our listserv
- Serve on a committee
- Submit an article to TCQ
- Join us in Louisville, Kentucky, March 17, 2010
- Learn more at http://www.attw.org

**ATTW:**
**We support technical writing teachers.**