

From Editing and Writing to Editing/Writing: Reframing a Professional and Technical Communication Program through Critical Archival Studies

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Abstract Recent scholarly, social, and technological shifts prompted revisions to an editing course in a professional and technical writing program after reactions from students revealed persistent views of editing as mere error correction, undermining the course's learning outcomes. Guided by concepts from critical archival studies (CAS), course revisions reframed editing as *editing/writing*: A socio-cultural, interpretive practice shaped by power, context, and technological mediation. These changes, including an application of CAS to L.M. Montgomery's journals, prompted a broader program-level rethinking of writing and editing as inextricable practices with ethical and cultural impact. This showcase concludes by considering implications for programs that prepare students to navigate authority, authenticity, and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence in professional and technical communication.

Keywords professional communication, technical writing, program administration, editing, artificial intelligence, critical archival studies

This piece describes a situation familiar to program administrators whose curricula must cover a wide range of professional communication concepts, including technical writing. Given the need for students to possess a range of adaptive skills when composing their future workplace communications, especially regarding linguistic representation, marginalization, and the use of AI and other technologies, it is important that when reviewing curricula an administrator addresses any lacks in student readiness. Described here as a demonstration is one course's curriculum, offered by a university's professional and technical writing program, that introduces students to the varied demands of the editing profession. This course is analyzed and the results extrapolated to the broader program.

Students' perceptions of the editing industry are explored, as they were revealed during recently taught class. Without understanding the complexities of this profession, students may not be equipped to respond successfully and appropriately to its dynamic nature. The students' understanding of editing, shown to be reductive and monolithic, persisted throughout the class, and in fact were shown to be reflective of simplified views of writing as well. These revelations suggested a deficiency in the larger program curriculum and required administrative attention. Program-level decisions about curricula must move students beyond reductive views of professional communication; these views may prevent spotting how socio-cultural influences upon the work may render the professional's editorial decisions as themselves a form of writing, for example. A more deliberately integrated programmatic approach that overlaps editing and writing can avoid problematic course compartmentalization within a larger communication program.

This showcase thus describes how the consequences of editing practices overlap with those of professional writing practices, using a critical archival studies (CAS) approach to explore how editing is embedded in various communication contexts. One historical illustration of *editing/writing* (as opposed to editing-or-writing) can be seen in the publication of author L.M. Montgomery's¹ personal journals. The socio-cultural influences under which the series' editors performed their work reveals how power dynamics involved in archiving and memory blur the lines between editing and writing. The L.M. Montgomery journal project, when seen through a CAS frame, offers an example for approaching the concepts of editing, writing, and editing/writing as an academic program philosophy when designing curricula.

Background: Disciplinary Identity, Program Structure, and Recent Swerves

A now lengthy history of efforts to specify a disciplinary identity in professional and technical communication can influence administration of academic programs in this field. Discussions in the literature have ranged from Platonic *techne-versus-empiria* debates (Johnson-Eilola, 1996; Miller, 1979; Rutter, 1991) to socio-cultural critique (Agboka & Dorpenyo, 2022; Bazerman, 1983; Haas, 2012; Herman, 2020; Mallette, 2024; Thralls & Blyler, 1993). And socio-cultural approaches to the field themselves have been expanded, for instance Cana Uluak Itchuaqiyaaq and Breeanne Matheson's (2021) study of the decolonial frameworks often found in disciplinary scholarship. Regardless of the lens

¹ Montgomery was a prolific author but is known for writing *Anne of Green Gables*.

used, such discussions of disciplinary identity act as reminders of an administrator's responsibility when shepherding a program and teaching the field's content.

While the scholarship may debate how technical communication programs should bear out a particular identity, one common goal throughout the discussions has been to position the field and distinguish itself among other disciplines, such as English education, business communication and visual design (Corrigan & Slomp, 2021; Pringle & Williams, 2005; Rosselot-Merritt, 2020). The emphasis on defining identity boundaries may not support all programs, however, such as those that are smaller or must teach not only technical communication content but also content from sister fields. Lisa Melonçon and Sally Henschel's (2013) review of 185 technical and professional communication (TPC) undergraduate U.S. degrees found that "58% of programs require courses outside of the department either as a minor, subject matter focus, professional expertise, or similar term" (p. 54). Within these institutional contexts, administrators of smaller, cross-pollinated programs must make creative and productive decisions to continue promoting technical communication's content.

Lately, this historical work of disciplinary identity-making and its attendant academic program defining has been affected by acute swerves, notably the widespread availability of artificial intelligence (AI) platforms (Jones, 2023; Mollick & Euchner, 2023). The education and other experience that professional communicators bring to the industry must equip them to face these dramatic changes. Below, I describe how students' perceptions from an editing course in a small, cross-pollinated program in professional and technical communication revealed a lack of student readiness for socio-cultural changes in the workplace, and the impact of those revelations for the larger program.

Context: Program and Student Stakeholders

I coordinate a professional and technical writing program at a US midwestern regional comprehensive university; while students can declare the program's minor, many take program courses a la carte in fulfillment of various majors, minors, and certificates across campus. Students in the humanities make up a significant proportion of the program's demographics, often enrolling because several of the program's courses are required to fulfill a popular literary publishing certificate. Their classmates from outside the humanities, meanwhile, enroll because they are required to take program courses to learn about communication in their respective fields, such as accounting, public relations, and supply chain management. The program's diverse population means that any change to a

course's curriculum has implications beyond that particular class (Yancey, 2009; Addison & McGee, 2010).

Program courses are bound by student learning outcomes (SLOs) vetted at the institutional level. The program's course sequence begins with introductory professional writing principles and progresses through curricula focused on document design, technical communication, the profession of editing, project management, and special-topics documentation. In essence, SLOs expect the program to address all things communication in workplace contexts. The result unsurprisingly must be a range of course topics and content that have evolved in tandem with industry and educational trends (Dodson, 2025; Mehlenbacher, Balbon & Mehlenbacher, 2025; Reinhart et al., 2025): rhetorical reasoning, ethical decision-making, document design and multimodal analysis, revision as a deliberate process, collaborative work, and attention to audience awareness, among others. In the face of these evolving trends, one of the constants for the program over the past two decades has been the assignment of community engagement projects in upper-level courses. Rather than undertaking hypothetical scenario-based work, students collaborate with organizational clients to produce needed professional-level communications.

While the SLOs contribute to an overall program understanding of professional and technical communication, they historically have also reflected certain assumptions about communication practice. Enactment of the outcomes at the course level thus may no longer sufficiently respond to current student and industry needs, especially in the wake of profound phenomena such as the arrival of public-use AI platforms. As discussed below, specific examples from the program's editing course can be seen as symptomatic of certain broader program-level concerns. Studying these concerns through a CAS framework can offer productive solutions to both the course and the program.

Editing Course as Symptom of Program Concerns

Within the program, I teach an upper-level course called The Profession of Editing (English 4780/5780), meant to introduce students not only to instrumental editing tasks but also to the larger editing industry. This comprehensive approach is meant to prepare students for the various challenges and work they will encounter as professionals. Curriculum topics extend from this course's SLOs: Acquisition of "content knowledge via an examination of editing strategies and responsibilities in scholarly and professional settings.

[Enhancement of] critical thinking and communication skills through an emphasis on understanding of editing resources, editor roles in document development, and the

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politics of grammar and style” (University of Northern Iowa, 2024). Students undertake a sequence of assignments designed to develop their editorial eye, address a variety of error types, and distinguish among editing approaches (e.g., developmental, copyediting, proofreading).

Practically, the editing course fulfills its SLOs a series of scaffolded assignments, meant to give students a range of editing experiences. The assignments also expose students to a variety of content, including professional, creative, and academic manuscripts. A focus on digital technology is threaded throughout the entire curriculum. The first assignment introduces students to the course’s overall approach before they move on to perform editing practices via three subsequent projects. Because the assignments embody the class’s learning outcomes, two of them are detailed below, as they are significant milestones within the larger course trajectory that students move through.

During the first assignment, the Errors Portfolio, the main point is not to simply spot handbook-defined “errors” but also to understand why in some situations, certain content in fact may not be “erroneous.”² That is, students are meant to acquire a more nuanced understanding of errors as social and cultural artifacts that goes beyond basic fixing mistakes:

- Students must find five different editing errors found in various texts, whether scholarly, trade, or popular. The students analyze errors using each text’s rhetorical situation and describe the potential consequences of the error, however minor.
- The assignment further emphasizes approaching the portfolio as a professional would; students need to adhere to formal citation guidelines when documenting the errors’ sources and submit a deliberately curated portfolio.
- I also ask students to keep a project log alongside their hunt for errors, informally recording their thought process when selecting which to include in the portfolio.

In the subsequent Editing a Creative Manuscript assignment:

- Students acquire a creative manuscript, ideally one that appears to deliberately use colloquialisms, dialects, or other vernacular language. They then find a suitable publication venue, analyze its rhetorical situation, and make appropriate editing marks, queries, and suggestions on the manuscript.
- Another requirement is to communicate editorial decisions effectively to the author-client; students must compose a cover letter that captures the overall

² In the US Midwest, for instance, it is common to answer the question “How are you?” with “I’m good.” Responding with the technically correct “I am well” likely would be considered unusual, even odd.

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editorial response and persuades the author to adopt the suggestions, by framing their edits within the context of the publication's audience and the manuscript's purpose. This component of the assignment addresses editor-author interactions and helps students develop their diplomacy skills.

- In addition, students compose a memo directed to the instructor, justifying their decisions and demonstrating a deeper understanding of editorial principles and their application in a non-hypothetical context.
- As with the Errors Portfolio, the Editing a Creative Manuscript assignment requires that students maintain a project log.

Although the Errors Portfolio and Creative Manuscript assignments both stress the importance of considering a text's situation when making editorial decisions, the latter assignment increases in rhetorical complexity. Teasing out the differences among the manuscript markup, letter, and memo components is meant to help students balance the many expectations that come with editing decisions. The Creative Manuscript project emphasizes the importance of considering not only the publication's target readers and their contexts, but its in-house situation (e.g., the publication's mission, submission vetting process, etc.). And when marking the manuscript, students are prompted to consider how their edits can enhance the author's intended meaning and style, particularly in relation to the use of non-standard language.

Recent scholarly, social, and technological shifts, however, have indicated that the current editing curriculum may not be achieving its learning outcomes. Despite the comprehensive nature of the course's assignments, they have not seemed to dispel students' simplified notions of professional editing. During a recently taught class, students' assigned projects and content from their accompanying project logs suggested that they were not satisfactorily prepared to handle the ethical, representational, and technological challenges typical of editorial decision making. The following describes how these challenges particularly drove my reconsideration of the editing curriculum—and more to the point, a rethinking of the larger professional and technical writing program.

Program-Level Concern: Editing, Writing, and Editing/Writing

Despite the program's—and by extension the editing course's—emphasis on rhetorical complexity, students' project logs suggest that writing and editing were perceived as distinct entities. Writing was seen as an initial act during the composition process and performed by an author, while editing appears only later in the process as corrective, not meaning-making. For instance, during the Creative Manuscript assignment, a manuscript

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may challenge students when they are trying to make decisions about preserving or adjusting language that does not conform to a handbook. Concerned about disrespecting authorial voice, students frequently left any unconventional language entirely alone rather than address it or even discuss it with the author. One student described prioritizing the author's voice over their own editorial instincts as consciously holding back suggestions that felt more personally motivated than author-centered. Rather than querying an author about language use, students also often resorted to a workaround by only looking for publishers that invite submissions from lesser-heard voices, or feature a similarly nonspecific mission statement.

Students also struggled with distinguishing the variety of rhetorical situations involved in this multi-task assignment. Several students were reluctant about having to write the memo, mistakenly seeing this component of the project as redundant (rhetorically synonymous with the letter), and more of an academic exercise than editing work. Often, students would draft the assignment's components linearly, meaning they first would finish the markup, then write the letter, then the memo, and finally the log, rather than spotting how the components could be placed in conversation with each other during simultaneous drafting.

These assumptions about writing and editing as distinct acts along the composing process perhaps are not surprising, given how the program used to compartmentalize its courses. Classes once were titled and their curricula scoped according to genre (e.g., "Designing Manuals and Handbooks"), which now seems almost quaint in today's need for complex, overlapping communication practices. The legacy of these assumptions may trickle down into a particular course's assignments, classroom activities, and students' definition of what constitute "writing" and "editing." My curricular revisions, to move the program beyond the genre-specific, had been guided by writing studies literature that explores the relationship of professional writing and editing. However, the scholarship's influence on the program's SLOs, by itself, may no longer sufficiently address how socio-cultural factors can influence practice, e.g., how they blur the lines between editing and writing.

Writing studies definitions of editing and writing have not always regarded the two as overlapping. Michelle Corbin, Pat Moell and Mike Boyd (2002), for example, draw a line between technical editing and technical writing by emphasizing the unique skills and perspectives each role brings to the information development process. Later texts, such as Carol Saller's (2009) *The Subversive Copy Editor*, also begin to blur editing and writing acts. The shift from editing-or-writing to editing/writing reflects a larger disciplinary change in approach (e.g., Mackiewicz [2011, 2014]; Mackiewicz & Riley [2003]). This change often

was tied to the complexities of editing as it occurs within various writing situations, which importantly are affected by the social nature of writing (Horner & Kopelson, 2014). In short, static execution of the professional and technical writing program's SLOs was increasingly occurring within significant social changes and the disciplinary shift from editing-or-writing to editing/writing. Even though the program SLOs do include an integrated understanding of professional communication, the curriculum itself may not have significantly helped students to experience writing and editing as interconnected.

Program-Level Concern: Student Dispositions toward Rhetorical Analysis

The Errors Portfolio can be a challenge for students, despite the assignment of companion exercises and the project log. The difficulties also suggest larger dispositions that many students exhibit throughout the program's courses. Although the Portfolio's components are designed to facilitate rhetorical awareness in keeping with SLOs, many students struggled to see errors as more than violations of standard handbook rules for grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Comments in the project logs reveal this challenge. One student received a meme from a friend and, while they did not see the humor in the meme that the friend saw, included it in the portfolio simply because it appeared (to the student) to contain erroneous content. Rather than clarifying a target audience, then assessing whether those readers would regard the misspelling as sufficiently distracting from the text's intended humor, the student automatically assumed it to be problematic. Another student used the song "Ironic" by Alanis Morissette in the portfolio, because the situations described in the song by definition did not constitute instances of irony.

The Portfolio and Creative projects' challenges seem to risk keeping students at a more basic, instrumental level of professional and technical communication, despite the projects' merits. Students may hold onto a basic view of editing because some moments during the projects may not require collaboration or consultation, such as correction of obvious misspellings. The course's curriculum therefore may confirm students' reductive view of editing yet give them the language for disguising it, however unintentionally. That is, when they encountered blurry challenges with no one correct answer, students reacted by performing the actions of basic copyediting yet costuming their decisions as complex ones, "honoring" an author's voice not through reflective editorial markup and conversation between editor and writer, but by merely picking a publication venue with nonspecific submission requirements, for example.

These trends from the editing class—a rigid definition of content “correctness” and attempts at objectivity when working with authors’ work—do not suggest concerns only from one specific curriculum, however. They would seem a trickle-down effect from long-time program challenges, especially students’ uncertainty regarding the writing process’ nonlinearity, rhetorical analysis and collaborative nature.

Program-Level Concern: Student Dispositions toward the Writing Process

Clues from throughout the program suggest one possible cause of students’ views. Given the demographics that typically enroll in the classes, my students often bring a certain academic writing experience with them. The bulk of their college-level writing experience invokes the current-traditional model, where surface-level error correction is emphasized, and the composing process is single-author and one-directional, moving through traditional “select-narrow-amplify” phases (Crowley, 1998). This model can result in a composing experience that is decontextualized. Drafting becomes a conversation limited to the text and whoever is writing it, and any outside, contributing voices are limited to secondary sources that the writer accommodates into the text rather than engaging with the socio-cultural framing of the sources. As a result, students unfamiliar with the messiness of a non-linear, collaborative, multi-vocal composing process (Sommers, 1980) learn to regard writing as a straightforward endeavor, written by a solitary author, and free from grammar, mechanical, and punctuation errors. In contrast, the editing course’s SLOs, as with those of the professional and technical writing program’s entire curricula, are meant to emphasize recognizing how editing and writing participate in and even bolster professional knowledge and power systems.

Recent social swerves, such as those brought on by artificial intelligence tools, have intensified students’ dispositions and thus challenged the program’s work to achieve its outcomes. Such swerves, coupled with the pre-existing culture of immediacy and the fragmented composing encouraged by digital media platforms (Fraschillo, 2023), increase both students’ uncertainty about what counts as “good” communication and their use of perceived reliable guides such as templates and writing formulas.

Program-Level Concern: Artificial Intelligence

Challenges to the program’s SLOs especially became revealing with the arrival of public-use AI tools. AI platforms made clearer the gaps between the learning outcomes as a bar to be met, and student readiness to meet them. Among the downstream consequences are future professional problems for students, as technological agility is a non-negotiable skill

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for professional communicators. The industry itself perceives AI as a mixed blessing. Ellie Taylor (2025) recommends that professional communicators would do well to integrate AI into their communication teams and lean into abilities unique to humans: Sensitivity to context, ethical decision-making, and rhetorical analysis (para. 5–7). Parker Cook (2023) warns, however, that such advice “assumes that the writers [already] have the necessary editorial skills to bring their ChatGPT-generated work to a higher standard” (para. 4). Justin Salani and Mass Masona Tapfuma (2025), focusing on AI as a disruptive innovation in the publishing industry, explicitly argue that the technology should only be complementary to writing, editing and publishing work, as it does “not have [the] emotions, ethics, and moral sense that facilitate the achievement of desired effects in a piece of writing” (p. 11). AI may streamline some tasks and increase efficiency, but informed human oversight is essential so that communication practices result in contextually appropriate content, work that goes far beyond sentence-level correctness.

Specific competencies promoted by the program’s SLOs, especially rhetorical and contextual awareness, could guide how AI’s limitations are addressed. As such, students’ persistently reductive approaches to editing and writing become even more of a prospective liability. Professional communicators’ use of the technology must involve skills to elevate AI-generated content, so that it reflects the subtlety of its context. A study of ChatGPT by Ho Ling Kwok, Yining Shi, Han Xu, Dechao Li and Kanglong Liu (2025) shows that generative AI is less effective with culturally nuanced content like literary works (p. 2) and might not adjust its language style to specific genres, raising concerns about preserving authors’ voices and genre-specific style (p. 10, 11). Clémence Pasteur (2024) elaborates on limitations of the technology in editorial situations. One interviewed editor noted that AI’s “strict correctness” can “diminish the emotional and conversational aspects of a story,” which are important in engaging a reader and preventing content from seeming “offensive or taken out of context” (p. 78). Even more, AI’s known struggles with the “hallucination problem” (p. 28), whereby it creates ideas not based on any perceivable fact, also makes a critical human eye crucial while editing/writing. Unprepared communicators may labor to meet these realities of the profession in order to produce high-quality work, to the detriment of their careers and the content they edit/write.

Perhaps more problematic, AI’s homogenizing of language challenges the program SLOs’ emphasis on ethical decision-making, especially as inexperienced professional communicators may struggle to address issues of linguistic representation and marginalization when writing and editing. A lack of experience with adaptive communication can hinder the professional’s ability to effectively engage with and

professionally advocate for a variety of voices. Lately, the industry has turned some attention to representation not just in the content published but among the decisions behind the work. Amy Reading (2024) argues how editors' largely invisible work also can obscure a lack of representation, by hiding their gatekeeping role and enabling a lack of accountability for perpetuating a status quo. Chris Jackson (2017) believes that "representation" in the industry is treated as an abstract concept rather than a reality: "I don't think ... people get any pleasure from hearing me talk about this thing that doesn't exist... And yet we keep talking about this abstraction, this thing that doesn't exist, as if it could be conjured through the power of lectures and panel discussions" (p. 223). Keeping the topic of representation at the conceptual level slows communicators' and scholars' attempts to address it.

By necessitating a sophisticated level of ethical evaluation and revision when communicators edit/write content, AI's arrival did not cause, but did accelerate, a disconnect that in hindsight had been growing between the program's learning outcomes and students' mastery of them. Although I had designed and revised program SLOs and curricula as guided by writing studies research, tensions between the industry's current socio-cultural realities and students' response, for instance their persistent, decontextualized view of editing, showed the problems with treating writing and editing as separate or sequential acts. In that sense, the SLOs risk being only a series of administrative boxes to check rather than an integrated program vision.

CAS offers a framework to synthesize outcomes in rhetorical analysis, collaborative meaning-making, and editing/writing. This frame is an opportunity not to add new outcomes to the program but instead reconsider how they might be enacted through its courses, including the editing class, and increase students' preparedness for industry demands.

Introducing Critical Archival Studies into Professional and Technical Communication

A critical archival studies approach challenges traditional views of archiving as neutral, decontextualized work, i.e., simply moving content into storage. CAS is a recent addition to larger scholarship on archival studies (Berbesi & Tognoli, 2024) but had been nascently building through other research on knowledge work and community archiving (Caswell, Punzalan, & Sangwand, 2017). Andi Gustavson and Charlotte Nunes' (2023) review of this concept point especially to community archiving research as having demonstrated the need for archival critique, as community projects frequently would reveal the "gaps and

silences” of certain voices within community-driven archive projects (p. 8). A CAS approach actively intervenes into established archival practice by questioning decisions to preserve and disseminate certain voices and the contexts that supported those decisions, and by advocating for transparency in archival practices. The approach has been rapidly taken up by scholars and archival practitioners (Han, 2025) and now influences discussions about archiving within social sciences disciplines (Bach & Freund, 2024; Luft & Subotić, 2025), incarceration sites (Gustavson & Nunes, 2023; Overdorf, 2021), and academic contexts (Maurer, 2025; Robinson-Sweet, 2024), to name a few.

As CAS research has developed, its focus on power structures in archiving collaborations has crystalized the framework’s priorities, including a dedication to care, affect, political advocacy, and equitable relationships in archiving. Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor (2016), taking a feminist approach to promote an “ethics of care,” redefine the archivist’s role as having a “mutual affective responsibility” with others connected to archiving, such as those who create, use and are the subject of recorded material (p. 24). This emphasis on care challenges the idea of professional objectivity by paying attention to the human stakes involved during archival decision-making (p. 31). Other work from Cifor (2016) connects an ethic of care with affect theory, arguing that the archivist’s emotional responses to material are an influential part of decision-making. By emphasizing the role of emotion rather than encouraging archivists to distance themselves from it, the author argues that they can better recognize how reactions to material suggest its impact on users and possible ways it might be used (p. 12).

In turn, the value for emotion and ethical care advocated by CAS renders archival decisions a political act. Jarrett Drake (2016), arguing that the purpose of traditional archival practice “is to *curate* the past, not *confront* it” (para. 5; emphasis in original), describes how archival silences surrounding Black lives only proves that every act of material selection and its arrangement either reinforces or disrupts existing power structures. He contrasts conventional archival practice to what he believes it should be, “liberatory memory work” that regards each material record as a site for advocacy (para. 6). As such, with each record is an opportunity for archivists to include memories that historically have been left out. Similarly, CAS emphasizes how archiving relationships are political. T-Kay Sangwand’s (2018) work as a transnational archivist prompts her to use a “contributive justice” understanding of global collaborations among archivists. For the author, all stakeholders in an archival project have the responsibility to share in decision-making. To do otherwise only reproduces power imbalances and perpetuates silences in recorded memory (p. 2). Because the CAS framework intersects care, affect, advocacy,

and equitable collaboration as mutually supportive priorities, it leans into the ethical and political implications of textual work, by placing concerns about power and representation at the center.

Even as writing studies scholarship helped me frame the program's approach to communication acts as socially and rhetorically situated, still elusive was a fuller view of the ethical, affective, and power-laden dimensions of editorial labor. CAS can provide that approach, not by challenging other disciplinary scholarship but by expanding it; reframed as editing/writing via CAS, communication practice becomes revealed as cultural intervention as well as rhetorical negotiation. When seen through this approach, the case of L.M. Montgomery's journals becomes a specific example of how editorial decisions about her work were also writing actions that preserved, reshaped, and redefined cultural memory.

Critical Archival Studies and the Example of L.M. Montgomery

Over the past forty years, Montgomery's diaries have undergone two published versions: First as a series of *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery*, then as a series of *The Complete Journals of L.M. Montgomery*. In 1985, editors Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston published the first of what would be five selected volumes. The volumes span Montgomery's private writing between 1889 and 1942 and reveal a sometimes shockingly different persona from the fanciful, cheery characters she created. Throughout the volumes, the editors provide introductions and annotations that explain Montgomery's entries and offer readers a deeper understanding of her life and work. As subsequent volumes were released, however, a shift appeared in the editors' behind-the-scenes commentaries.

In the first volume, Rubio and Waterston primarily discuss Montgomery's literary value and her journals as a historical document, rather than her celebrity value as a globally known author. The second volume provides a more intimate look at her personal life, and the third volume greatly reveals Montgomery's rich introspective life. The fourth and fifth volumes turn more so toward the external. As a famous author and the wife of a minister, Montgomery faced repeated personal challenges and triumphs as a woman, mother, professional writer, and public figure. These were compounded by her husband's severe mental illness and Montgomery's own struggles with debilitating depression. In these final volumes of the journals, Rubio and Waterston also analyze how Montgomery's thoughts

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and reflections about her experiences occur alongside changing roles and expectations for women in the early 20th century (1985; 1987; 1992; 1998; 2004).

During the *Selected Journals*' 19-year publication timeline, Rubio and Waterston increasingly reveal not only the technical difficulties of editing Montgomery's prolific content but also the professional devaluing they faced as female scholars who were editing an author of children's literature, and a female one at that. Unsurprisingly, Volume I's introduction makes the case for recognizing Montgomery's contributions as intellectual and significant, and the editing work by extension as equally important: "Because the journals are so full and frank and cover such a long period, and because they are the work of a successful professional writer, they provide a degree of information, anecdote, and personal history that makes them unique in Canadian letters" (1985, p. xxiv)

Rubio and Waterston also take care to limit their editorial role by defining it as more of a custodial role, secondary in action compared to Montgomery's original texts. They comment that they had corrected the author's spelling for the sake of clarity, but left other errors intact to preserve authorial voice, such as Montgomery's increased use of slang over time. As they mention, "Either aging or a less formal society seem to have diminished Montgomery's earlier fastidiousness in language. She slips into contemporary slang: has 'the willies' or notes that a friend is 'a scream'" (p. xxv).

However, by Volume V's publication in 2004, the editors' introductions and their other published research alongside the journals were explicitly arguing that editorial work plays a key role in shaping an author's legacy and how different editions of a text can reflect evolving social and cultural values. Instead of describing their own editorial notes as static and subordinate metatexts, Rubio and Waterston define editing as a significant, changing influence, pointing out that the network of individuals and institutions involved in an editing project, not just its lead editors, generate iterative interpretations of a manuscript (Gammel & Lefebvre, 2016).

In terms of how CAS scholarship focuses on and intersects care, affect, political advocacy, and equitable archiving relationships, its priorities can expand socio-cultural understandings of text mediation such as those discussed by writing studies. That is, CAS offers a complementary expansion of writing studies' value for context, audience, and social engagement, by seeing text material not only as a passive socio-cultural artifact but also a result of deliberate socio-cultural intervention; an editor's decisions, however unwittingly, become recognized as acts of socio-cultural intervention along relational, affective, and political lines. As such, the L.M. Montgomery journal project becomes an example not only of changes to a manuscript but also changes in gender expectations,

trends in the publishing market, and most significantly the editors' decisions about the caretaking of the author's legacy. Montgomery's journals thus are revealed to be a demonstration of editing/writing in action, as the editing of each volume both (re)writes and preserves public memory and its role in societies and cultures.

Reconsidering the L.M. Montgomery Journals

At the beginning of *The Selected Journals* project, Rubio and Waterston were bound by funding logistics, often tied to prevailing views about gender. It was not until later in the project when the editors felt as if they could call out their professional constraints. During their work on the project within a pre-ebook economy, “[s]elected’ was the key word”—financial concerns and an unproven audience prompted edits that omitted a great deal of Montgomery's original content and tightened the journals' narrative (2012, p. ix). These business pressures were fueled by gendered pressures. Rubio (2001) recalls one grant assessor dismissing the proposed Montgomery project as “lack[ing] discrimination,” which in that context was a coded way of expressing skepticism about popular women's writing and its audiences (pp. 52–53). Those views dissuaded the editors from taking greater risks with their decisions, instead editing toward a coherent, single-focus narrative that would demonstrate the journals' value according to prevailing literary criticism beliefs. While a writing studies reading of the editors' situation would emphasize the intersections of audience, socio-cultural norms, and genre, CAS adds to this emphasis to show the editors' decisions as political efforts to legitimize Montgomery, occurring in an atmosphere where cultural legitimacy was unequally recognized.

As financial support, technology, and academic attitudes changed during *The Selected Journals* and into *The Complete Journals* projects, Rubio and Waterston's decisions gained some latitude. The *Complete* series introduced meta narratives via the inclusion of diaries by Montgomery's friend Nora Lefurgey Campbell and relative Charles Macneill, loosening the *Selected* journals' tighter narrative by showing how a community of voices shaped Montgomery's work. These decisions on the *Complete* volumes did not merely add content to the *Selected* volumes; during the course of the two projects, Rubio and Waterston were increasingly able to signal their care for, not just custody of, Montgomery, by editing/writing the boundaries of the author's life and allowing it to be revealed as humanly messy.

CAS helps to name the qualitative factors underlying the more obvious changes in the editors' decisions. Caswell and Cifor's (2016) ethics of care emphasizes how archival responsibility includes a sense of mutual obligation to all creators and subjects involved in a commemorative project (pp. 24–25). Rubio and Waterston's editing/(re)writing of their

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previous work on the journals signal their awareness of this responsibility. By more widely contextualizing Montgomery's voice via their later decisions, the editors enabled a richer legacy of the author and her community to exist in public memory.

It is not an overstatement that the effects of the journal projects were wide and profound. The *Selected* volumes directly led to the launch of the L.M. Montgomery Institute and a biennial global conference (LMMI, 2025). These and many other resulting scholarly events and publications became a feedback loop where each piece of research created an audience as much as satisfied a fan base. Irene Gammel's (2008) investigations into Montgomery's legacy reveal how as an act, the recursive edited/written mediation of Montgomery's content itself is a cultural text, reminiscent of Jerome McGann's call to see the history of a text's iterations as much a subject of inquiry as the actual text in question (1991). By *editing* repeated versions of a text, an editor also *re/writes* its social role and impact. Later published volumes of Montgomery's work further echo Drake's demand that archiving be intervening liberatory memory work, not just a single-perception record of what happened (2016, n. p.). Ultimately, the overall evolution of the journal projects and their tremendous impact echoes Sangwand's (2018) concept of "contributive justice;" the Montgomery editorial network came to share the authority to interpret the author, as it broadened to include other scholars, Montgomery fans, and community knowledge from the several locations where Montgomery lived.

Revising the Editing Course through CAS

Bringing together writing studies' contributions with a CAS approach explains Rubio and Waterston's journey with Montgomery's content, resulting in an example of editing/writing that in turn can inspire my administrative decision-making for the larger professional and technical writing program. Writing studies scholarship had guided the curricula, for instance, with the goal of helping students move past the idea of editing as basic error correction and think of their work as rhetorically situated and socially embedded. Nonetheless, my students persisted in seeing editing as an activity that only follows and "cleans up" previously written content, a tendency that has accrued greater urgency in the wake of recent historical swerves, especially technological. The CAS-reframed Montgomery project suggests that I might revise program curricula to approach editing as *editing/writing*, a relational, affective, and political action whereby editing decisions write (and even overwrite) cultural memory. The comprehensive reconsideration of editing work in turn would impact all of the editing course's content, from workshops to assignment components to topic guides during class discussions, as described below.

Memos and Project Logs as Intervention Documentation

CAS's focus on intervention has implications for the memo and project log components of the Editing a Creative Manuscript assignment. A writing studies' influence had meant these documents were cast in the editing course primarily as reflective opportunities; students were expected to justify their decisions in terms of audience expectations and genre conventions (Miller, 1984). A CAS extension of this influence suggests that the memos and logs might be seen not only as justifying documents between teacher and student but also as archival commentaries, in that a student has consciously intervened into a manuscript project through editorial decisions. Just as Drake (2016) argues that memory workers must confront how their decisions reinforce or disrupt power structures, Rubio and Waterston eventually were able to reveal and question the gendered and market pressures during their early work on Montgomery's *Selected Journals*. In that vein, I could ask students to account in their memos how their choices meant that certain ideas in their assignments' manuscripts would be preserved, reframed, or even erased.

Class Projects as Questions about Authority

Given how the revised memo assignment emphasizes a student editor's interventions, the editing projects assigned throughout the course raise the question of how authority plays a role in the work. The editing course curriculum already treated the projects, which involved actual manuscripts rather than hypothetical scenarios, as writing studies-defined distributed work between students and authors (Spinuzzi, 2003). CAS enriches this approach by prioritizing authority when looking at distributed work relationships. Sangwand's (2018) notion of contributive justice makes explicit the power dynamic of shared authorship, as she argues that all stakeholders in an archival project should contribute to the decision-making. Her call for equitable labor recalls the growing influence of Montgomery scholars' work after publication of the initial *Selected Journals*, and Rubio and Waterston's increasing inclusion of both that scholarship and the fandom world of Montgomery's dedicated followers (Rubio, 2001). In the editing class, the CAS-reframed projects should ask not only how students are collaborating with their authors but also who has (and should have) the power to decide a published version of a manuscript.

Table 1 itemizes my revisions to a CAS-extended editing curriculum. During this reconsideration, mapping CAS onto writing studies' previous influence is not a case of simply adding on, but a more comprehensive response to my students' needs in the face of their persistent struggles and recent scholarly, social, and technological swerves.

Table 1. Impact of CAS-Inspired Revisions at the Class Level

Editing Course's Original Assignment/Activity	Writing Studies Influence	CAS Extensions
Memos and project logs	Focus on rhetorical situation and genre; communication as a power artifact	Editing as a deliberate intervention into how memory is represented; transparency of decisions to indicate editorial care
Class projects as focusing on issues of authorship	Collaboration as an act of distributed authorship between editors and writers	Shared authority as justice and shared decision-making as contributive justice

The implications of this curricular redesign extend beyond the editing course. Because the class operates within a small professional and technical writing program that must address all things communication through a variety of curricula, the course's CAS reframe would not be successful if it occurred in isolation from the larger program.

Reconsidering the Larger Program: Take-Aways and Future Directions

Writing studies has long grounded the program's SLOs in rhetorical awareness, collaboration, and responsiveness to socio-cultural context, and these should remain priorities. CAS, meanwhile, emphasizes these priorities first as values-laden and tied to issues of power, cultural memory, and intervention. Revising the editing course curriculum consequently raises a challenge for the larger program: Ensuring that students graduate not only as skilled communicators but also attentive to the qualitative, high stakes in their future tangible digital and archival work.

Memory Work through Reflection Work

While the editing-or-writing binary has always been resisted at the assignment level, there has been silence regarding the political and ethical stakes of fusing editing and writing at the program level. Specifically, if one class is going to act as a site where editing is memory work as discussed earlier, then programmatic consistency requires me to confront how the larger program is encouraging students to emphasize, revise, and even erase. In writing studies scholarship, students' acts of student reflection have been studied and described

as the result of heightened rhetorical awareness and a sensitivity to context (e.g., Nowacek, 2011). But reflections that students are asked to make should move beyond reporting reactions to also comment on the ripple effect of their work.

That is, when students perform any reflection throughout the program's courses, it is important to ask how they regard themselves through their decisions, i.e., as neutral actors or as participants in cultural memory work. The project logs, which are assigned not just in the editing course but across all the program's upper-level courses, for instance should involve questioning the tools used such as publication layout software. Doing so recognizes how certain memory work becomes legitimized through instruments that perpetuate and challenge. Importantly, these questions are not ones to merely be handled during project logs or class discussions, but rather threaded through the program's entire stance, in order to help students spot the force of their editing/writing work.

Peer Workshopping as Care

Workshopping in the program had followed writing studies' emphasis on collaboration and mediated networks (Spinuzzi, 2007). CAS adds a dimension to this approach by defining workshopping of program assignments as a care action, aligning with Caswell and Cifor (2016)'s argument that anyone involved in the preservation of content has a "mutual affective responsibility" toward content creators and subjects. Put another way, the program should focus on humans as much as their creations. Collaboration, whether between student editors and authors in the editing class, or among students during peer workshopping across all program courses, is a negotiation of power through authority.

In addition, Cifor's (2016) focus on an archivist's emotional disposition toward the content is a reminder that draft analyses should focus on every decision as an ethical one. Rubio and Waterston, for instance, moved from a sense of custodianship to an "ethics of care" orientation during their work on *The Complete Journals*, by inviting an increasing number of voices into the journal content that had been previously excluded in the *Selected* volumes. Throughout the program's courses, peer workshopping actions could be deliberately seen as having the potential to amplify and sustain certain voices (and the risk of doing so at the expense of others).

Class Projects as Questions about Affect

Issues of authority and constraints during editing/writing, as revealed by socio-culturally contextualizing and analyzing the work, may not account for the entire picture, however. CAS brings the question of affect into acts of rhetorical analysis, with Cifor (2016) even

linking archivists’ awareness of their emotions directly to ethical responsibility. Much like Rubio and Waterston’s increasing ability to admit their personal dispositions as their work on Montgomery continued and her public memory evolved with each volume’s publication, the program’s SLOs should encourage students to mull how their affective responses to their decisions are not distractions from the work but flags about their ethical responsibility toward it.

Class Projects as Interrogations of Technology

The question of authority is made even further complicated when considering the implications of using AI and other technology. The “social justice turn” in writing studies scholarship has generated important discussions about justice when looking at inequities in the creation, design and use of content (Walton, Moore, & Jones, 2019). CAS elaborates by showing how AI generation is an intervention with socio-cultural and ethical consequences. Just as Rubio and Waterston had to negotiate between the factors that inhibited them with the *Selected* volumes versus their increased technological ability to intervene with the *Complete* volumes, the program’s courses should focus on how AI interventions may amplify some points of view and render others invisible—and the ethical oversight required when an editor/writer must make those complicated decisions.

Table 2. Impact of CAS-Inspired Curricular Revisions at the Program Level

Program Methods and Topics	Writing Studies Influence	CAS Extensions
Acts of reflection	Documentation of editor/writer’s decisions during the creation process	Editing/writing process as a socio-cultural act reshaping cultural memory and voices represented
Peer workshopping	How socio-cultural networks shape meaning during collaborations	“Ethics of care” as shared obligation and responsibility among all stakeholders (not only editor/writers) in memory work
Editor/writer authority	Editor/writer awareness of each communication act’s rhetorical situation	Affect as a key component of editing/writing decisions; care-focused reflection as ethically necessary
Interrogations of technology	Editing/writing as shaped by technological systems; critique of inequities in digital design and usage of content	Digital (including AI) tools as socio-cultural interventions and thus with ethical consequences

Table 2 itemizes my CAS-elaborated rethinking of the professional and technical writing program. Again, mapping CAS onto writing studies' guidance is not an effort at replacement, but an extension of the program mission as embodied by its SLOs.

Final Thoughts

If a professional and technical writing program can be CAS-reframed not as curricula where writing “ends” and editing “begins,” but rather how fused editing/writing is an opportunity to be accountable, all of us administrating, teaching, and researching in such programs may increasingly appreciate how awareness is insufficient if responsibility is not also named. Because students in our programs already are learning to contextualize their work rhetorically, we can walk them toward seeing themselves insofar as they shape the memories living within those contexts. It is an expanded approach to administration and pedagogy that goes beyond instrumentalist strategies for making students more ethically workforce-ready.

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