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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

Introduction

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This is a year of growth and change at *Programmatic Perspectives*. We are excited to share that *Programmatic Perspectives* has fully integrated our production process into our new Open Journal System interface, found at programmaticperspectives.cptsc.org. We express our deep gratitude to the CPTSC Executive Board for investing in this change, and we sincerely hope readers and contributors find our new journal site engaging and inviting. We also are grateful for our stellar editorial team, including co-editors Lora Anderson, Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch, FOCUS editor Joseph Jeyaraj, Book Review Editor Russell Kirkscey, and our copyeditor Alexander Evans. As you may have seen elsewhere, we are preparing for an editorial change, and we have issued a call for editor with the goal of a new editor starting in January 2024. We have enjoyed working together over the last three years to transition to the journal's new future.

In this issue, we are pleased to share publications that reinforce our unique focus on academic technical and scientific programs. This issue includes three research publications and one program showcase that highlight current topics such as integration of open educational resources, voices of contingent laborers, innovative curricular revision approaches, and ethical and informative integration of advisory boards.

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In "Looking Back, Looking Ahead: A 'Layered Literacies'" Approach to Program Change," Diana L. Awad Scrocco and Jay L. Gordon describe the process of redesigning their decades-old professional writing program using a framework of layered literacies and social justice. Their inspiring account shows how a redesign can create opportunities to re-engage with curriculum, faculty, students, and a program's mission.

Recipients of a CPTSC Research Grant, Katie Rieger, Christina Lane, Sarah Lonelodge, and Lydia Welker share results of an IRB-approved comprehensive national survey of over 250 academic contingent laborers in technical communication and writing fields. This ground-breaking study voices concerns, stories, and frustrations involving resources, compensation, and support among continent laborers. The authors share important implications that can apply across individual, department, and institutional levels.

In "Perspectives from a Departmental Adoption of an Open Technical Communication Textbook," Tiffani Tijerina and Jonathan Arnett describe results of an evaluative study of a recent adoption of an open educational resource (OER) that became a required text for their multi-section technical communication course. The authors share perceptions about the use of the OER across various course sections and offer insights from participating students and faculty that might inform others considering the adoption of OERs at their institutions.

In "Sustainable Industry-University Partnerships: Accountability as a Model for Program Development," Heidi Y. Lawrence, Lourdes Fernandez, Veronica Garrison-Joyner, Mae Bonem, Doug Eyman, Rachael Graham Lussos, and Luana Shafer share results of a qualitative study about advisory boards in technical communication programs. They describe how focus groups and iterative research practices showed ways to strengthen and integrate industry-university collaborations and develop ethical interventions in technical communication programs.

We are also pleased to include two articles that are part of our new FOCUS section that includes short and timely articles on current or emerging issues of interest. This edition of FOCUS offers two essays that offer a balance between theory and practice as it relates to social justice. In "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in TPC: Antiracist Pedagogy and Becoming an Antiracist Educator," Raquel DeLeon shares insights on ways to deepen a commitment to antiracist pedagogy in TPC. Deleon's piece offers a detailed exposition of social justice scholarship and approaches to social justice-related matters with recommendations of specific scholarship for readers' consideration. In "Designing 'Writing for Health and Medicine': Course Arcs, Anchors, and Action," Elizabeth Angeli demonstrates an application of ideas for including social justice pedagogical components in a course on health and medicine from the exciting field of health communication. Both FOCUS pieces reflect the continuing interest in social justice among scholars and students in the field of professional and technical communication.

Issue 14.1 also includes book reviews of new texts. Jagadish Paudel reviews *Equipping Technical Communicators for Social Justice Work: Theories, Methodologies and Pedagogies* (2021), edited by Rebecca Walton and Godwin Y. Agboka. Priyanka Ganguly reviews T*eaching Business, Technical and Academic Writing Online and Onsite: A Writing Pedagogy Sourcebook* (2021) by Sarbani Sen Vengadasalam, and Myrna Moss reviews Joanna Schreiber and Lisa Melonçon's edited collection *Assembling Critical Components: A Framework for Sustaining Technical and Professional Communication* (2022).

We hope you are as inspired as we are by contributions to this issue. Thank you and read on!

A R T I C L E

Looking Back, Looking Ahead: A "Layered Literacies" Approach to Program Change

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Abstract. This article showcases our professional writing program, which began in our university's English department in the late 1980s, as we carry out the first major update since its inception. Until recently, the program has only been updated in small, incremental ways. We frame our recent, more extensive update in terms of Kelli Cargile Cook's (2002) "layered literacies" scheme and Walton et al.'s (2016) guidance for integrating a social justice focus into professional writing programs. We describe our redesign of our major from a Professional and Technical Writing Program to a Public and Professional Writing Program, discussing how we addressed problems of enrollment decline, static classes, and outdated curriculum. We describe how we analyzed our student population and our program's existing strengths and set clear, scholarship-based pedagogical goals before updating and modernizing our mission statement, learning outcomes, and curricular requirements. We conclude by sharing survey results that demonstrate campus stakeholders' strong support of our programmatic changes. We reflect on expected benefits of our new program to our current and prospective students, our college and university, and our surrounding community. We offer key takeaways for professional writing program directors and faculty to consider as they evaluate and revise their own programs.
Keywords: Professional and Technical Writing, Writing Instruction, Curricular Change, Social Justice, Curriculum, Non-Profit Writing, Technical and Academic Writing

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1. Introduction: The need for change

1.1. Overview

This article showcases our professional writing program, which began in our university's English department in the late 1980s, as we carry out the first major update since its inception. While we have made some cosmetic changes over the years, until very recently, the program has only been updated in small, incremental ways. We frame our recent, more extensive update in terms of Kelli Cargile Cook's (2002) "layered literacies" framework and Walton et al.'s (2016) guidance for "social justice initiatives" (p. 119) in professional writing programs. Because Cook's framework integrates theory and practice effectively, we have found the layered-literacies structure useful for course and assignment design as well as for coordinating learning outcomes across the program. Additionally, Walton et al.'s (2016) more-recent model for integrating social-justice oriented content and projects into professional writing courses adds productively to Cook's repertoire of literacies and helps us envision how our program can "reflect [the field's] turn from critical analysis to critical action" (p. 122). Below, we describe the nature and rationales for the changes we have made to our program's mission, learning outcomes, curricular requirements, and courses.

1.2. Three Problems: enrollment decline, static classes, outdated curriculum

1.2.1. Enrollment Decline. Enrollment concerns served as the original impetus to take a closer, more critical look at our program. In 2019, like Rebecca Walton, Jared Colton, Rikki Wheatley-Boxx, and Krista Gurko (2016), we found ourselves facing a "kairotic moment for change, [and] we considered several factors that would affect our program's direction" (p. 121). When we composed the first proposal for our program revision, our total number of majors had been declining for approximately five years. As Table 1 indicates, we experienced a gradual yearly drop from Fall 2014 to Fall 2016 followed by more significant drops in Fall 2017 and Fall 2018. Despite a modest increase in 2019, the overall trend had been downward. We hypothesized that our decline in majors stemmed from various factors: the overall university enrollment declines, departmental declines in majors, and the move of our university's journalism major to a different college, which made our major less visible to students interested in communication and writing.

Table 1: Number of Professional and Technical Writing Majors Over Six Years

Term	First Time Undergraduates	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	Total
F 14	3	6	10	8	12	36
F 15	2	5	3	10	13	31
F 16	3	5	6	7	9	27
F 17	0	1	4	6	7	18
F 18	0	1	2	3	4	10
F 19	2	3	8	2	5	17

To address enrollment decline, we envisioned a program that would make the undergraduate BA degree and our minor more attractive to a broader range of students. Recruitment and retention are perennial problems at our university. Moreover, because our program lacks the household-name status of more familiar majors such as psychology, engineering, and chemistry, we face an ongoing recruitment problem. Therefore, we sought to make changes that would increase our program's visibility among new students selecting a major or minor.

1.2.2. Static classes: decades on the books. Prior to our recent, more pedagogically reflective program revision, the most substantive change in our program occurred nine years ago during AY2013-2014. At that time, the program name changed from Professional Writing and Editing to Professional and Technical Writing, and the literature-course requirement was substantially reduced. Despite these changes, most of our courses had not been modified significantly for several years or even decades. For example, two core courses in our curriculum had not been seriously reviewed and updated in nearly thirty-five years. Side-by- side comparisons of these courses, (1) Proposal and Report Writing (Table 2) and (2) Professional and Technical Editing (Table 3), reveal minor changes made between 1985 and 2019:

Table 2: Proposal and Report Writing Course Description Comparison

1985	2019
Application of general rhetorical strategies to the preparation of texts in two specific professional communication genres: the policy/procedure report and the solicited/unsolicited proposal.	Application of rhetorical strategies and principles of design to the preparation of texts in two specific professional writing genres: the proposal (such as grant and research proposals) and the report (such as technical, feasibility, and other kinds of reports).

Table 3: Professional and Technical Editing Course Description Comparison

1985	2019
A study of the skills needed to make appropriate editorial changes in the grammar, mechanics, style, format, and organization of manuscripts for scholarly, trade, and professional publications. The course will introduce stages in the publishing process, technical and substantive editing, and the use of house or press style. Practice in copy editing, design, and proofreading will be provided.	Study of the skills needed to make appropriate decisions about the content, grammar, mechanics, style, organization, and format of scholarly, trade, journalistic, and other professional publications, including newsletters and electronic publications. Topics include stages in the publishing process, proofreading, hard-copy versus online editing, mechanical and substantive editing, and the use of house and press styles.

As the above comparisons demonstrate, updates to these two core course descriptions reflect relatively trivial revisions that left the scope, substance, and objectives of the courses largely unchanged. For Proposal and Report Writing, the more-recent description mentions design principles and a few specific examples of the genres covered in the course. Similarly, the more-recent Professional and Technical Editing description adds content-level editing as an area of focus, references some additional genres (e.g., journalistic texts, newsletters), and mentions electronic texts and online editing. While these revisions reveal minor updates to our courses, the scope and structure of these courses and our program has remained essentially the same.

1.2.3. Outdated curriculum design: catching up with the twenty-first century. In addition to sustaining static courses, for decades we had failed to engage in constructive reflection about our program's overarching pedagogical goals and curricular coherence. If the program's courses had looked the same on paper but still functioned well programmatically and pedagogically, we may not have been motivated to institute a program-level overhaul. However, we tended to teach our program's courses without deliberating on course-description rationales or the extent to which the courses worked together to reinforce specific knowledge bases, competencies, and literacies. In other words, since the program's launch, we had not stepped back to take a broader view of our primary objectives and analyze how effectively our curriculum was addressing "multiple literacies of twenty-first century technical communicators" (Cook, 2002, p. 6).

Advocating for holistic layering of essential literacies across academic programs, Cook (2002) argues that professional and technical writers should develop proficiency in six literacies. These literacies include *basic* (reading and writing), *rhetorical* (understanding audience and choosing invention strategies), *social* (collaborating effectively with other writers and audiences), *technological* (navigating among and using emergent technologies), *ethical* (knowing ethical standards and considering all stakeholders), and *critical* (recognizing power structures and serving underserved audiences). In addition to Cook's well-known six key literacies, Walton et al. (2016) supplements Cook's framework with one that encompasses "social justice, diversity, and activist literacies," (p. 122). Social-justice literacy includes learning "how gender, race, culture, age, ideology, and socio-economic class influence the design, execution, and outcomes of projects" (p. 123).

While our original program certainly addressed several of these literacies, an archival search of our program's course descriptions offered no evidence that the curriculum had ever been developed or revised using a central, multilayered rationale that intentionally integrates core literacies. Instead, our program's courses were built on the faculty's experiential awareness of needed skillsets, such as competence with communicative technologies (e.g., Videotex in the 1980s) and knowledge of genres and practices in the field. This approach to program design reflected a "lack of understanding about how these multiple literacies can be integrated, situated, or [...] layered into programs, courses, and specific course activities" (Cook, 2002, p. 6).

Consequently, while we may have engaged in some pedagogical analysis over the years and made small revisions from course to course, we had not been conducting the overall pedagogical business of the program reflectively. We had failed to reflect on, evaluate, and revise our program on a broad scale to produce a modern, dynamic educational experience for our students. Our recent curricular redesign reflects an attempt to make deliberate efforts to layer Cook's six literacies and social-justice literacy more coherently into our mission, learning outcomes, curricular requirements, and individual courses.

1.3. Conditions on the ground: our student population, our program's strengths

To address the aforementioned three problems—static courses, enrollment decline, and outdated and piecemeal program design—we formed a comprehensive plan to revise our Professional and Technical Writing undergraduate major to a Public and Professional Writing (PPW) major. In crafting this proposal, we considered two important conditions: which students were selecting our major and the strengths of our current program.

1.3.1. Our student population. During our curricular redesign process, we gathered information about our recent graduates and current students. To understand our student population better, we collected transcript data from students who registered for our senior capstone course from Spring 2014 to Spring 2022 and from current students who have declared our major. Among a total of 67 students in these two groups, we were able to access 65 students' transcripts and record the following:

- current enrollment status or graduation year
- semester in which they entered the university
- whether they declared our major in their first semester at our university
- previously declared majors (if applicable)
- academic standing at the time they declared our major (good, warning, probation, or suspension)

Among the 65 transcripts we examined, 18 students were listed as currently enrolled, 45 students had graduated with their degrees, and 2 had never graduated (but were not currently enrolled). As for whether students declared our major during their first semester at our university, 51 students did not declare our major in their first semester, and 14 students did declare our major in their first semester. Among those students who did not declare our major in their semester, the most common statuses were the following: undetermined/exploratory (15), STEM (12), English literature (8), education (8), journalism (6), and business (5). All students who declared our major after being undetermined/exploratory or declaring a different major were in good standing with the university when they declared our major. These data show that most students in our program over the last decade have not declared our major in their first semester at our university, and many come to us after trying one or more other majors first.

These findings indicate the need for a more appealing, visible professional writing program. Courses with more explanatory names and descriptions might increase the chances that students take our classes. For examples, students from STEM might see our program as a good supplement to their major (as a minor or second major) or an even better fit for their long-term professional goals than their declared major. They might see our revised course, "Writing with Data," as an opportunity to learn to write about scientific findings in clear, concise ways for lay audiences. As another example, business students or students in arts programs might see our new course, "Grant Writing," as a chance to better understand the grant-proposal genre to acquire funding for nonprofit organizations. While our courses have provided instruction in these areas for years, one important goal of our new program is to make our program's offerings clearer to a broader audience.

1.3.2. Our program's strengths. Our program revision intends to build upon the strengths of a university degree program that has existed since 1989. While we argue that these substantive changes to the major should be made, we have not changed the fundamental identity of the program—one in which writing, nonfictional and pragmatic, is the central practice we study and teach. When the Professional Writing and Editing major first appeared in our university's course catalog in AY1989-1990, the faculty teaching in the program held PhDs in English literature. Some had worked as practitioners in technical writing, publishing, and editing, and they relied on those experiences to develop the program.

Beginning in the 2000s, faculty with PhDs in rhetoric and composition joined the department and initiated a scholarly and pedagogical shift in the program. We began moving our program from one tied closely to literature studies to one firmly situated in the field of rhetoric and writing. For instance, while the original major required more literature courses than professional writing courses and presented professional-writing competencies from a workplace-writing stance, our faculty now approach assignments and courses based in rhetoric- and writing-specific theory and scholarship. We believe this strength of our current program should remain central to our new program.

1.4. Our new goals

We have envisioned a major in Public and Professional Writing as one that stems from the ancient rhetorical tradition and prepares students to succeed in today's writing marketplace—from corporations to nonprofit firms and academic institutions. Specifically, we have sought to create a program that employs a layered-literacies approach to prepare students to understand and respond to audience needs—whether the audience is an individual client, various stakeholders in an organization, or the public. We hope that the revised major appeals to a broader base of students and prepares students for a wider range of careers. To accomplish this goal, we work to establish with students a strong foundation in basic, rhetorical, and technological literacies as well as attention to ethical, social, and critical literacies and social justice.

1.4.1. Grounding in rhetorical literacy. Rhetorical literacy remains at the forefront of our program. We consider all forms of nonfiction composition to be rhetorical, and our curricular revisions reflect that view. We want to cultivate an understanding among our majors that all public, professional, and technical writing uses basic and rhetorical literacies to accomplish certain goals:

- Identifying and analyzing significant problems to organizations and communities
- Constructing authority and credibility within documents
- Capturing and sustaining audience attention
- Engaging effectively with multiple and diverse stakeholders
- Grounding discourse in sound reasoning and competent research
- Devising appropriate and effective linguistic strategies

1.4.2. Developing technological and ethical literacies. We also aspire to incorporate technological and ethical literacies into our program. We aim to teach students how to use available software and hardware packages to create clear and effective designs, adhere to formatting styles, and convey honest, ethical visual arguments. By assigning projects that require designing documents for actual readers, we help students comprehend "the ethics of writing for a real audience and the social embeddedness that can influence the writing process" (Bourelle, 2012, p. 184). We work to teach our students that public, professional, and technical writing involves the following:

- Understanding core principles of visual design (i.e., as derived from Gestalt theory)
- Knowing how to use available software to produce effective designs for specific audiences (e.g., Adobe InDesign)
- Using data-visualization tools to generate graphs, charts, and tables that convey truthful data-driven arguments
- Developing credibility and trustworthiness through clear, accurate visuals

1.4.3. Meeting student needs through social and critical literacies. Pedagogically, our revised program strives to meet student needs—including securing rewarding jobs and learning the ideals of a liberal arts education. These principles include engaging in critical thinking, learning about the role of community and social context in writing situations, and selecting audience-appropriate research, language, and tools. To reinforce these ideals, the new program has aimed to place social and critical literacies in more prominent roles. For instance, as our program turns more intentionally to public-facing genres and audiences in the nonprofit sector, we hope to focus more attention on helping students "recognize and consider ideological stances and power structures" and the role of writing in "[taking] action to assist those in need" (Cook, 2002, p. 16).

In this way, layering social and critical literacies more deliberately into our new program facilitates the professionalization of our majors and moves our students beyond "simulated" workplace projects into authentic writing tasks (Bourelle, 2012, p. 184). We foreground social and critical literacies in our new program by expanding research-based curricular elements we have had in place for several years:

- internships on and off campus that empower students to become true "experts" in the field (Bourelle, 2012, p. 187)
- a requirement that capstone students work with a real client (e.g., writing grants for local nonprofit organizations, a feasibility report for a local literary organization, handbooks for campus departments)
- client-based/service-learning projects at all levels of courses (as described in Melançon, 2018)—from campus clients in our gateway course to off-campus organizations in upper-level courses like our new health sciences writing course

1.4.4. Explicitly integrating social-justice oriented literacies. Along with Cook's (2002) six core literacies, our programmatic revision considers the field's recent turn to social-justice literacies, which engage students in social action through professional writing (Walton et al., 2016). According to Walton et al. (2016), including social-justice literacies in professional writing curricula requires teaching students "social justice at two levels of abstraction—1) broad critical concepts (e.g., social justice, privilege) and 2) specific social issues relevant to the partner mission (such as homelessness, wrongful incarceration)" (p. 126). To implement teaching on these levels, we plan to integrate more course readings on social-justice concepts. We also intend to seek out community partners, internship employers, and service-learning projects with missions and values that explicitly support social-justice causes. In this way, we follow Walton et al.'s (2016) guidance to build courses centered on social justice, provide students with authentic social-justice projects, and encourage both students and community partners to reflect on these experiences.

2. Updating the program's mission and goals

With these goals in mind, we have modified our programmatic mission statement to prioritize and layer the aforementioned literacies into core courses, projects, and out-of-classroom experiences. Our original mission statement placed emphasis on basic and rhetorical literacies with some attention to technological literacy; however, social, ethical, critical, and social-justice literacies remained largely implicit. Our original mission statement foregrounded basic and rhetorical literacies by stating an overarching goal of teaching students "to write, edit, and design electronic and paper documents for businesses, organizations, and institutions." Reinforcing the centrality of rhetorical literacy, we stated our goal of enabling students to "analyze existing works—from web sites and manuals to policies and proposals—as well as produce [their] own original materials for [their] professional portfolio[s]." Our original mission statement also alluded to the interdependence of rhetorical and technological literacies. We stated our aim to teach students "to produce clear, effective, well-edited writing that serves the needs and interests of various audiences; learn to adapt to working environments that are changing rapidly—especially in terms of information technology; [and] develop a specialty in a specific field or type of working environment in which [they'd] like to put [their] PTW knowledge and skills to use."

In our revised mission statement, we mention the new ways we layer technological, social, ethical, and social-justice focused literacies into our program. One new area includes preparing our students with a more robust understanding of argumentation and rhetoric, including visual rhetoric and document design. While these competencies have been addressed in our program for many years, the new program positions them in more central roles. For instance, technological literacy emerges in our new visual rhetoric course, which aims to equip students with a fuller understanding of document-design theories and user-centered design. Students will not simply strive to make their documents aesthetically appealing using Adobe InDesign, for instance; they will learn visual principles that shape decisions about how to create rhetorically effective designs that, in some cases, aim to effect social change among public audiences.

We also highlight ethical and social-justice oriented literacies more intentionally in our revised mission statement. In a new course, Writing with Data, we engage students in activities like seeking IRB approval for systematic primary research, collecting data, and writing up results truthfully. This amplified focus on collecting, analyzing, and writing about primary data works to empower our students to accurately represent data-based findings through visuals and text. We intend to help students see connections between data and argument (another approach to teaching rhetorical literacy) and understand how to report data honestly (ethical literacy) to influence social or public issues that affect audiences in concrete ways (social-justice literacy). These curricular revisions prepare our students to communicate competently in a world where clear, honest presentation and analysis of data matter more than ever—particularly in nonprofit and other public contexts.

Finally, our new mission reflects more purposeful emphasis on social literacy through more emphasis on creative nonfiction, storytelling, and writing in the public sphere. While our program has always empowered students to write documents intended to be consumed by the public, we now overtly mention public writing in our mission statement, directly addressing social literacy. In addition to naming "public writing" as a focus in our new and revised classes, we have also made a conscious decision to require more client-based projects and internships—engaging students with "'the *involved* audience. . . [which assists] in the decision-marking, problem-solving, strategy-building act of invention" (Cook, 2002, p. 11). This change mirrors the move toward more social, public-facing professional writing programs across the country and aligns more closely with the types of professional writing positions our students seek.

Our new mission statement now reads:

The mission of the PPW program is to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to successfully plan, develop, and revise documents for businesses, organizations, and institutions. Specifically, successful PPW majors will:

- *produce clear, effective, well-edited writing that serves the needs and interests of various audiences and publics;*
- *develop a robust understanding of visual rhetoric and the ability to use visual techniques to enhance the effectiveness of their documents;*
- *analyze and write meaningfully about data drawn from various fields and sources;*
- *explore writing in both traditional and emergent genres.*

3. Before and after: Learning outcomes and curriculum redesign

Modernizing our program to layer Cook's (2002) six essential and social-justice focused literacies into our curriculum more substantively also required evaluating and revising our original student learning outcomes (LOs). The original Professional Writing and Editing program highlighted the two product-focused competencies of writing and editing and, in so doing, placed most of the focus on basic and rhetorical literacies. The third original LO focused on design, addressing technological literacy somewhat; however, most design instruction in our original program centered on teaching software (i.e., Adobe PageMaker in the 1990s and InDesign in the 2000s) rather than design principles. Even after our program name changed in 2013 to Professional and Technical Writing, our LOs remained centered on basic, rhetorical, and technological literacies. Historically, we assessed students' mastery over these LOs by examining final written products: the content of written documents (writing), the degree to which surface-level errors remained in the prose (editing), and the inclusion of basic visual-design principles in documents (design). The additional three literacies described by Cook (2002)—social, ethical, and critical—received inconsistent or scant attention in our original curriculum.

During our curricular redesign, we have attempted to refocus our learning outcomes to account for the full range of literacies professional writers need. While we have preserved our original focus on the quality of the final product (basic, rhetorical, and technological literacies), we have also implemented changes that attempt to capture a sense of the writing process. This new process-focused stance allows more attentiveness to social, ethical, and critical literacies. Below, we show side-by-side views of our old and new LOs, followed by a mapping of which of our courses cover which LOs and the extent to which these courses layer all six literacies.

3.1. Learning outcome 1

We kept this LO the same but incorporated more emphasis on the rhetorical dimensions of texts by elaborating how students demonstrate effective writing. This revised LO addresses rhetorical literacy with more depth and breadth than the original LO.

Table 4. Learning Outcome 1

Old	New
LO 1. WRITE documents to meet the demands, purpose, and interests of a specific client and audience.	LO 1. WRITE documents to meet the demands, purpose, and interests of a specific client and audience.
Demonstrated through the production of clear, professional prose appropriate to specific genres and contexts.	Demonstrated through the production of clear, professional prose appropriate to specific rhetorical strategies (e.g., consideration of audience, purpose, context, genre).

Old	New
Demonstrated through the consistent use of an appropriate style guide or in-house style.	Demonstrated through the consistent use of an appropriate style guide or in-house style.
	Demonstrated as the presence of a minimum of inappropriate sentence-level language choices (e.g., style, usage, syntax, grammar, mechanics).

3.2. Learning outcome 2

We maintained this outcome but absorbed the "hardware and software" element into the first statement about how the LO is demonstrated. In the past, we relied upon Adobe InDesign almost exclusively for our design-tool requirement, but the new curriculum is devised to require design across multiple courses using multiple tools (e.g., Microsoft Word for typography and Excel for graph and chart creation). This more robust coverage of visual rhetoric attempts to enrich students' technological literacy by equipping them with theories of design that can be applied across genres and platforms to meet their audience's unique needs.

Table 5. Learning Outcome 2

Old	New
LO 2. DESIGN documents to meet the demands, purpose and interests of a specific client and audience.	LO 2. DESIGN documents to meet the demands, purpose, and interests of a specific client and audience.
Demonstrated through effective use of basic document design principles as well as design conventions of specific genres.	Demonstrated through effective use of basic document design principles and design conventions of specific genres, using available hardware and software packages.
Demonstrated through effective use of available hardware and software packages.	

3.3. Learning outcome 3

We added two important elements to this revised LO: a statement about setting and meeting criteria established by real audience(s) and the point that revising involves multiple stakeholders and potential authorities. This LO prioritizes social, ethical, and social-justice oriented literacies and aims to encourage more client-based and service-learning projects—particularly ones that explicitly support social-justice causes. This LO also manifests in our new curriculum as deeper audience-analysis activities (e.g., writing audience personas as described in Dayton, 2003), implementing document user-testing to center revision around readers' real needs, and composing reflective revision memos.

Table 6. Learning Outcome 3

Old	New
LO 3. EDIT documents to meet the demands, purpose, and interests of a specific client and audience.	LO 3. REFLECT and REVISE their documents' writing and design using concrete criteria set by a specific client and audience.
Demonstrated through substantive, positive changes in response to comments, criticisms, and questions, including improvements in both writing and design for the sake of coherence, clarity, consistency, and readability.	Demonstrated through meaningful refection on one's own writing and design choices with a focus on revision plans that prioritize higher-level concerns over surface-level issues.
Demonstrated through prose that is free of mechanical, grammatical, or diction errors.	Demonstrated through substantive, positive changes to document(s) made in response to reader comments, criticisms, and questions, including improvements in both writing and design for the sake of coherence, clarity, consistency, and readability.

3.4. Learning outcome 4

This new LO explicitly acknowledges oral presentations—another effort to integrate social literacy into our revised program. While our program has always required oral presentations in courses, emphasizing oral communication with a distinct LO strives to communicate the significance of knowing how to present one's writing projects visually and orally to an audience of stakeholders. Our students practice this important literacy in capstone presentations given to our entire faculty, fellow students, and members of our local chapter of the Society for Technical Communication.

Table 7. Learning Outcome 4

LO 4. DELIVER ORAL PRESENTATIONS of their documents' writing and design using professionally designed visual aids.
Demonstrated through focused, well-organized presentation that attends to audience needs (e.g., detail, lexicon, structure).
Demonstrated through prose that is free of mechanical, grammatical, or diction errors.
Demonstrated through effective engagement with the audience, including ability to respond to questions and comments.
Demonstrated through effective use of presentation software and visual aids.

3.5. Layering our new learning outcomes in our core courses

These revised and new learning outcomes do not simply sit alongside our new curriculum as goals to keep in mind. They function as the criteria by which our courses are designed and by which our program is assessed. To demonstrate how we intend to use them for those purposes, we have mapped them to each of our program's nine core courses, identifying relevant LOs as "high," "medium," or "low" priority:

Table 8. Learning Outcome Priorities in Nine Core Courses in the New Curriculum

Course	LO 1: Write	LO 2: Design	LO 3: Reflect/ Revise	LO 4: Present
Intro to Public, Prof., and Tech. Writing	High	Medium	High	Medium
Writing with Data	High	High	Medium	High
Writing for Online Media	Medium	High	Medium	Low
Rhetoric and Argument	High	Low	High	Low
Ethnographic Writing	High	High	High	Low
Grant Writing	High	Low	High	Low
Visual Rhetoric	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Copyediting	High	Low	High	Low
PPW Senior Project	High	High	High	High

As Table 8 shows, we have attempted to layer and balance the aforementioned literacies into our new core courses through our LOs. While all four learning outcomes matter across our program, the highest-priority outcomes remain writing and reflecting/revising because of our program's central focus on rhetorical and basic literacies. Reinforcing our program's emphasis on technological, ethical, and social literacies, design and presentation emerge as critical outcomes represented in at least half of our core courses. Finally, while educators may not want to label any LO as "low" priority, some classes emphasize one LO less than others. Indeed, the only course where all LOs receive "high" priority is the capstone course, in which students are expected to demonstrate competence in all essential outcomes and literacies. As Lisa Melonçon and Joanna Schreiber (2018) argue, our capstone course represents the site where students "[bring] together theories and practices of the academic field and the workplace" (p. 322).

4. Refining core courses in the major

Once our vision for our revised program had been documented in our new mission statement and learning outcomes, we updated core course names, descriptions, and syllabuses to reflect our program's new focus on a fuller breadth of literacies. To that end, we revised our core curriculum (27 semester hours) by revising some existing core courses, creating new courses, and moving one course from our core requirements to our elective options.

We first revised the names and descriptions of several existing core courses to create more coherence across the program. Two goals motivated our course revisions: 1) making the courses more appealing to students and 2) reflecting more accurately how courses had been taught in recent years. While courses are more than names and descriptions, as "highly visible, public facing, and readily available" (Melançon & Schreiber, 2018, p. 329) texts, they can determine whether students register for classes. For instance, a vaguely named course, "Advanced Writing," had been taught for decades in our department as an upper-division nonfiction narrative writing course. However, because the course description presented an imprecise focus, one professional writing faculty member has taught the course in recent years as an ethnographic writing class. Others have taught it as the study of nonfiction, often personal essays. We responded to this long-standing curricular ambiguity by replacing the old, unclear "Advanced Writing" class with two new classes: "Nonfiction Narrative Writing" and "Ethnographic Writing:"

Table 9: Evolution of Advanced Writing Course

Old Advanced Writing Description	New Ethnographic Writing Description	New Nonfiction Narrative Writing Description
Designed to strengthen proficiency in essay writing, with emphasis on the development of ideas, analysis of style, clarity of thought and expression, editing, and proofreading.	Students learn to analyze and produce ethnographic nonfiction texts by learning 1) the rhetorical strategies ethnographic writers use to advance claims (e.g., purpose, audience, stance, voice, and genre); 2) how to collect and analyze primary and secondary sources of information; and 3) how to communicate in written, audio, visual, and multimodal formats, using various technologies.	Using a range of prose styles (e.g., personal essays, memoirs, travel writing, political commentary), students learn to 1) identify and use rhetorical elements informing narrative nonfiction writing situations (purpose and audience, characters and dialogue, the narrative arc, narrative themes, imagery, and symbolism, and metaphor); 2) read, analyze, and write narrative nonfiction essays, using various sources of information; 3) communicate in multimodal formats.

4.1. Revised and new core courses

In addition to revising existing courses, we also added several new courses and removed one course from our core curriculum:

Table 10: Original Core Courses and Revised Core Courses

Original Core Course	Revised Core Course
Professional and Technical Writing	Intro to Public, Prof., and Tech Writing
Proposal and Report Writing	Writing with Data
Writing for Online Environments	Writing for Online Media
Readings in Prof. and Tech. Writing	Rhetoric and Argument
Advanced Writing	Ethnographic Writing
Advanced Prof. and Tech. Writing	Grant Writing
Professional and Technical Editing	Copyediting
PTW Senior Project	PPW Senior Project
	Visual Rhetoric
Principles of Linguistics	*Removed*

Introduction to Public, Professional, and Technical Writing: Replacing our original gateway course, this new introductory course maintains the original focus on rhetorical concepts like audience, purpose, and context, and adds a new public-writing component. Intended to be the first core course taken by majors, this course provides a survey of key genres in professional writing. Because the course has historically served programs in our university's STEM college, we retained "technical" in the title to signal that we include instruction in technical writing.

Writing with Data: We created this revised course to replace the original course, Proposal and Report Writing, which problematically "[settled] into teaching generic forms" (Melançon, 2018, p. 206) without providing appropriate context for those genres. This revised course emphasizes collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data in various professional genres for diverse audiences. Students learn about seeking IRB approval and using primary research methods (e.g., interviews, surveys, focus groups, online community analysis, and quasi and true experiments). Students also become familiarized with designing and writing about visual representations of data. The course aims to help students use data to investigate, analyze, and write about real-world problems and serves as one site where social-justice content may be addressed. Students may select a local social-justice focused issue for their course projects and collect data that aims to effect change in our community.

Writing for Online Media: This course originally focused on writing copy for the Videotex system of the 1970s. Later, the course taught students HTML and CSS and how to use online WYSIWIG editors to create web projects. As online work became more commonplace, the course became "Writing for Online Environments," with added attention to developing online forms, interactive PDFs, and electronic portfolios. Recently, the course has moved to a more streamlined structure, focusing on rhetorical matters of writing online articles in different forms (informative, instructional, persuasive, analytical) and capitalizing on the functionality of online media (e.g., interactivity and juxtaposing text, images, audio, and video).

Rhetoric and Argument: This new course explicitly addresses rhetorical concepts and themes that have always been implicitly covered in our courses. Providing students with more in-depth exposure to classical and modern rhetoric, the course explores how current forms of written communication can be examined using rhetorical theory. The course also builds upon the research-based argumentation that students typically learn in first-year writing. Expanding this framework, the course examines additional rhetorical dimensions of public, professional, and technical writing. Because the course focuses on argumentation and advocacy, this course serves as a natural site for a social-justice perspective.

Ethnographic Writing: Unlike the vaguely framed Advanced Writing course, this new course more accurately reflects one way the course has been taught recently. Through ethnographic research and writing assignments, students analyze and produce ethnographic nonfiction texts by focusing on the rhetorical strategies ethnographic writers use to advance claims (e.g., purpose, audience, stance, voice, and genre). Students write ethnographic nonfiction essays using primary and secondary sources of information (e.g., field observations, ethnographic interviews, archival research). Students also learn to use various technologies to communicate in written, audio, visual, and multimodal formats.

Grant Writing: Replacing the ambiguously named "Advanced Professional and Technical Writing" course, this new course in grant writing is modeled after our graduate-level grant-writing course. We designed this undergraduate course for students across campus and within our program who would like to pursue grant writing. In this course, students learn about writing grant proposals, beginning with "an emphasis on rhetorical exigencies" (Melançon, 2018, p. 207) motivating grant proposals. They learn how grant proposals enable research in natural, behavioral, and social sciences; facilitate civic and educational projects and social change; and advance community development and artistic initiatives.

Copyediting: As "Professional and Technical Editing," the original course did not require a complete overhaul; however, the way it was taught over the years often departed from the core editing practices covered in the course description. The revised course focuses more closely and specifically on professional copyediting. In part, this change stems from a desire to narrow the scope of the course's coverage, and in part it is motivated by the most recent edition of Amy Einsohn and Marilyn Schwartz's (2019) *The Copyeditor's Handbook* and *The Copyeditor's Workbook*; this textbook provides a focused foundation in the work of professional copyediting. The topics covered in the textbook represent the art of copyediting in the breadth and depth appropriate to our vision for the course.

PPW Senior Project: Revisions to the capstone course represent minor changes to the name and description; primarily, we have added the public-writing component. In the course, we connect students to real clients—as most capstone courses in our field do (see Melançon & Schreiber, 2018, p. 326)—to address problems and opportunities that can be solved with professional documents. Combining "knowledge and skills gained from across the other courses in the degree program to serve as a 'cumulative experience' for students" (Melançon & Schreiber, 2018, p. 324), the capstone course involves individualized research, analysis, development, and oral presentation of a project that responds to clients' needs. Students learn to incorporate audience-appropriate writing, design, and editing in a usable high-quality product. They also reflect on their final project in writing and in a presentation to the faculty (Melançon & Schreiber, 2018).

Visual Rhetoric: This new core course targets a competency we tangentially covered in various courses in the original program, providing a stronger, more coherent basis in visual literacy. This course considers student feedback from several years, our own sense of the value of understanding foundational design principles, and the general importance of visual rhetoric in modern society. Students analyze documents in terms of the rhetorical and functional roles their visual elements play, and they produce their own documents using software packages like Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint and Adobe InDesign.

4.2. Layering literacies in revised and new core courses.

These revisions to our core curriculum clarify the genres and competencies covered in our classes and modernize and streamline the topics covered. Additionally, these changes align our program's aims and requirements with similar programs across the country—a goal others in the field contend academic program administrators should work toward (Schreiber & Melançon, 2019). These revisions also reflect a more deliberate layering of Cook's six literacies and social-justice literacy (see Table 11).

Table 11 demonstrates that not all literacies receive close attention in every course. Indeed, only "basic" and "rhetorical" literacies receive high priority in all core courses. We assign the remaining literacies different degrees of focus depending on each course's goals, objectives, and genres. For instance, social literacy receives more attention in Ethnographic Writing, Grant Writing, and the Senior Project class. In these classes, students practice social literacy by partnering with outside clients and engaging with involved audiences directly, meeting with readers who "ask clarifying questions, express concerns, and make suggestions" (Walton et al., 2016, p. 132). As another example, we focus on technological literacy more closely in Writing with Data, Writing for Online Media, Ethnographic Writing, and Visual Rhetoric as students learn to use different software to produce multimodal texts for diverse audiences. Notably, while we do not label critical or social-justice literacies as high priority in any of our classes, we expect our program to

Table 11: Priority of Literacies in New Public and Professional Writing Core Courses

Course	Basic	Rhetorical	Social	Technological	Ethical	Critical	Social Justice
Intro to Public, Prof., and Tech. Writing	High	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Low
Writing with Data	High	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	Medium
Writing for Online Media	High	High	Low	High	Low	Low	Medium
Rhetoric and Argument	High	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Medium
Ethnographic Writing	High	High	Medium	High	High	Low	Low
Grant Writing	High	High	High	Low	High	High	Medium
Visual Rhetoric	High	High	Medium	High	Medium	Low	Low
Copyediting	High	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Low
PPW Senior Project	High	High	High	High	High	Medium	Medium

integrate more service-learning and social-justice focused projects into courses. For instance, we expect both literacies to assume more central roles in classes like Ethnographic Writing, Writing for Online Media, Rhetoric and Argument, and Grant Writing; in these classes, issues of equity and inclusion could be emphasized by encouraging students to engage in more intentional audience outreach and by partnering with local nonprofit organizations on social-justice oriented projects.

4.3. Expanding elective options and areas: "Writing and Language Study"

Supplementing our core courses in both the original and revised programs are supporting elective courses in related fields. In this portion of our curriculum, called "Writing and Language Study," students choose electives that customize their degree to align with their long-term goals and interests. In the original program, students selected four courses (12 semester hours) from four categories—Professional and Technical Writing, Journalism, Creative Writing, and Linguistics—and could not take more than nine hours from a single area. In the new curriculum, students may select electives from Public and Professional Writing, Journalism, Creative Writing, Linguistics, and Communication.

Under the new "Writing and Language Study" area, students must take one additional PPW class beyond the core curriculum, and they cannot take more than six semester hours in any single area. Our rationale for these parameters stems from our university's recent policy that allows students to count the same course(s) in their major and minor. By limiting the number of courses taken in one area, we hope to prevent students from counting all or most of their minor's courses as major electives (e.g., a creative writing minor is six courses, and three are listed as electives under "Writing and Language Study"). More broadly, we hope that requiring students to distribute their elective courses across multiple academic areas expands their understanding of written, visual, and oral communication.

Additional PPW classes under this elective portion of the curriculum represent more specialized PPW courses that may not be offered regularly. These courses equip our students with knowledge in other subject areas: Nonfiction Narrative Writing, Writing and the Public Sphere, Writing in the Health Science Professions, and the PPW Internship class. Nonfiction Narrative Writing examines a range of prose styles, including personal essays and memoirs, travel writing, political commentary, and forms of science writing. Writing in the Public Sphere covers writing that serves the public interest (i.e., writing primarily for the nonprofit sector). Writing in the Health Science Professions introduces students to writing practices and genres produced in the health professions with a focus on writing about health and medicine for lay audiences. Finally, the PPW Internship includes supervised work-and-learning experiences in public and professional writing under the direction of a faculty member and a supervisor at a participating business, organization, or institution; one goal of encouraging more students to complete internships derives from both anecdotal and research-based evidence of improved job outcomes for student interns (Bourelle, 2012).

Notably, as we revised the elective options, we removed a vestigial literature requirement from the program's curriculum. As mentioned, the original major developed from a traditional English literature degree program. While the bulk of the literature requirement was removed by 2013, a new course was created, "Readings in Professional Writing and Editing" (later, "Readings in Professional and Technical Writing"), and a "critical reading" requirement of two literature courses was established. These related moves served to reassure some literature colleagues that students in our program completed enough reading throughout our major. By the time we proposed our Public and Professional Writing curriculum to the department, concerns about our students' reading had largely dissipated, and no one objected to removing the remaining literature requirement.

4.4. Replacing the "Professional Area" with a traditional minor

In addition to making substantive changes to our program's mission, learning outcomes, core courses, and electives, we also revised our original curriculum's requirement for a "professional area," and instead, we added a requirement for a minor. The original BA in professional and technical writing was distinctive among majors at our institution in that it required a "professional area" instead of a minor. This "professional area" served as an 18-credit block that students could assemble with an advisor. A "professional area" could consist of a minor or it could be customized to suit students' individual interests.

The original rationale for the "professional area" held that students could pursue subject matter expertise to combine with the transferable rhetorical skills taught in our writing courses. Despite this thoughtful reasoning, the "professional area" brought practical problems and failed to function as intended. Some students selected six courses that logically fit together as a coherent area of study, but other students selected courses that only loosely related to each other. For many students, the objective became maximizing the number of courses that counted for completion of the program instead of assembling a pedagogically sound collection of courses. After noting this problem for several years, we replaced the "professional area" with a traditional minor.

In the new program, we recommend that students meet with advisors to select a minor that supports their long-term professional goals. For instance, students with an interest in technical writing careers might select a STEM minor that provides needed subject-area expertise. Students who would like to become grant writers might choose our university's minor in nonprofit leadership. Students who plan to work for businesses or other for-profit organizations might select a minor in business or graphic design for non-art majors. One advantage of our new requirement of a minor is that established minors present a coherent, logical set of courses that students can take to supplement the rhetorical competencies they acquire in our major.

5. Survey results on revised curriculum

To systematically assess the perceptions and interest in our revised Public and Professional Writing Program, we conducted a brief IRB-approved survey (IRB #: 2023-25, Youngstown State University) of stakeholders on our campus (see Appendix A for survey questions). We circulated our survey across our campus to all students, faculty, administrators, staff, and others. We received feedback from 144 respondents, affiliated as follows:

Table 12: Affiliation of Survey Respondents.

Respondent affiliation		
Student affiliated with the Public and Professional Writing (PPW)/Professional and Technical Writing (PTW) Program	9.03%	13
Student not affiliated with the PPW/PTW Program	40.28%	58
Faculty affiliated with the PPW/PTW Program	2.78%	4
Faculty not affiliated with the PPW/PTW Program	26.39%	38
Administration	2.78%	4
Staff	13.19%	19
Other	5.56%	8
TOTAL		144

Table 12 shows that most respondents to the survey were not affiliated with the PPW/PTW program. This distribution of respondents provides a clear idea of what the broader campus community thinks of our proposed curriculum in the new Public and Professional Writing Program.

Among the 144 respondents, 62 (43%) had heard of our professional writing program, and 83 (57%) had not heard of our program. When asked about their degree of interest in classes that teach students about writing, editing, and designing documents for businesses and organizations, 93% of respondents expressed at least some interest; 35% showed strong interest in our program.

We asked respondents to rate their perceptions of our program revisions and views of our new and revised courses. In response to a question highlighting our revised program's new emphasis on teaching students to write public-facing genres and address audiences in the nonprofit sector, nearly 90% of respondents said the changes were either somewhat or highly desirable.

We also asked respondents to rate their interest in all revised and new core course offerings and found wide support across our campus for our new and revised courses. See Table 13 for a detailed breakdown of respondent interest in our courses. Approximately 90% of respondents expressed moderate to strong interest in the following courses: Introduction to Public, Professional, and Technical Writing (90%), Writing with Data (89%), Writing for Online Media (87%), Grant Writing (91%), and Copyediting (90%). Between 75-85% of respondents expressed moderate to strong interest in the following courses: Rhetoric and Argument (85%), Ethnographic Writing (78%), Visual Rhetoric (83%), and Public and Professional Writing Senior Project (74%). The two most highly rated among these new and revised courses are Grant Writing (68 respondents expressed strong interest and 39 expressed moderate interest) and Writing with Data (65 respondents expressed strong interest and 37 expressed moderate interest).

We hypothesize that the transferability of the concepts and the versatility of the genres covered in these two courses appeal to respondents from a range of disciplines. The next two most highly rated among our new program's courses are Introduction to Public, Professional, and Technical Writing (61 respondents expressed strong interest and 45 expressed moderate interest) and Writing for Online Media (61 respondents expressed strong interest and 44 expressed moderate interest). We theorize that our introductory course appeals to respondents because the class offers a survey of the field and includes rhetorical concepts and strategies that can be applied to a range of field-specific writing. Finally, Writing for Online Media likely interests respondents because of the ubiquity of online writing and communication in our culture and the increasing demand on professionals from all fields to understand the best practices of online writing.

Table 13: Interest in our proposed courses

Course name	Strong interest	Moderate interest	Some interest	No interest	Total respondents
Introduction to Public, Professional and Technical Writing	42.36% 61	31.25% 45	17.36% 25	9.72% 14	144
Writing with Data	46.10% 65	26.24% 37	17.02% 24	10.64% 15	141
Writing for Online Media	42.96% 61	30.99% 44	13.38% 19	13.38% 19	142
Rhetoric and Argument	35.42% 51	31.25% 45	18.75% 27	15.28% 22	144
Ethnographic Writing	22.92% 33	34.72% 50	21.53% 31	21.53% 31	144
Grant Writing	47.22% 68	27.08% 39	16.67% 24	9.72% 14	144
Copyediting	42.36% 61	28.47% 41	18.75% 27	10.42% 15	144
Visual Rhetoric	29.37% 42	32.17% 46	22.38% 32	16.78% 24	143
Public and Professional Writing Senior Project	36.62% 52	23.94% 34	14.08% 20	26.06% 37	142

In response to an open-ended request for additional feedback on our new Public and Professional Writing Program, several respondents commented on the value and applicability of our new program to students across campus. One respondent commented that the program revision "makes the curriculum more relevant and applicable to a wider range of students." Another mentioned the applicability of our new and revised courses to STEM students and to students "who may not have been interested in writing." One individual noted that the program revision's orientation toward "nonprofit, public-facing writing… [is a] unique program offered at YSU for students looking to further their education in that direction." Another stated, "As a first year *[sic]* student, I've been debating on a minor to choose, and the revised courses have definitely made me interested in looking into choosing

PPW as my minor." Comments like these suggest that our curricular revisions may be more attractive to students outside our department.

Although most open-ended responses reflect a positive view of our new program, some survey respondents offered recommendations for our program or expressed concerns. One respondent advised us to integrate "interdepartmental collaboration to give the students a broader experience," and another suggested that the introductory course should be mandatory for some majors on campus. Notably, we do involve other departments' courses in our curriculum (see "Writing and Language Study" requirements above), and some programs do require their students to take our introductory course (e.g., some engineering and computer science students). Another survey respondent encouraged more visible marketing of the new program across campus. In terms of concerns about our new program, one respondent noted the limitation of our new program's broad-facing stance and the lack of writing instruction within specific disciplines. While we acknowledge that our program cannot offer discipline-specific writing instruction, this concern goes beyond the scope of our programmatic goals. One strategy for addressing this issue would be to guide our students to select minors in specific subject areas or fields that interest them. A few other respondents commented on potential overlap between our writing courses and courses in business and journalism; while we take these concerns seriously, our new and revised courses do not emphasize business or journalism in their content.

Overall, we conclude that our survey of campus stakeholders reflects strong support for our new Public and Professional Writing Program. We cannot draw definitive conclusions about the generalizability of these survey results to those who did not take our survey. Nonetheless, we are encouraged that most students, faculty, administrators, and staff who took our survey believe that our revised program teaches valuable competencies and benefits our students, our university, and our community.

6. Concluding comments

6.1. Benefits for students

Primarily, we hope the new program expands our graduates' professional and academic possibilities. Like graduates from our original program, graduates from the revised program will be qualified to begin careers "as writers, editors, and document developers, professional and technical writers, grant writers at regional nonprofits, marketing and public relations specialists, [and] teachers, trainers and consultants in the field" (quoted from our curricular materials circulated to students).

With a broader range of competencies and literacies acquired in the revised program, we expect our graduates to be more prepared for careers writing in public advocacy and engagement, public agencies, government, the non-profit sector, and advertising and public relations. We also hope graduates from our new program will be more fully equipped to enter graduate programs in rhetoric and composition, which remains one of the strongest growth areas within English studies.

Along with modernizing and expanding our program, we also hope the program's new name and focus align with more students' overall interests. For years, we had anecdotally noted that most of our students did not pursue technical writing careers. We had hypothesized that the word "technical" in our program title deterred some students. While technical-writing careers remain possible for students in our revised program, we expect the new curriculum to appeal to the larger group of students who seek to write in public domains and for advocacy and social-justice purposes.

Our changes to our program also support fundamental philosophies of our academic department, college, and university. Our revised curriculum prepares our students to engage in effective communication in a wider range of contexts and critical thinking for a broader set of writing purposes. We have better aligned our program with our institution's mission "to provide innovative lifelong learning opportunities that will inspire individuals, enhance futures and enrich lives" through an increased push for service-learning projects and off-campus internships. As we continue to develop new real-world projects and positions for our students, we establish "reciprocity between the campus and the community," (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999, p. 180), an objective that improves our students, local businesses and nonprofits, and our university. Our Public and Professional Writing major strives to empower students to identify, research, and solve writing problems by understanding more genres, appealing to more audiences, and "[moving] outside of academic frameworks and into disciplinary and workplace practices" (Melançon, 2018, p. 208).

6.2. Limitations and future directions

1. *Although we did not formally consult students or other stakeholders prior to making our programmatic changes, we conducted a survey during the first semester of the revised program, and we plan to track perceptions of our revised curriculum over time.* We based several of our programmatic changes on anecdotal evidence from our capstone students' final reflections about the program as well as feedback from internship employers and service-learning cli-

ents. During the first semester of those changes taking effect, we conducted a campus-wide survey of our programmatic changes to gather input on our curricular revisions and suggestions for additional changes. To build on our recent campus survey about our programmatic changes, we plan to continue tracking perceptions of our revised program from various stakeholders within and outside of the university. In this way, as Joanna Schreiber and Lisa Melançon (2019) contend, we intend to bring together "current programmatic practices (e.g., assessment, course objectives, program outcomes, curriculum mapping, stakeholder identification) by enabling the alignment of programmatic and course outcomes with field-wide curricular practices, while also making these practices and reflections visible in documentation" (p. 262).

2. *While we have no guarantee that our programmatic changes will attract more students, we intend to follow enrollment trends and student feedback to assess the effect of the new curriculum.* We expect our revised major and minor to appeal to more students for the reasons we have described in this article, but we must follow our enrollment numbers each semester for several years to make any determinations. Because various factors influence program enrollment, we will not be able to make causal assumptions. However, increasing enrollment in the program may indicate positive perceptions of our changes. In addition to following enrollment numbers, we plan to conduct more robust exit surveys for our graduating senior students and collect reflective memos at the end of our senior-level courses to develop a fuller picture of students' experiences with the new curriculum.
3. *Because Cook's (2002) six literacies and social-justice focused literacies may exclude other essential literacies, we plan to integrate other frameworks into ongoing curricular improvements.* While we do not limit our programmatic and course goals to these literacies, this framework has informed our approach to our recent curricular redesign. Moving forward, we plan to keep working to apply these literacies (e.g., by layering critical and social-justice oriented literacies into more courses), and we intend to incorporate other professional-writing frameworks that align with our overarching aims.

6.3. Key takeaways

1. *Enrollment declines in academic programs may result from issues like outdated curricula and static classes; solving these curricular problems requires regular and thorough reviews at global and local levels.* While programmatic consistency maintains stability for both stu-

dents and administration observers, consistency for its own sake can leave a program stale and out of step with the field's current pedagogical best practices. Annual program assessment can be useful, but this institutional practice does not guarantee genuine program change. Assessment instruments can be designed and applied, and results can be produced to satisfy institutional goals, without a program necessarily becoming more engaging or useful to students. As this program showcase describes, updating static, outdated professional writing courses and curricula involves aligning the program with similar, reputable academic programs.

2. *Academic programs should be theoretically informed.* While a program of study should not be a mechanical application of any theory, program changes can and should be grounded in concepts that hold currency in the field and that can be applied fruitfully. Instead of approaching program maintenance in a piecemeal fashion without broader theoretical concepts driving curricular revisions, Cook's (2002) layered-literacies approach represents one solid framework for informing curriculum structures, learning outcomes, and individual courses. We also view Walton et al. (2016) as a timely guide for incorporating a social justice focus in key courses in our program. Moving forward, another framework we expect to consider as we evaluate our new program comes from Schreiber and Melançon (2019): the GRAM model of continuous improvement encourages gathering data about an academic program, "reading landscapes" (p. 262) in the field, analyzing local and global information, and making modifications to improve curricula.
3. *Program faculty should not hesitate to make major changes to academic curricula.* For many years, our program remained in a rut, in part because of the inherent conservatism of academia. When our program began, our major looked like a traditional English literature degree with some professional writing course requirements. This model remained in place for decades, as literature faculty worried that students in our program would graduate without the appropriate background in "English." When we undertook this program change, we decided to engage in a serious overhaul of our curriculum. That perspective facilitated our development of a new program that we hope will truly engage more students and serve our pedagogical and professional goals for them.

7. Appendix A

Full Survey:

1) What is your status at the university?
- Student affiliated with the Public and Professional Writing (PPW)/Professional and Technical Writing (PTW) Program
- Student not affiliated with the PPW/PTW Program
- Faculty affiliated with the PPW/PTW Program
- Faculty not affiliated with the PPW/PTW Program
- Administration
- Staff
- Other, please specify:

2) Have you heard of YSU's Public and Professional Writing (PPW)/Professional and Technical Writing (PTW) Program in the Department of English and World Languages (EWL)?
- Yes
- No

3) How much interest do you have in classes that teach students about writing, editing, and designing documents for businesses and organizations?
1. Strong interest
2. Moderate interest
3. Some interest
4. No interest

4) The Professional and Technical Writing (PTW) Program has recently been revised into a Public and Professional Writing (PPW) Program with more emphasis on teaching students to write public-facing genres and address audiences in the nonprofit sector. Rate your perception of this program change.
1. Highly desirable
2. Somewhat desirable
3. Somewhat undesirable
4. Highly undesirable

5) Several courses in the new Public and Professional Writing (PPW) Program have been revised to update older courses. Please rate your interest in the new Public and Professional Writing (PPW) core courses.
1. Strong interest
2. Moderate interest

3. Some interest
4. No interest

Introduction to Public, Professional, and Technical Writing
Course Description: Exploration of writing for public and professional/technical audiences. Students examine the use of writing in public organizations, government, the nonprofit sector, the safety and health professions, and political and social campaigns. With an emphasis on audience and purpose, students consider the rhetorical and ethical demands of writing in public, professional and technical contexts. Assignments may include analysis and research, proposals, media kits, editorials, instructions, position papers, and web content.

Writing with Data
Course Description: Introduction to writing effectively with data. Students examine various forms of qualitative and quantitative data, focusing on how to use data rhetorically to advance research-based arguments for lay and specialized audiences. Students collect, write about, and cite qualitative and quantitative data, including methods such as interviews, surveys, focus groups, online community analysis, and quasi and true experiments. Students also learn how writers incorporate data-driven arguments into different written genres and represent those arguments using data-visualization tools. No knowledge of statistics is required.

Writing for Online Media
Course Description: Analysis of the rhetoric of online verbal and visual discourse and exploration of techniques for examining and producing documents meant to be accessed online. Students consider common audiences, purposes, and genre expectations for various genres of online writing. Students use web design applications to produce online writing that serves a range of rhetorical purposes.

Rhetoric and Argument
Course Description: Examination of historical and contemporary rhetorical concepts that inform written arguments. Students analyze present-day issues, evaluate other writers' arguments, and construct a range of arguments that incorporate written, visual, oral, and digital modes of representation. Students design and participate in written and oral debates on current topics and compose their own forms of public persuasive communication.

Ethnographic Writing
Course Description: Analysis and production of ethnographic nonfiction texts with a focus on the rhetorical strategies ethnographic writers use to advance claims. Students learn to recognize the rhetorical elements that inform ethnographic writing situations, including purpose, audience, stance, voice, and genre. Students write ethnographic nonfiction essays using primary and secondary sources of information and learn to communicate in written, audio, visual, and multimodal formats, using various technologies.

Grant Writing
Course Description: Study of various issues and strategies involved in writing grant proposals to help solve a range of problems and support various causes that improve people's lives and communities. Students learn how grant proposals enable significant research in natural, behavioral, and social sciences; facilitate civic and educational projects; and advance community development and artistic initiatives. Students learn the functions and conventions of grant proposals, the range of research required to write grant proposals, and the rhetorical and practical processes that produce them and lead to approval. The course emphasizes two key stages of writing grant proposals: developing the proposal (including defining needs, reviewing existing projects and literature, and researching sources of funds), and writing the proposal with a particular audience in mind.

Copyediting
Course Description: Study of the skills needed to make appropriate decisions about the content, grammar, mechanics, style, organization, and format of scholarly, trade, journalistic, and other professional publications, including newsletters and electronic publications. Topics include stages in the publishing process, proofreading, hard-copy versus online editing, mechanical and substantive editing, and the use of house and press styles.

Visual Rhetoric
Course Description: Study of visual elements across a range of historical and contemporary rhetorical practices and genres. Students explore the rhetorical implications of design and analyze how design and writing work together as an integrated process. Students work with specific technological tools to analyze existing texts and to create single- and multi-paged texts for particular rhetorical purposes, audiences, and contexts.

Public and Professional Writing Senior Project

Course Description: Capstone experience for the Public and Professional Writing major. Individualized research, analysis, development, and oral presentation of a project that responds to a client's needs by incorporating audience-appropriate writing, design, and/or editing in a usable high-quality product. Taken during the student's final undergraduate year.

6) Please share any feedback or comments you have about the Public and Professional Writing (PPW) Program or its revised and new courses.

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ARTICLE

Sustainable Industry-University Partnerships: Accountability as a Model for Program Development

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Abstract. This article reports on how graduate professional and technical writing (PTW) programs can reframe engagement with industry through an accountability-based model as a novel way of solving student and program problems. This article discusses the standup of an Advisory Board, composed of representatives from across industries in our region, and the results of the focus groups and iterative research practices we used to gain feedback and develop ethical interventions for PTW programming. We show how our engagement process, research, and resulting accountability model are scalable to other programs and industry-university collaborations as one method for ensuring positive student outcomes and professional growth in PTW programs.

Keywords: Professional and Technical Writing, Advisory Boards, Accountability, Industry Partnerships, Outreach, Professional Development

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Introduction

George Mason University, a large R1 university in Northern Virginia, offers a Master of Arts in English with a concentration in Professional and Technical Writing (PTW) as well as a graduate certificate program in PTW. Beginning in 2018, our PTW programs faced two interlinked problems: 1.) Enrollment in our programs was consistently shrinking despite investment in classic outreach and marketing; and 2.) Remaining students were struggling to pursue meaningful professional and research opportunities. To address these problems, we established an Advisory Board of industry professionals and conducted a series of focus groups to gain their insight and feedback. We aimed to answer a range of questions not just about our program but about the values, needs, strengths, and workplaces in our region and new professionals in them. Through this work, we arrived at an expanded model for accountability to drive program development as a key to understanding what values our program could offer students, how we might build and communicate these values, and how we might work reflexively within local professional communities. Our model of accountability, we argue, offers a productive framework for maintaining relationships with industry that are responsive to student and community needs without replicating problematic industry practices. As such, we build a notion of accountability from existing metrics and assessment designs within technical communication and writing studies, while adopting more reciprocal notions of accountability from research ethics and bioethics (Collins, 2000; Mol, 2008), to create a new model for driving program and curriculum change through the direct engagement of external stakeholders.

This article comprises three sections. First, we outline a brief history of literature on the complications of incorporating industry representatives and feedback in PTW pedagogy and programs. Second, we discuss how focus groups and resulting new initiatives worked recursively, and how our findings shifted program approaches to industry partnerships, moving toward developing reciprocal relationships with accountability to student outcomes and professional development at the core. Third, we present our accountability model, which emphasizes collective action, long-term relationship-building, and sustained outreach as mechanisms for opening up spaces and opportunities for PTW students, thus creating stronger and more just PTW programs.

The Necessity and Problems of Industry Outreach in PTW

Programs in PTW often are tasked with delivering academically rigorous curricula while also helping students launch and build robust future careers, challenges that are often addressed through building industry partnerships. The goals of these relationships are to yield positive outcomes for students, programs, and industry alike. However, gaps and problems across industry-university connections in technical communication are well established and remain difficult to resolve (Boettger & Friess, 2016; Lang & Palmer, 2017; Bridgeford & St.Amant, 2015). Balancing the need to create authentic learning experiences (Poe et al., 2010) while avoiding hyperpragmatic answers and interventions (and replication of problematic industry practices) can be difficult. The history of concerns about the relationship between industry and university interests in PTW are well established and carry the potential for benefits but also limitations (Miller, 2003; Scott et al., 2006). Furthermore, PTW programs often grapple with issues of professionalization and access when structuring programs to meet diverse student populations' and local job markets' needs. But perhaps most acutely, when a program's goal is to connect students to gainful employment after, or even before, graduation, it can be easiest to hyperfocus on the needs of industry partners and how to meet their needs. To understand and respond to ever-changing workplace and institutional exigencies, PTW program administrators must find creative ways to meet their programmatic goals without alienating students or industry stakeholders, and that balance is difficult to achieve.

In their examination of program assessment in PTW programs, Nancy Coppola, Norbert Elliot, and Faye Newsham (2008) offered the goal of identifying opportunity structures as a way to "align educational efforts with industry impetus" (p. 17). Their Design for Assessment (DFA) model places opportunity structuring as the top priority of program assessment, with all other aspects falling in line with that overarching goal. A program's main responsibility to students, therefore, is to provide authentic learning and opportunities that cohere with contemporary industry trends and needs. In their DFA model, accountability refers to the program's responsibility to students, industry, and the university, and their model emphasizes project management systems to enable that accountability. Although Coppola, Elliot, and Newsham's framework involves all stakeholders, their heuristic focuses on the involvement of industry-specific stakeholders, with numbers of students or enrollments as the measurable outcome.

As much as they offer opportunities for students to gain useful experiences and for academics to learn more about what is happening in the workplaces our students are likely to enter, these approaches to industry engagement also reveal the potential for reinforcing the problematic, hyperpragmatic, capitalistic paradigms that often govern industry priorities in the design and implementation of academic programs. As Amy Kimme Hea and Rachael Wendler Shah (2016) explained, direct engagement with community/industry partners, wherein partners reflect and share their reasons for involvement, is one way to move away from hyperpragmatism and toward a more balanced approach that prepares students to build relationships with potential employers. While Whereas Ryan Boettger and Erin Friess's (2016) work pointed out the limits of scholarship—and possibly pedagogy—in technical communication research, Kirk St.Amant and Lisa Melonçon (2016) similarly found that gaps between academic and practitioner engagement with the principles and practices of technical communication are both widespread and are necessary for academic programs to address.

For PTW programs that prepare students for the workplace, the goal of building coalitions with multiple stakeholders has been to achieve a balance between contributing to technical disciplines through research and framing the way a technical communicator's work is valued in those disciplinary and vocational spaces. Responding to Carolyn R. Miller's (1979) call for community building, Carolyn Rude (2015) advocated for using research to establish "academic legitimacy" in ways that help build the type of "epistemic community" Miller described (368). However, she also sees a rift between research for and by practitioners and that which is produced for and by academics. This epistemic gap between the two audiences, Rude argued, needs to be filled by research that "work[s] with practitioners of technical communication on the types of problems that they face" (373). As if taking up Rude's call, Emily January Petersen (2017) offered insights from 39 interviews conducted with practitioners. Petersen found that technical communicators on the job are acutely in need of professional connections, community, and modes for advocacy. Petersen described perceptions of PTW work as still primarily non-essential, secretarial, or aesthetic only; given that PTW researchers have found and argued for the potentials for the PTW toolset to perform key work within organizations, from ensuring clarity for a variety of audiences to identifying and acting upon opportunities for change, we know that the students who graduate from our programs and enter these workplaces can benefit from an expanded cadre of skills that allow them to grow and develop as professionals.

The prospects for engaging with an advisory board specifically as an answer to these gaps has a long history and possibilities for PTW programs, impulses we share and respond to as well here. Advisory boards have a long history in other programs with professional practice elements, such as engineering, journalism, and accounting (Dillon, 1997; Defatta, 1988; Greenheimer et al., 2009; Begnini et al., 2011; Henderson, 2004). Carole Yee (1994) reported positively on one such case of advisory board engagement as an answer to balancing the needs of industry with university resources. This is corroborated by Charles Sides (1998). Such filings are further endorsed more recently by Lars Söderlund, John Spartz, and Ryan Weber (2017), who find that a strong board, with clear boundaries for engagement and involvement, can positively contribute to technical communication programs.

Our program, situated in a densely metropolitan area with access to the U.S. federal government and a range of related industries (think tanks, policy organizations, nonprofits, small business opportunities), has become increasingly engaged with a more deliberate, intentional approach that prepares students while building connections and relationships with local industry and business. While acknowledging the tensions in industry-university partnerships, we argue that relationship-building and outreach with key stakeholders provides a way for PTW programs to navigate some of these tensions. During the last year and a half, our program has been engaged in deliberate, thoughtful relationship-building. In this article we provide a model for incorporating the voices of a variety of stakeholders, while maintaining curricular integrity.

We describe a recursive, iterative process of engaging with industry experts and stakeholders, and through a set of documents we incorporate and seek feedback that successfully accomplishes several goals: building relationships with a community of external stakeholders; creating thoughtful curricular changes; and continuously incorporating stakeholder feedback. The entire research team, including our graduate student MA and PhD members, were included in the analysis and project development processes, ensuring that student perspectives were woven into our questions and how we answered them throughout the research process. We also piloted interventions and sought student feedback through reflective exercises, interviews, and small anonymous surveys during the program revision processes. Consequently, we show how a program-wide professional development initiative serves as a pedagogical intervention that increases student professionalization, responds to the expressed needs of industry experts in our region, and incorporates current scholarship on expanding access in technical communication, grounded in a rich notion of accountability, which we arrived at iteratively through the process of our advisory board research.

Outreach and Study: Advisory Board and Focus Groups

In spring 2018, we convened an Advisory Board and conducted focus groups with the Board that would help us collect feedback on our program as it related to community and industry needs and gaps. We decided that supporting mechanisms for dialog rather than one-way demands for resources would offer more expansive benefits than other forms of feedback and assessment.

For this study, we were guided by the following research questions:

1. How can we address the often-incommensurate paradigms of the academy and the workplace through pedagogical, programmatic, and research practices?
2. What are the needs of the workplace: what people in technical communication and related industries are looking for in new technical communicators, how they define it, etc.?
3. How can we create industry buy-in for our program?

The PTW programs had conducted prior qualitative research projects in 2009 and 2015 to gather alumni and current student feedback on the programs. This was conducted through a combination of surveys and interviews. Although the 2018 project reported on here might have updated existing data for a more formal DFA-style assessment (as in Coppola et al.), we decided to pursue Board development and feedback because we felt that additional engagement with those audiences limited our data sources. Students, faculty, and alumni couldn't give us the whole picture. Continuing to ask more questions of those who had already bought into our program—as faculty, as students, as graduates—couldn't help us understand the ways we weren't reaching the students who were not choosing us. So, we had to go outside of ourselves to find the answer to that question. Our Board ultimately filled that important information gap by telling us what we didn't know we didn't know.

In the section that follows, we summarize our Board's creation, research team development, and the findings of the three focus groups we held with the Board.

Board Development

To increase outreach and network opportunities, and to research these problems and questions, we began by standing up an Advisory Board of 20 total members and conducting focus groups with those Board members. We invited Advisory Board members based on a wide variety of factors. We wanted community members who worked directly with technical writers, but we also wanted employers who are in contact with technical writers but are not technical writers themselves. We included people across the fields of finance, military, defense contractors, IT, technical writers, proposal writers, and community college and university writing instructors. The Advisory Board includes industry and community representatives from major industries in our region, HR professionals, small and large business owners, and communication leaders. The Board also includes alumni, from both of our university's undergraduate programs and from our PTW programs. We also considered representation based on demographic factors as well, ensuring that members of the board reflected diversity in terms of age, gender, and race/ethnicity to the degree possible. Our Board includes members who run 8a (minority-owned) small businesses, serve on DEI committees for national organizations, have worked with and/or attended historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and range in experience from less than 3 years to more than 30 years of experience in industry.

Project Team Development

The project was primarily facilitated by a faculty member in PTW, but the research team was made up of students. Graduate students—both MA students currently in the PTW program as well as PhD students in our department's Writing and Rhetoric program—were included in the Board development and research processes. Students were paid summer stipends or hourly wages for this work; students were encouraged to nominate and recruit Board members from within their own existing networks whose perspectives they thought would be valuable and trustworthy to the program, an opportunity taken by the PhD students in our team, two of whom were alumni of George Mason University's graduate programs. This practice allowed students to enrich their own professional connections to their industry contacts—all of whom eagerly joined and participated in the Board—and help "give back" to George Mason and enrich future student experiences. The purpose of our team composition was twofold: first, to support graduate students as they build professional networks of their own with Board members; and second, to engage with research and outcomes in ways that would help the program be accountable to both our region and our students. The Board and iterative focus groups increased faculty support for this initiative, allowed MA students to make professional contacts in the local industry, and gave PhD students access to and experience with a research project.

Focus Groups

We conducted three focus groups (IRB approval # 124-9598-2) with the Advisory Board over the course of approximately 18 months. Each focus group protocol was designed to address a specific area: what industry representatives thought about early career technical communicators, curricular and programmatic interventions, and professional development initiatives. Because we wanted the focus group to work iteratively and relationally, we left the protocols open ended and incorporated feedback from each focus group into the next one, after discussing findings with faculty and student researchers.

Focus Group 1 Study and Design: Building Relationships—What Does Industry Think?

The first focus group met early summer of 2018. We developed a semi-structured protocol that would allow participants to talk about how they perceive students and newcomers to their workplaces and the types of skills they wish technical writers had when entering the workplace. We wanted to begin a conversation with community stakeholders that would allow us to consider accountability as inclusive of students, faculty, and industry representatives.

We had three primary objectives for this focus group:

1. To establish relationships between our program and industries in the local area
2. To seek feedback on industry perceptions and expectations of newcomers to the workforce
3. To learn more about sustainable practices that would improve the program's accountability to students preparing to work in these industries

Graduate student team members were primarily responsible for extensive note-taking during this initial focus group. After the focus group, the research team met to consolidate notes and discuss patterns that emerged during the note-taking. Taking multiple sets of notes helped the team find themes and patterns in what participants mentioned as important for writer development. The team met several times to discuss and organize themes. We used feedback from those emerging themes (described in the findings section below), to prepare for the second focus group.

Focus Group 2 Study and Design: Relationship-Building Through Heuristics and Accountability

Following Focus Group 1, our notion of accountability began to take shape. Of course, given what we knew about the history of problems and successes with outreach and industry engagement in PTW, our goal was not simply to start adding additional assignments or courses that might explicitly teach the tasks cited by our first focus group. Although many participants had inventive ideas for assignments or writing prompts, our goal was larger than that: to rethink how we might understand and communicate the value of our PTW program based on this feedback. The goal of the second focus group then became iterative, working through the heuristic to help focus group participants provide iterative feedback.

We convened Focus Group 2 in late summer 2018. During that meeting, we presented a range of tailored revisions to our program based on the feedback provided by Focus Group 1 (Table 1). The goal of this heuristic was to align Board feedback with current or proposed offerings in our program. We also sought feedback on program marketing materials, delivery options (including feedback about a proposed hybrid course option that students had remained ambivalent about), and outreach questions about if, how, and where the Board wanted to engage with students.

Table 1.

Current Programmatic Offering	**Feedback/ Recommendation** *"Good communicators need..."*	**Proposed Revisions**
Introductory course *Current focus: theoretical foundations of rhetoric, general program introduction*	Strong writers AND communicators Soft skills: communicating with coworkers, relationship management, problem solving	Emphasize rhetoric as a problem solving, relationship-building theory or skill Include teamwork, team projects, project management
Research methods course *Current focus: foundations of research in rhetoric, preparing for independent research*	Methods/attitudes for information gathering: curiosity, ignorance, interviewing skills	Expand and enhance interview-based projects Expand access to workplaces to conduct small-scale research and problem solving
Editing course *Current focus: editing in a variety of styles for different audiences*	Audience awareness and responsiveness Genre awareness and responsiveness Concepts/skills: concision, content strategy, real publishing opportunities, client-based projects	Make client connections for real-world projects Incorporate project management Emphasize concision Produce a final professional portfolio

Current Programmatic Offering	**Feedback/ Recommendation** *"Good communicators need..."*	**Proposed Revisions**
Document design course *Current focus: preparing workplace documents for professional publication*	Audience awareness and responsiveness Genre awareness and responsiveness	Make client connections for real-world projects Produce a final professional portfolio
Proposal writing course *Current focus: writing proposals in business, nonprofit, and research*	Strong writers AND communicators Career skills: crafting one's own narrative for promotion and job opportunities, writing samples, elevator pitches	Make client connections for real-world projects Invite speakers/make connections to job opportunities Produce a final professional portfolio
Technical communication course *Current focus: foregrounding advanced tech comm skills*	Making technical knowledge accessible for multiple audiences	Make client connections for real-world projects Invite speakers/make connections to job opportunities Produce a final professional portfolio
Internship course *Currently self-guided; under-utilized	Career skills: crafting one's own narrative for promotion and job opportunities, writing samples, elevator pitches	Develop strategies for encouraging and enriching this experience
Cultures of Professional Writing Currently under-utilized; purpose is to connect students to communities/workplaces for research and to gain on-the-job rhetorical skills	Soft skills: communicating with coworkers, relationship management, problem solving	Develop strategies for encouraging and enriching this experience

The mapping and ensuing discussion in Focus Group 2 functioned as the beginning of our adoption of the accountability framework; since accountability means that all community members, their constraints and affordances, should be acknowledged, it guided a view of information flow as cyclical and reciprocal. The heuristics provided a space for multiple community members to intervene and respond to an ongoing conversation, not simply rewrite course descriptions, suggest "improvements," or find areas for labor sharing.

Focus Group 3 Study and Design: Enacting Accountable Programming and Professional Development Feedback

After Focus Group 2, the PTW programs piloted a range of changes:

1. In response to feedback about course delivery method, we obtained a university grant to pilot hybrid courses in our program.
2. In accordance with the findings from Focus Groups 1 and 2, we adopted the proposed changes and feedback in course descriptions and emphases as outlined in Table 2.
3. We piloted a series of professional development assignments in fall 2018, which expanded to program-wide integration by fall 2019. Professional development assignments were designed to fill the gaps across course content, the areas of need identified by the Board, and the relational and networking requirements driven by our accountability model.

One significant difference between Focus Group 3 and our earlier focus groups was that, this time, we had actual changes and student feedback to gain buy-in on. As we have come to operationalize it (discussed further later in this article), accountability insulates against uncritical adoption of industry practices by considering the needs, views, and experiences of all stakeholders, and then gaining wider adoption and buy-in once the needs of all programmatic stakeholders are considered and addressed.

In Focus Group 3, we presented the Board our professional development curriculum, asking for feedback and buy-in: would you be willing to help our students with activities like this? In what capacities? To what ends?

For this focus group, we once again engaged in semi-structured conversations that allowed for open-ended, non-directive feedback. We wanted to discuss main concerns from the focus group about student preparation, but this time grounded in curricular changes already made and implemented in response to feedback from the previous two focus groups. This approach allowed us to facilitate a conversation far more granular and nuanced than during the first focus group, but less directive than the second.

The feedback we received from Focus Group 3 centered around these areas; once we conducted this third focus group, we also began to see trends and themes that sustained over time (oral communication, understanding kairotic moments) versus ones that seemed to change in tenor or topic.

Findings Across Focus Groups

Three key findings shaped our ultimate understanding of accountability and its basis for our program direction moving forward. To arrive at these overall findings, the research team convened in research meetings on multiple occasions to share notes, research memos (completed following Focus Groups 1 and 2 in particular), and themes from the discussions. Team members took turns proposing possible themes and reviewing our notes to assess theme frequencies and densities across the discussion. We did record the sessions, but only referred to audio recordings to confirm direct quotations and did not transcribe or directly code recordings. We discussed themes until the team gained coherence and clarity around the them. As a team, we agreed on the following overall themes across the data sets, with various specific themes that expand on these concepts discussed further in the section that follows.

Overall themes from participant responses were:

1. Participants did not want graduates who were technically trained, but rather who were rhetorically savvy–who knew how to respond appropriately to situations.
2. Within organizations, writers were needed to facilitate information-sharing, decision-making, and cooperation; writers themselves were valued for their ability to build consensus in networks.
3. Participants wanted ongoing, reciprocal relationships with academia; they wanted to share knowledge and understanding across industry-university boundaries.

Notably, though we did ask participants about their need for and the usefulness of specific technical skills (word and document processing programs, coding languages, etc.), participants were less consistently interested in those competencies. The same was true of requests for writing skills, comma knowledge, proficient grammarians, etc. When these more specific skill-based forms of knowledge were discussed, participants tended to respond that, if those things were necessary, workers could be trained on the job. They were more interested in employees who possessed these more ephemeral, hard-to-train competencies, with the perception that hard skills could always be gained by an enthusiastic team member at a later date.

We also observed several themes across the focus groups.

Below we briefly describe each theme.

Communicators as more than "good writers"

Participants reported that writing is only part of what employers want to see in newcomers to the workplace. They reflected on the social qualities of writing—being able to use documentation appropriately across space and context, communicate across media and document types, and facilitate strong collaboration in writing projects. Participants often made a distinction between being a "good writer" and a "good communicator," noting that an ability to communicate, beyond an ability to write, is an important workplace skill:

> "I've noticed they have the ability to write but not the ability to communicate. They write well, but they don't speak well. They're usually the smartest person in the room but the least effective. My challenge in helping them advance is how to help them take those writing skills and make it personal."

Here, we argue that this participant is noting a gap in professionalization; the person might come in highly trained and technically competent but less capable of communicating those competencies in audience-focused, relatable ways that put people at ease and communicate confidence in addition to competence. This finding was reinforced by similar, smaller-stakes recommendations that new employees avoid email and have face-to-face or phone conversations to build informal relationships; be more succinct and direct in answers to questions when complexity is not required; and learn to gain a healthy detachment from written work that might be heavily edited or critiqued by a team.

Soft skills

The term "soft skills" came up repeatedly during our discussions (although the term "essential skills" has become more common when referring to these types of skills, we are keeping the nomenclature our participants used in the discussion here). The "soft skill" was used to connote multiple types of skills relating to communication, related tasks, and professionalism in the workplace. Participants defined soft skills in several ways, including the ability to engage in public speaking and give professional presentations, the ability to build relationships and networks and to maintain working relationships, the ability to collaborate, work in teams, listen, have empathy, persuade, and take on leadership roles.

Participants specifically discussed soft skills as the ability to admit ignorance and respect the relational aspects of expertise. As one participant stated,

> "My best asset is ignorance. Knowing how to get the info out of people. Knowing what you don't know and need to ask. You need some background, know what a database is, some skills and knowledge there, but also know where your gaps might be and how to go have it explained to you. Willingness to admit you're ignorant and need it explained .... not letting pride get in the way."

The term leadership was discussed repeatedly as it related to soft skills. Leadership was described as working in teams, gathering consensus from teams, and helping the team meet deadlines. In some instances the "dearth of leadership" seemed to indicate an inability to get the team to meet deadlines for submitting portions of what eventually becomes part of a finished written product, which ultimately required and engaged soft skills such as effective communication, project management, and team morale. Peer leadership was also mentioned as a related necessary skill. Leadership seemed to be operating as the ability to "get things done" or "take charge" but also as filling a gap when deadlines were not being met, as one participant noted,

> "I think a lot of this touches on leadership as a soft skill. Knowing the folks who work for you so you can use their skills in order to form those products that you need. Being able to know both the folks that you're leading and the end goal, what you're trying to inform—the audience. Leadership isn't easy to teach, but putting students in an environment where they have to do that, where you have to get to know people who are working for you or with you, because there's peer leadership as well, … being able to take everyone's background and strengths and develop a product."

Another participant responded,

> "I love that. There is such a dearth of leadership skills in the world. I became a leader because there was no one else to do it. ... Leadership skills … coming out of your program, that will make them so much more successful, even on the small scale, just being able to lead their little piece."

Audience awareness

Participants expect that students can understand the audiences they engage with. The term was mentioned multiple times by multiple speakers. One participant used the term "decision makers" to refer to the workplace audiences who need information that leads to decisions and becomes actionable. This finding is articulated in several ways, including the ability to gather data from stakeholders while still meeting a deadline and the ability to write so that an audience can understand expertise in lay terms. One participant described receiving an extremely well-written white paper that served no purpose, given that it was not the right product for the client.

> "No one comes into our organization and just speaks to one person. At any given time you might be doing something for peers or CEO or the client. There's a gap in understanding audience, who you're communicating to. Before I came here today I edited a white paper. ... From an academic perspective the white paper was beautiful, but it lacked the one-page takeaway and persuasive spin needed for a client. Understanding audience, who you're communicating with and what's the right way to be persuasive."

Another participant expands on the definition and illustrates the need for aiding the audience in their decision making:

> "In the intelligence community we have people from many different backgrounds, whether regional studies or technical. The ability to take that knowledge and understanding and to know the audience in a way that you can communicate what you [need] into something actionable, usable for decision makers and others. That gap is present in a wide variety of folks, not just new students. To be able to use new methods of communication and to be able to tailor the communication products in order to aid the audience. Maybe across the spectrum, not just for communicators, but for everyone."

For several participants, audience awareness was not constrained to audiences and communication external to organizations, but extended to proficiency communicating with and "reading" audiences internal to organizations as well. Participants specifically emphasized the role of knowing how and when to speak in group settings through both planned (briefings, presentations) and unplanned (ad hoc presentations, general meeting participation) communications activities. The ability to know how to speak concisely and appropriately (or, in rhetorical terms, to consistently produce a "fitting response" to rhetorical situation [Bitzer, 1968]) in a range of situations called up, for participants, many instances and examples of both appropriate and inappropriate behavior by new employees in public speaking situations. Participants wanted new employees to be equipped with the basic expectations of meetings in professional environments: how to conduct them, be a strong participant, use technology within them, when and whether to use a cellphone during a meeting, and so on.

Relationship-building

The importance of relationship-building emerged in every focus group as a major concern. Relationship-building was seen as an inextricable component of student development and a critical PTW toolset that might be built; this finding was particularly salient in Focus Group 3 when we discussed the professional development assignments in detail. Two participants commented that they would have benefited from deliberate and intentional professional development activities focused on networking while they were students. For example, when describing the "Make a friend" activity, where students reach out to someone in the class and get to know them, participants had a range of ideas for how to vary or enrich this activity, from presenting it as a challenge (make a friend with an engineer or someone in a different discipline) to thinking about how to plan and understand the role of various types of relationships (friendships, colleagues, professional acquaintances) across one's network.

Programmatic buy-in

As the focus groups unfolded, participants wholeheartedly agreed to participate in our ongoing professional development assignments and efforts with our program. Board members were enthusiastic about being a part of the process, so that ensured our future work in this regard would connect students with industry members already disposed towards establishing and facilitating these relationships. Participants noted that the student should do the work of making initial contact in order to practice deliberate engagement with the process of building networks.

Frankly, this surprised us. People are busy, and the focus groups already seemed like a big ask for busy people with full days and difficult commutes for relatively little compensation (just a meal and our appreciation). We were surprised and encouraged all around at the general enthusiasm of the board and their eagerness to answer our questions and participate in our focus groups. But their eagerness to do more—visit classes, participate in site visits, work with classes as clients, recruit students to well-paid and resourced internships, further connect us to other resources in their organizations for recruitment and student opportunities—were a welcome, if unexpected, ask from the board as our formal focus group time came to a close. This further strengthened and extended our own use and building of the notion of accountability as our model moving forward and shaped our continued program revisions.

In the final section of this article, we discuss how the focus groups informed program decision-making centered around accountability and how we used a variety of documents to iteratively engage in dialog with multiple community members and ultimately make smart revisions to our programs to improve both student and industry outcomes.

Toward Accountability

Broadly speaking, accountability connotes cooperation and reciprocity across parties. In developing a notion of accountability, we draw from and distill the concept from sources in ethics as well as technical communication. Most directly, we respond to and build upon accountability described in the 2016 "Programmatic Research in Technical Communication: An Interpretive Framework for Writing Program Assessment." Coppola et al. situated accountability in writing program assessment alongside consequence, research, communication, localism, documentation, and sustainability. Coppola et al. defined the accountability-based framework they create (drawing from White et al.) as, "a form of relational modeling that allows a postsecondary institution to identify the variables that impact the writing program and to ecologically model the variables to increase student success" (6). Essentially, accountability operates as a measure to "suggest that the public wants to know what the university is doing with their funds and whether their work is effective" (12). Accountability, in this sense, reflects what programs owe to the community—a kind of one-way flow of knowledge and expertise, from the university outward, wherein external factors work to determine the value of what the university is doing.

Here, we reprise the notion of accountability discussed in program assessment measures and specifically taken up by Copolla et al., but expand the notion of accountability to leverage the ways in which its reciprocal qualities can be leveraged in PTW programs. Within research ethics, accountability demands that researchers are called to be accountable to—that is, have a reciprocal relationship with—all stakeholders in research, including research participants, funders, employers, or institutions supporting research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). For our conceptualization of accountability, principles from bioethics work as an adjunct here to further expand and enrich the goals of accountability. Diving more specifically into accountability, within bioethics, principles of beneficence and justice—good that must apply both back to the research or clinical subject as well as the greater society and system—apply acutely to refine and specify how accountability must work. Researchers cannot simply act for the sake of acting, and research cannot exist for the purpose of knowledge alone. Rather, research and knowledge-making must be guided by specific principles that work for the good of multiple stakeholders: those being researched and beyond to other social spaces and groups in need. Patricia Hill Collins refined the notion of accountability further, specifically situating a notion of personal accountability as a tenet of black feminist epistemology, where research that is situated in and reliant on a valuing of personal experience and belief makes researchers necessarily accountable for their research and accountable to those who inform research (Collins, 2000). Accountability precludes researchers from separating themselves from their research by tying the validity of the findings to the apparent commitment of the researcher to the implications of their work. Personal and professional accountability are inseparable within this perspective because individuals approach knowledge production from their own personal perspectives shaped by life experience. Acknowledging the relevance of personal context works reciprocally wherein individuals are accountable to the communities that, in turn, make their personal and professional activities possible. Collins's accountability reminds individuals that they are part of a larger system and reminds the system that it is made of individuals. Finally, Annemarie Mol (2008) offered a specific paradigm for understanding how to see individual responsibilities within systems, pointing out that: 1.) people are collective (68) and exist in relationship to one another (72); 2.) actions cohere and are "embedded in practices, buildings, habits, and machines" (10) and therefore can be observed as they relate to and influence each other; and that finally 3.) care for individuals must be "aimed at...the conditions in which collectives live" (79). Mol's set of values turns us away from thinking through research problems—and solutions—as finite and individual and instead as communal, contextual, and collective. Together, Collins and Mol offered important ways of refining notions of accountabilities in context, promoting a flexible perspective accountability that moves between the individual and the collective.

Together, these perspectives form a notion of accountability that reflects how PTW programs can work reflexively with students and industries to produce active forms of PTW knowledge that make students more competitive and facilitate ethical adoption of industry practices into PTW programs. Specifically, we argue that accountable PTW programs:

- situate student outcomes in community contexts;
- shape ethical mechanisms for incorporating stakeholder perspectives into PTW programs; and
- build a toolset of reflexive professionalism within PTW programs that empowers students to use PTW knowledge across contexts.

An "industry-university partnership" here does not just see a one-way flow of outcomes back into industry, as is a well-established critique of such relationships, or produce a set of static outcomes to be measured, as accountability is conceptualized within existing paradigms or hyper-pragmatic objectives (Miller, 2003). Rather, this notion of accountability refocuses responsibilities of PTW programs away from finite outcomes and individual applications and toward thinking as collectives and networks[1] —the very collective, networked knowledges that our focus groups showed industry is asking for from PTW program graduates.

Under this paradigm, if—like an accountable researcher—we think about our student engagement and community outreach not as an "act for the sake of acting," which is what critiques of industry engagement imagine, but rather an accountable engagement that must 1.) benefit the student (beneficence) and 2.) benefit the system within which the student exists (justice), we have to find new ways to empower students to develop the professional skills necessary to engage with existing networks, build relationships within communities, and use technologies to serve collective goals and objectives. Such a stance is a mechanism for making programs accountable to student need, student learning, and the long-term development of practitioners, professions, and the communities within which we are situated.

Developing Heuristics for Accountable PTW Curricula

Table 2 below outlines what we created as a result of this work, what guides our program now, and what could scale to other programs with the same series of questions, problems, and tired, insufficient answers:

[1] In using the term "network" in this research, we are thinking more literally about professional networks made up of individual, personal connections and sources of knowledge that inform and structure career progression, rather than the complex networks of objects, genres, etc. that an Actor-Network Theory (ANT) analysis might further tease or produce. We do acknowledge, though, that this form of analysis overlaps with our findings and would be worthy of further pursuit.

a heuristic for solving problems with PTW programs to improve student outcomes through industry connections. By leveraging our key concept of accountability here, the heuristic moves programs away from asking questions rooted in hyperpragmatic, individualistic notions and instead moves toward building networks and communities, seeing industries as existing within communities, and helping students see how their work as PTW professionals comes with a range of responsibilities as they enter those industries and thereby effect change on those communities.

Table 2.

PTW Program Problems	Hyperpragmatic Institutional "Answers"	Accountable Model Questions
Access: to sites for research and knowledge building	• Unknown or unacknowledged ("You do research in your field?") • Service to industry Problem with approach: relies on individuals doing free work in exchange for access	Programs are situated in communities; programs respond within and are responsive to them How can professional development refocus faculty research and pedagogy to community needs, expanding client- and community-based projects?
Access: to professional opportunities for students	• Internships • Service • On-campus opportunities Problems with approach: requires students to leverage finite, non-PTW-specific university services for the most readily available opportunity	Students develop and engage in meaningful networks through PTW education, fostering programmatic partnerships How can professional development attune and connect students to communities, industry, and professional opportunities?

PTW Program Problems	Hyperpragmatic Institutional "Answers"	Accountable Model Questions
Program growth: faculty problem	• Advertisement • Program delivery changes • Adopting new technologies, trends Problem: demands faculty redesign programs for new, "cash cow" groups of students	Faculty build programs that improve and support the communities to which they are best suited to contribute How can professional development attune and connect faculty and programs to communities and the industries in them?
Program growth: student problem	• Students experience this problem as low course offerings and class sizes, which can hinder class discussion if too small Problem: Students should be agnostic to the communities they join	Students become responsive and responsible to one another as a collective How can professional development encourage creation of and support for student networks?
Program growth: alumni problem	• Start an alumni society Problem: Faculty should create pipelines for giving	Networks create and strengthen external bonds How can professional development build networks beyond cohorts and classrooms to deepen community, industry, and professional ties?

In the table here, we outline the primary problems faced acutely by our program in this study but common to programs in PTW experiencing issues with growth. In the center column, we outline the ways in which traditional notions of accountability or even hyperpragmatic goals might more classically inform our actions and decision making. In the final, right-hand column, we offer a re-framing of these problems and possible solutions through the accountability model presented here. Simply put, when accountability is grounded in beneficence and justice, outcomes must be reciprocal and evenly balanced across students, industry stakeholders, and professions.

Specifically, we will unpack the problem of student opportunities through the heuristic and accountability model here, a perennial concern for students and (should be), in turn, for programs. As a method for problem solving, a heuristic that leverages hyperpragmatism might approach the problem in very specific ways. If the problem is "students need more appropriate opportunities for learning and growth so that they are prepared for better jobs when they graduate," then the fastest route for solving this problem may be to ramp up an internship program, perhaps by leveraging the university career center's resources or even taking students on internally within the university as interns. Metrics of students placed in internships would then be tracked, and programs would think about counting and assessing the number of additional students who participate in internships per semester (and then, perhaps, the level of happiness students have in those internships and how well they track to full-time employment following graduation) as a way of assessing how they are addressing the problem of student experience. This is not a bad or unethical idea, of course. Other hyperpragmatic answers might involve, say, beginning to teach the latest program—a shift from MS Word to InDesign in a document design class or the like—in hopes of making graduates "more competitive" or "more marketable."

But, the accountability model, which emphasizes networks, relationships, and reciprocity, asks that programs do not simply address and track the problem and its solution for individual students, but rather look to see what networks facilitate sustainable, community-wide answers to the problem. After all, the need for new opportunities and new career challenges is not just a problem of new college graduates—this is an ongoing challenge of vibrant careers and professions. Instead, the accountability model demands that we think not about "placement in internship" as the end goal, but rather "ability to conduct a productive job search." Such a more expansive task asks:

- What networks do students have access to in order to gain access to job opportunities? We know that most jobs are filled through networking and that the endless cycles of online applications can be unsuccessful and disappointing. Do students possess the skills, networks, and know-how to conduct a job search as a professional?
- How can we use our access to industry to help students gain and communicate what they bring to new workplaces? Can industry professionals advise and provide feedback not just on resumes, but on gaps in expertise, areas of the profession to consider, and

ways to describe the value of in-class learning across audiences?

- How do we help students across the program build the knowledges they need to help them build and pursue their own new opportunities? Do they have the broad range of professional skills needed to build, access, and leverage those networks to pursue new challenges? And once they get an interview, can they communicate the right kinds of skills—and eagerness to gain the ones they don't—to actually land the job?
- Can we further equip students with networks of colleagues and professional connections to help the student self-assess: is this the right job for me? Am I happy in it? Do I want to seek a more permanent position or do I need to acquire a different set of skills to make me competitive doing something else? How can they share what they now know with the rest of the students in the program? How do they grow their own forms of job expertise through this process?

In the case of the hyperpragmatic approach, the program sees what appears to be a finite problem, tries to solve it using existing structures and measures, then traces and assesses how that specific problem gets better or worse over time. Accountability assumes problems and their solutions to be networked, recursive, and reciprocal—students aren't lacking opportunities because they don't know how to search the university jobs database, but rather because they are missing a competency for true professional growth in job seeking, which is a networked, relational activity requiring a professional communication of its own. Programs, therefore, are not responsible for simply ensuring students know how to search a database and write a cover letter, but rather are accountable to students, industries, and the professional communities our students will join by growing the professional networking, relationship development, industry outreach, and student support capabilities that helps students grow as professionals and within professions outside of our classrooms.

By establishing a practice of networked, cooperative understanding of PTW itself and its role in organizations, PTW students see how they fit into collectives, moving away from individualist practices. For example, our program enacts and articulates the accountability heuristic by using its questions and prompts to assess, inform, and guide program actions. Through curricula that build these skills, students find jobs for other students in their classes, exchanging job ads and contacts. As they become employed or advance as hiring managers, they recruit their classmates to strong teams of technical writers. When they see problems in the workplace, they build on these networking skills to form coalitions for change. All of these specific outcomes are the topic of another study altogether; but anecdotally we report that the concept of accountability, as it drives the operation of the program, is something we model in practice, teach explicitly, and then give students a space to practice and deploy on their own. Such practice reflects the ways in which we are, of course, accountable to our students and helping them find fulfilling career outcomes, but also to our industry partners who work with us and the profession we are shaping through our graduates. We imagine ourselves as part of the ecosystem of professional and technical writers and communicators across workplaces, and we find that the accountability principle helps shape curriculum in ways that are not merely responsive or beholden to workplace trends but rather help shape the profession as a whole in positive ways.

We conclude in the section that follows by discussing the outcomes of this heuristic and how it has guided program revision along three lines: curricular change, ongoing engagement and relationship-building, and professional development, the final of which has become a keystone in our curricular and extra-curricular programming across our program.

Conclusion: Scaling Accountability Across PTW Programs

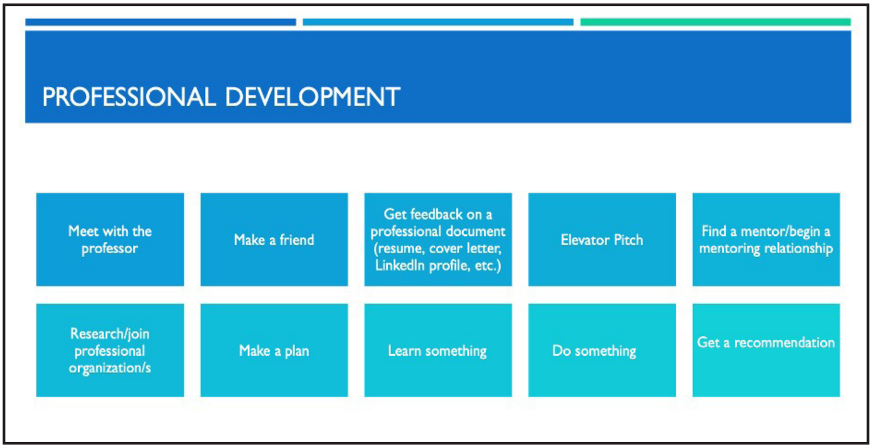
Finally, we want to end with three specific ways we have used the accountability model to shape our program and practices in curriculum, engagement, and—what we see as the keystone change in our program—professional development—as providing concrete recommendations for practices other programs can begin or continue to change and enhance when adopting an accountability model.

Accountable curricular change. Following our initial focus groups, we began a series of focused changes to our current courses, including moving all core courses to a hybrid model. We piloted and assessed this change before scaling it across the program, which was particularly fortuitous in light of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Each course was reviewed to incorporate professional development curricula as well (more discussed on this below) as to encourage student development in the professional skills specifically called out by our Board in focus groups. Finally, continual assessment of industry needs and student gaps have driven new course additions within our program and hiring, including adding a new course in user experience design as well a social justice course, taught initially as a topics course but now as a recurring offering. In these cases, accountability to students, industry, and profession drove these changes, which were also incremental and assessed along the way to ensure they were responsive and appropriate to needs.

Engagement and Relationship Building. Critical to our work has been the continued inclusion of our Advisory Board in our program's work. Advisory Board members have active roles in our professional development activities, participate in annual meetings and feedback sessions, and facilitate meaningful professional connections for our students and faculty through internships, information sessions, networking, guest talks, client projects, and more. The long-term relationship between the program and the Board helps students to build and faculty to model how to build and sustain community, client, and professional relationships over the long term in ways that are critical to student learning, program growth, and professional engagement.

Professional Development. Our professional development programming is perhaps our most visible signifier of the ongoing work we are doing to grow in accountability. Originally developed in fall 2018 and fully launched across our program by fall 2019, the professional development curriculum involves three to five assignments per course focused on motivating students to practice developing the professional skills identified as essential for technical writers, such as attending a professional event or making an introduction between colleagues. Completing the professional development assignments is currently worth a minimum of 10% of a student's grade in each core course in our program, and is worth up to 30% of the grade in some courses. Professional development has grown beyond in-class curricula to bi-annual professional development forums, where Board members as well as alumni and other professionals come to share their expertise with students on a range of topics, from improving interview skills to project management. Figure 1 below outlines the professional development activities; we discussed these with our Advisory Board in Focus Group 3 and continue to adopt and assess these activities.

Figure 1.



Professional development coursework, we hold, fills a key gap across programs that could be easily adopted by other programs to start building accountable practices in a variety of ways. As we have conceived of them, professional development assignments build the meta-professional skills that the Board described in Focus Group 1 as desired and essential for technical writers. Although the coursework in our PTW programs implicitly suggested the development of these meta-professional skills for the successful completion of other coursework, we found that students needed clearer signaling from our programs that we expected them to actively practice developing these skills. (See Table 2 for where this learning was occurring.) Furthermore, these assignments don't just ask students to engage in rote industry-led activities; rather, they offer an opportunity for assessing and understanding their own learning and growth, building and engaging in networks, understanding how professions work, and creating a roadmap for future coalition-building as professionals so that they can operate as empowered professionals ready to enact change once on the job.

Professional development assignments are also tailored to course objectives, and—critically for our Board—require professional outreach to industry experts as part of network-building. Professional development in our class on social justice, for example, included a mapping tool for students to plan their next career steps and execute at least several of those initial steps. In document design, students had to choose a tool or software and learn how to use it. The assignment allowed for novices to reach mastery, and for students completely unfamiliar with a tool to become novices. Both assignments allowed for students to decide, with some faculty-led facilitation, how to use the assignment to professionalize.

Across our PTW programs, we intend for students to carry forward the notion of accountability as practiced across curriculum, engagement, and professional development as well. We encourage students to build their own mentoring relationships—and their own abilities as mentors—so that they can build a depth of mentor and mentee relationships over time. Faculty engage broadly across a wide range of professionals and industries across classes in ways guided by critical engagement and accountability so that students do not simply work for free. We equip students with toolsets for seeing and changing problematic practices, and we give them a network beyond just program faculty and students, so that they adopt that additional "check" on their experiences. Through all of these activities, we believe we encourage and strengthen the notion of accountability past the program to the students themselves and the professions they will shape, challenging them to adopt accountable practices as well once they are out in the "real world." The accountable model equips graduates of our programs with the broad PTW skills and reflexive professional capabilities that have the capacity to make them change agents and think beyond the hyperpragmatic as their careers continue to grow well beyond our classrooms.

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A R T I C L E

Contingent Voices: an Overview of a Field-Wide Study and Suggestions for Support on Three Levels

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Abstract. Labor issues are an ongoing concern within the Writing Studies field; however, while numerous studies discuss this topic, few center the voices of contingent faculty. Emerging from our own experiences as contingent laborers, we developed this CPTSC grant-funded study to identify labor issues in the Writing Studies field and to enact real change at the programmatic level. Utilizing a nationwide survey, we elicited the experiences of over 250 contingent and non-tenure track (NTT) laborers, including graduate students—a demographic typically excluded from previous studies. Our survey addressed topics such as resources, compensation, support, and frustrations. In this article, we first review the existing literature regarding the abuse of contingent/NTT laborers and describe our IRB-approved study. Then, we categorize our results into three levels: individual, departmental, and institutional. Within each level, we identify several sub-themes. At the individual level, we discuss collegiality and value. At the departmental level, we discuss communication and governance, service and stability, and opportunities and support. At the institutional level, we discuss salary and recognition as well as care and support.

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We conclude our article by offering concrete suggestions that can improve the working conditions of contingent laborers at each of these levels.

Keywords: contingent, non-tenure track, labor, social justice

Introduction

For the past two decades, higher education institutions have continued to hire more contingent laborers in lieu of full-time, tenure track (TT) positions. This practice has resulted in an ongoing precarious labor situation. In 2021, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) reported that contingent laborers make up 70–75% of instructors at the collegiate level (AAUP, 2020a) and account for about 12 million instructors in the United States alone (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2020; Murray, 2019). Contingent laborers are the new faculty majority.

Both adjunct and NTT positions face a number of issues (see Dorfeld et al., 2015; Colby & Colby, 2020.; Melonçon et al., 2020). The new faculty majority often teach at multiple institutions and more than what is considered a full-time (4/4) load. They are compensated at a rate that does not reflect this increased workload. The American Federation of Teachers found that 66% of adjunct instructors make less than $50,000/year, and 33% of those individuals make less than $25,000/year (Flaherty, 2020). Beyond the essential living costs, this minimal income must be also used for healthcare coverage, as contingent positions rarely provide it. In addition to these hardships, adjuncts—and at some institutions, full-time non-tenure track (NTT) positions—offer only precarious contracts that are dependent upon enrollment and budgetary constraints.

David Bartholomae (2011) has argued that "The issue is not simply that there are too many faculty members hired for too short a time. It is that too many have been around for years, many teaching full-time, with inadequate compensation and participation in governance" (p. 7). A devastating example of the precarious nature of these roles was illustrated on a national level with the life and tragic death of Margaret Mary Vojtko. Vojtko worked for 25 years as a per course instructor at Duquesne, made roughly $10,000 a year, was not provided with health insurance in her contract, was left in a destitute situation unable to afford to heat her home, and died due to health complications (Dorfeld, 2015).

In addition, we note that graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) are often in precarious situations as well. Many face food and housing insecurity, especially after COVID-19 (Olgilvie et al., 2020). Many must rely on loans, additional jobs, and food banks in order to continue their studies. In this same study, researchers found that related to the economic precarity of food and housing insecurity and a lack of institutional support, graduate students reported concerning levels of anxiety, depression, and PTSD symptoms. These levels were exacerbated in marginalized groups (Ogilvie et al., 2020). Further worrisome, GTAs are typically excluded from labor studies (for example, Melonçon et al., 2020), despite the problematic nature of GTA positions. We argue that this exclusion reveals a research gap due to the significant role that graduate students have as higher education instructors. For example, in 2020, at Oklahoma State University, where three of us were PhD students, we were paid $1,734.50 per month. A nine-month appointment was $15,610. For a one-person household in the United States, the poverty rate is currently $13,590, and, in Oklahoma, the living wage for a one-person household is $33,535. Many graduate students such as ourselves have partners and are caregivers, which drastically increases the income needed for a living wage. Like adjunct and NTT positions, GTA-ships offer low pay and no or minimal healthcare coverage, require work overloads, and more. We believe this erasure of graduate students (Wright, 2017) from larger labor studies continues the exploitation of vulnerable workers.

Although our inclusion of NTT, adjunct, and GTAs in this study may feel too disparate in scope to some, we argue that it is the inequity these contingent laborers experience that obligates us to categorize them together. While we understand that the treatment of contingent laborers is different at each college and university, we argue that all share inequitable experiences worth listening to and can provide invaluable insight for program directors, department chairs, and administrators at every level of academia.

In order to more fully illuminate the issues facing the new faculty majority, we argue that studies on labor within the field should include all voices: GTA, adjunct, and NTT. Therefore, we approach this study through a transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2009; Phelps, 2021) in an effort to illuminate new ways of seeing and doing. As such, we join the conversation by responding to Lisa Melonçon and Kirk St. Amant's (2018) call for "field-wide" data on the state of contingent labor and by joining the social justice turn in the field of technical and professional communication (TPC) (Walton et al., 2019) in an effort to address labor inequities within higher education. This study, therefore, moves beyond collecting data regarding only salary and benefits and invites participants to discuss their expectations, actual job duties, levels of support, professional development opportunities, and more.

Contingent/NTT

To describe the individuals who inform and are impacted by this study, we use the AAUP's (2020b) base definition of contingent faculty as "adjuncts, postdocs, TAs, non-tenure-track faculty, clinical faculty, part-timers, lecturers, instructors, or non-senate faculty" (para. 2). As Melonçon (2017) discussed, these roles include part-time, full-time, outside tenure lines, and graduate student employees. We also consider that these roles may be connected to administrative (e.g., GTA assistant directors) or tutoring work (e.g., writing center consultants) and are within colleges and universities at various levels and sizes. While we appreciate the AAUP's definition, we also note Bartholomae's (2011) argument that "non-tenure track" (NTT) may be a more encompassing term due to some individuals' contracts being renewed year after year. And while we agree with Bartholomae's claim that many NTT individuals are compensated poorly for multiple years, we do not want to dismiss the precarious nature of some contingent roles. For example, many contingent faculty do not have the stability that is granted to TT positions, and many contingent faculty contracts may not be renewed at any given semester for a variety of reasons.

We argue, therefore, that a hybrid term, "contingent/NTT," captures the realities of both "contingent" and "NTT." When necessary, however, we employ specific group names (GTAs, adjuncts, lecturers, etc.) to identify unique positions and realities. We strategically chose this combined term as a way to represent the occasionally-steady-but-often-precarious nature of these positions. Though we use an umbrella term, we realize that it represents a heterogeneous group of individuals who are unique and multifaceted and who have many reasons for being off the TT line (Kaezer & Sam, 2010).

Research Questions

In order to address labor issues in TPC and in the wider Writing Studies field, we developed research questions to guide this study:

- What are contingent/NTT TPC instructors' experiences regarding their labor in contingent positions (duty expectations, actual duties performed, compensation in these roles, reappointment, promotion opportunities, and other aspects);
- What is the level of support they receive from their program, institution, and colleagues; and
- What are their preferences and suggestions for micro/macro levels of support based on these experiences?

In the following sections, we outline the literature that informed our work, provide an overview of the study we conducted, present our analysis, and offer tangible steps based on this analysis. Our suggestions for tangible steps are aimed at all allies in various levels within academia but may be especially useful for department chairs and program directors who want to support their contingent/NTT colleagues.

Literature Review

In this section, we provide historical context regarding labor issues in order to contextualize the historical struggles regarding labor inequity and describe the current landscape of the field. We note here that much of the research on contingent labor is situated in the larger English/Writing Studies field. Subsequently, our study intentionally includes information on the larger English/Writing Studies field as opposed to only TPC for two reasons. First, we believe that this framework will help situate TPC into the larger English/Writing Studies conversation, which may be beneficial for program directors and departmental chairs when speaking to those in administrative positions. Second, many contingent/NTT laborers who teach TPC courses—particularly the introductory or service TPC courses—have a variety of training/educational backgrounds and may not be considered by others or themselves to be TPC specialists. Consequently, some of these individuals, like graduate students, have been excluded in previous studies. Because our goal is to support all contingent laborers teaching these courses, we have developed this project with a broader scope.

Historical Context

The abuse of contingent/NTT individuals has been going on for decades. But how did we arrive at this (ab)use of contingent laborers? Scholars attribute the 1960s as the decade in which the rise of contingent labor occurred. At the time, only 22% of higher education instructors were contingent/NTT workers (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). That number grew to 66% by 2009 (Evans, 2018). After the first rise, the English/writing field provided various actions and position statements to support contingent laborers. For example, the Wyoming Resolution of 1986 was one of the first social action collaborations to discuss composition instructors' benefits and working conditions, which led to the 1989 Principles of and Standards for the Post-Secondary Teaching of Writing.

After this period, one solution was the implementation of humane lecturers. Sue Doe et al. (2011) described humane lectureship positions as long-term, renewable contracts. While these positions do offer some stability, they should still be critically examined. A potential issue that can arise from these positions is a permutation of the caste system in higher education (Melonçon & England, 2011). These positions typically have lower salaries, larger teaching loads, a lack of professional development opportunities, and the anxiety of whether one's contract will be renewed. We offer this example not to diminish these positions but instead to emphasize the wicked problem of contingent/NTT labor issues as well as the need to continually work and reflect on current practices, especially at a local level—such as within one's institution and department.

Within the larger field of English/Writing Studies, programs tend to overuse and abuse contingent laborers. In 2011, *College English* dedicated an entire issue to topics on contingent labor reform. Doe et al. (2011) discussed contingent labor as an issue of workplace equity and highlighted how vital contingent labor is currently paramount to institutions' ability to function. We want to be clear: We are not arguing for the continuing (ab)use of contingent contracts but rather illustrating that while these positions are on the fringes (Schreyer, 2012), contingent/NTT are the faculty majority and account for 12 million instructors in the US alone (AAUP, 2020a; NCES, 2020).

The 2011 *College English* issue ended on a hopeful, but perhaps mistakenly optimistic, note. The issue suggested that, after the 2008–2012 recession, the overabundant use of contingent labor may be resolved. In other words, there was hope that higher education as a system would better support faculty after the 2008–2012 economic crisis ended. However, labor issues were only exacerbated and intensified during times of prosperity (AAUP, 2020a). As many in programmatic/departmental leadership roles have seen, institutional-level support and money have "invested heavily in facilities and technology while cutting instructional spending" (AAUP, 2020a, par. 5), thus illustrating that contingent labor was not an economic necessity. Based on these reports, the (ab)use of contingent labor is an ongoing choice.

Since the 2011 *College English* issue, governmental actions meant to help contingent workers, including policies like the Affordable Care Act (ACA), were followed by worsening conditions. For context, the ACA requires employers to fund health insurance for individuals working more than 20 hours a week. However, after the ACA was passed, many institutions capped many contingent laborers at or below 20 hours in order to avoid the requirement of providing health insurance (Kahn, 2017). This reduction in hours forced many contingent laborers to seek piecemeal employment opportunities at multiple institutions to help make ends meet (Kahn, 2017). Furthermore, if this issue increases during times of economic prosperity, we may see (and in fact have already seen) the even more unsettling effects that the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn will have on the contingent workforce.

Recent Studies

More recent studies indicate that the (ab)use of contingent/NTT faculty is ongoing:

- Currently, 70%–75% laborers are contingent, 83% of all service TPC courses are taught by contingent/NTT individuals, and there is an overall higher use of contingent/NTT labor in English/Writing Studies/TPC, as compared to general higher education (Melonçon & England, 2011).

Further, data illustrates that contingent faculty (in higher education):

- Account for 70–75% of all appointments (AAUP, 2020a; Mazurek, 2011)
- Teach the equivalent of full-time load (AAUP, 2020a)
- Have contracts split between multiple institutions to make ends meet, and with this part-time status (AAUP, 2020a; Colby & Colby, 2020)
- Are not provided with health insurance (AAUP, 2020a)
- Are provided little recognition for their scholarship as well as "virtually no time to carry it out," even though many of these instructors are actively engaged in research (Doe et al., 2011)
- Spend as much time as their full-time and TT counterparts in the classroom, meeting with students, and general out-of-class working time (Doe et al., 2011)
- May be graduate students who
    - Are told by programs that teaching is an apprenticeship that will enhance their graduate studies when—in reality—this work distracts from their completion of the program (AAUP, 2020a)
    - Have dwindling chances of obtaining TT positions due to limited availability of TT positions (AAUP, 2020a) and the collapse of jobs in the humanities market (Micciche, 2002)
    - Are at institutions that use differential workload distribution situations, which reinforces hierarchies, marginalizes teaching, and makes success difficult to achieve, even for those contingent faculty with a research component as part of their work-

load (Doe et al., 2011)

- Lack access to necessary resources such as offices, computers, photocopying services, research databases, office phones (AAUP, 2020a; Doe et al., 2011)
- May receive food stamps to supplement their contingent work; 34,000 PhD students supplement contingent work with food stamps (Kahn et al., 2020)
- Lack time to dedicate to research (which would assist many in career aspirations) (AAUP 2020a, 2016; Colby & Colby, 2020)

Narrowing the scope to the English field, a few additional interesting notes should be provided:

- Adjuncts (not all contingent/NTT faculty) account for 70% of general education writing course instructors (Kahn, 2017)
- More than 95% of contingent/NTT faculty taught first-year composition (FYC) courses (McBeth & McCormack, 2020)
  - The "freshman-composition-only model" where contingent/NTT instructors teach only the FYC course leads to burnout due to the high paper count, grading, and mental load (McBeth & McCormack, 2020; Kahn, 2020; Colby & Colby, 2020)
- 83% of TPC service courses are taught by contingent/NTT individuals (Melonçon & England, 2011)
- Our field shares a stark disregard for teaching positions (Kahn, 2020). In other words, research positions are unfairly viewed positively while teaching-intensive or teaching-only positions are frowned upon and discouraged
- Contingent/NTT instructors, especially graduate students, are dissuaded from pursuing teaching positions because they "aren't prestigious enough or don't afford enough research time" (Kahn, 2020)
- Contingent/NTT instructors suffer from professional disrespect (Kahn, 2020)
- Evaluations and raises based on student reviews and D/F/W rates (Nardo & Heifferon, 2020) instead of holistic review systems
  - Many institutions lack structured pay increases that come with promotions similar to TT positions (Colby & Colby, 2020)

In an effort to contribute to the ongoing conversation within the field regarding contingent/NTT labor, we developed this study with the goals of both gathering data about laborers and listening to the concerns that they have. In the following section, we discuss our methodological approach and describe the methods we employed to reach these goals.

Methodology

In our design of this study, we employed a transformational framework (Mertens, 2009) due to the oppressive conditions contingent laborers often experience. This transformational framework informed both how we approached this study and how we interpreted our findings in a manner aligned with the social justice turn in TPC (Walton et al., 2019). As Johanna L. Phelps (2021) discussed, TPC researchers have been using axiological, ontological, epistemological, and methodological tenets from the transformational framework for years without explicitly articulating that connection. Within a transformational framework, we specifically utilized the theories of radical transparency (RT) and ethics of care in order to address the complexities of conducting a study focused on a social justice issue we were/are so intimately situated within.

Radical Transparency

Because of the need for more research into the precarious conditions that contingent laborers face, we employed RT in hopes that future scholars will be able to build upon our work just as we have built upon the work of others. As a theory, RT has been associated with a variety of practices and fields such as leadership practices (Scott, 2011) and environmental practices (Reid & Rout, 2020). We argue that it can be a useful concept in TPC/Writing Studies. RT is a necessary part of a transformational framework as it focuses on sharing information to prevent informational silos and presents feedback, frustrations, innovations, and ideas to all levels in an educational setting. RT can be achieved through articles with published datasets, descriptions of implementations or models, and narratives from contingent workers, among other resources. By sharing these materials more openly, we can achieve four goals:

1. Create a richer understanding of the workforce
2. Invite more collaboration and innovation on a cross-institutional basis for tackling this issue
3. Draw upon more data to conduct replicability studies, create sustainability with our research, and/or share information with administrators to support the individuals in our institution/department/program
4. Support contingent/NTT laborers more readily

RT can apply to the sharing of data, instruments, resources, and experiences and can, therefore, lead to solutions to the wicked problem of labor (ab)use in higher education. In line with this theory, we have done our best to be transparent through our experiences, methods, and sharing of data (where ethical).

Ethics of Care

In addition to RT, and in line with our transformational framework, our research is also informed by an ethics of care through strategic contemplation. As Jacqueline J. Royster and Gesa E. Kirsch (2012) wrote, practicing strategic contemplation enables us to be able "to observe and notice, to listen to and hear voices often neglected or silenced, and to notice more overtly [our] own responses to what [we] are seeing, reading, reflecting on, and encountering during [our] research processes" (p. 85). With a focus on ethics of care, we acknowledge the responsibility we have in researching, analyzing, and discussing this topic with attentiveness, particularly as current and former contingent laborers ourselves. For this reason, and as an aspect of RT, we have presented autoethnographic vignettes of our experiences (see Appendix A) as individuals who have been or are still contingent laborers in academia. Some of our common experiences include working as GTAs; being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; and perpetually being overworked and underpaid yet continuing to be passionate teachers. However, we have also had very different experiences. For example, we differed in how we chose and funded graduate school, in choosing to remain in a contingent laborer position, in pursuing an alt-academic (alt-ac) career, and in our non-academic roles, like our differing experiences as caregivers.

We believe sharing our stories is a foundational element in building the ethics of care lens through which we interpret our findings in this study (Royster & Kirsch, 2012). Sharing our reflections of our time as contingent laborers was a necessary step in consciously acknowledging how our own experiences have influenced our methods. As contingent laborers who have been or are currently being silenced or neglected, we admit those experiences have indeed impacted who we are as researchers. We emphasize that being radically transparent does not only mean sharing our methods or findings in a more detailed manner but also requires a willingness to be strategically contemplative, particularly when it comes to how our stories shape all parts of our research. However, we emphasize here that the iterative process of collaborative autoethnography (Chang et al., 2013) is not a formal method of our study.

Methods

With our transformational framework in mind, we developed research methods that would allow us to ethically and fully investigate the current situation regarding the new faculty majority. Employing RT and an ethics of care, we developed a mixed-methods survey in order to gather quantitative and qualitative data that is both varied and complementary. Including both quantitatively and qualitatively oriented questions allows for a more complete analysis of the ongoing labor issues in higher education. The qualitatively oriented questions provided respondents an opportunity to voice their own thoughts and opinions outside the parameters of quantitative data collection, which allowed us to more fully consider the issues contingent laborers face. Our detailed survey (see Appendix B) was granted IRB approval (#21-2). In this section, we describe the process of developing and distributing this survey and gathering and analyzing the results because, as Melonçon and St. Amant (2018) asserted, we need to strive toward sustainable research practices that are replicable by others in the field. In addition, we offer methods as a component of RT, which is key in enabling others to discern the quality of our research and makes it as simple as possible to conduct similar studies.

Survey Development

Because of the rhetorical nature of survey question creation, we referenced survey questions from both the AAUP and the Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW) throughout the survey's formation and added questions related specifically to teaching TPC courses. The survey was divided into six sections:

1. Instructions with Agreement to Participate and Identification as a Contingent Laborer
2. Overview of Support and Labor
3. Resources and Compensation
4. Demographic Information
5. Frustrations and Other Thoughts
6. Optional Follow-Up

Each section contained questions that helped to present a clearer picture of each respondent and allowed for detailed information regarding their positions, labor, professional development, and much more. Due to the AAUP's long-standing reputation in conducting surveys, some of our questions were developed similarly to questions in their annual faculty compensation survey and follow-up report. For example, an illuminating excerpt from their survey (AAUP, 2022a) stated that

"The[a]verage pay for part-time faculty members teaching a three-credit course section varies widely between institutional types, with average rates of pay ranging from $2,263 per section in public associate institutions without ranks to $4,620 per section in private-independent doctoral institutions. Within institutional categories, minimum and maximum pay rates span huge ranges." (Survey Report Table 15)

Necessitated by our own experiences and the findings shared by the AAUP, the third section of our survey was dedicated to resources and compensation. We also referenced questions from the CAW's (2012) contingent faculty survey. Like the AAUP's (2022a) annual faculty compensation survey, the CAW's survey enabled respondents to address the precarity of being contingent laborers. For instance, their second section was labeled "Employment in Postsecondary Teaching" and asked about employment status, how many institutions they teach at, and how many sections they teach. Specifically, Question #2 in their second section asked, "At how many institutions of higher education are you teaching in the fall term 2010? (Do not count multiple campuses of the same college or university.)," while Question #3 asked, "How many classes/sections for credit are you teaching in the fall term 2010…" As such, we also developed questions that focused on similar topics. For example, in some quantitatively oriented questions, we inquired about teaching loads for Fall 2021 (i.e., sections taught and number of institutions).

As noted at the beginning of the Methods section, although quantitative data reveals much about the precarious conditions that contingent laborers work and live within, we also included qualitatively oriented questions that would enable us to more authentically hear contingent laborers' voices. Examples of the qualitatively oriented questions from the fifth section include the following:

- With your position(s), what are (if any) frustrations you have related to this position(s)?
- With your position(s), what monetary resources/office resources/professional development (not just those included above) would make your position better?
- Are there additional thoughts that you wish to convey about the support (or lack thereof) in your position(s)?

We shared the survey via three listservs: the Association of Teachers of Technical Writers, the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication, and the Council of Writing Program Administrators. The first 80 participants were offered a $25 Amazon gift card (made possible by the grant from CPTSC). The survey was open to all contingent laborers—NTT professors, adjuncts, and graduate students. We received 254 completed surveys by the end of December 2021.

Data Analysis

In an effort to fully and ethically analyze the survey data, we developed analytical procedures in line with our focus on radical transparency and the ethics of care within the transformative framework. In doing so, we moved beyond rigid protocols for analysis that may exclude some interpretations and toward multifaceted analyses that considered both text and context. As Royster and Kirsch (2012) wrote regarding this shift toward broader analytical practices within the rhetorical studies field,

> This re-formed view encourages the use of patterns of observing, reading, analyzing, and interpreting that are dialogical, dialectical, reflective and reflexive and that generate thereby multiple sources of information that have to be balanced in knowledge creation and knowledge use. As professionals in the field, then, we face the challenge of gathering data with a consideration of multiple viewpoints, balancing the viewpoints that emerge, and then coming to interpretations of the enriched landscape that are substantive, fair, and respectful. Facing this challenge requires more than just excellence in scholarly work. It also requires patience, attention with caring, a willingness to consider more than one set of possibilities and to forestall coming to closure too quickly. (p. 139)

Each of our unique positionalities within academia and our experiences as contingent/NTT laborers (see Appendix A) enabled us to consider the survey data through our own lenses, to reconsider it through other possibilities, and to not rush to interpretation. Instead, we reviewed and talked through the data on multiple occasions until we reached consensus on emerging themes (Creswell, 2014; Gonzales et al., 2020; Royster & Kirsch, 2012; Saldaña, 2021). After individual recursive readings of the data, we each identified themes we saw emerging from the quantitative and qualitative data on a shared Google Doc. Then, during one of our bi-weekly online research meetings, we discussed, compiled, and condensed our initial codes into primary themes. Through intensive dialogue over several meetings, we came to group consensus on each theme (Creswell, 2014; Royster & Kirsch, 2012; Saldaña, 2021). While not a full codebook, Table 1 shows sample survey responses, initial code examples, and the primary themes that we merged from those codes. These themes will be identified in the Results section and elaborated upon in the Discussion section.

Table 1. Examples of Raw Data, Initial Codes, and Themes

Survey Response Data	Initial Code Examples	Assigned Theme of Support
"The TT faculty infantilize and dismiss our work even though we bring in more revenue than anyone, and fund their research." "The TT faculty believe strongly (in general) in their expertise and their protection from some service tasks."	Frustrations Disrespect Collegiality Support/lack of support from TT faculty	Individual
"...as an adjunct I had THREE new course preps, and one of them was another one-and-done." "We are also encouraged to go to conferences etc but get a limited amount of money to attend. This leaves us to choose between saving money for expenses or our careers."	Lack of professional development opportunities Service for no pay Teaching only lower division courses	Program/Departmental
"We are grossly underpaid given the amount we earn for the university." "I also feel worried that we will be pressured to move every course back to in-person for the Spring rather than keeping some online sections which have been a clear benefit to our disabled, neurodivergent, caretaking, and/or working students. Also, the University should provide N95 masks for everyone."	Salary and benefits issues Timeliness of contract renewal Transparency Unionization	Institutional

Results

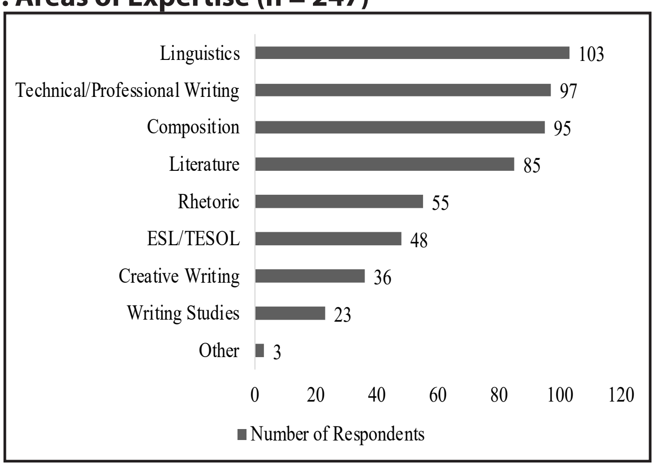
Quantitative

The results from the quantitative questions include demographic information about contingent/NTT faculty and the conditions under which they work. A total of 254 people responded to the survey. Most questions were optional, and not all participants responded to every question. The following data about survey respondents provides info in connection with gender, age, ethnicity, education, contingent laborer position type and number of institutions worked at, additional non-academic jobs, caregiver status, desire to engage in service and/or professional development, and overall satisfaction. We present this data in an effort to describe our respondents and to highlight who the new faculty majority is.

Most of the respondents were male (52.2%), followed by female (44.4%), those who preferred not to say (3%), and nonbinary (0.4%). Of those who responded to a question about age, the overwhelming majority were 23-42 years old. Most were in the 33-42 age group (n = 175), followed by 23-32 (n = 22), 53-62 (n = 9), 63-72 (n = 3), 43-52 (n = 2), and 73+ (n = 1). Of those who responded to an open-ended question asking them to categorize their ethnicity (n = 187), 51% identified as White, 20% identified as Black, 13% identified as Hispanic, and a little less than 1% identified as Indigenous.

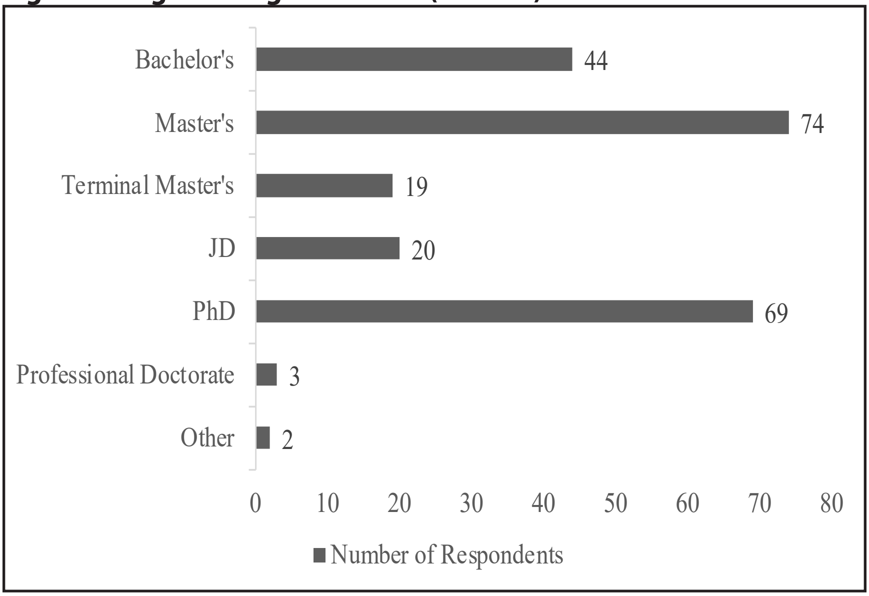
Respondents could also choose their area(s) of expertise as it relates to their degree(s) and/or an emphasis they have in addition to their degree title. While many respondents (n = 97) considered their expertise TPC, several other fields within Writing Studies were selected, including linguistics (n = 103), composition (n = 95), and literature (n = 85). See all respondents' selected fields of expertise in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Areas of Expertise (n = 247)



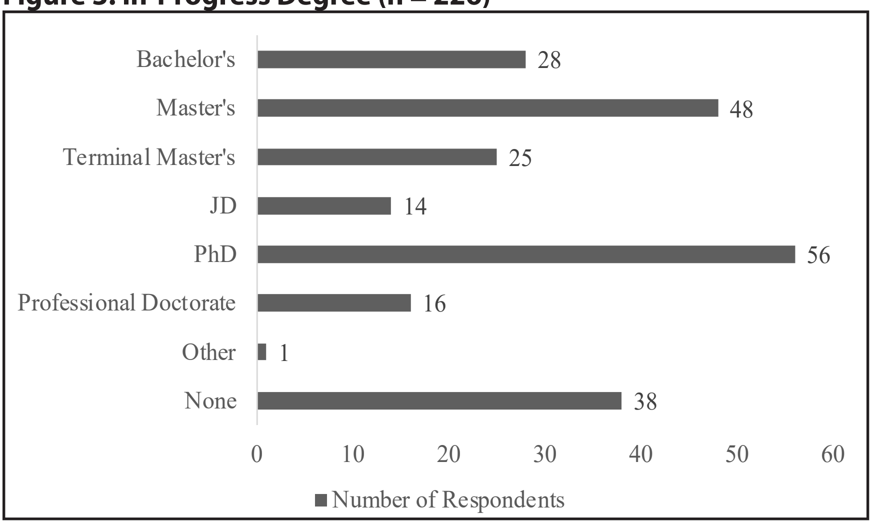
Participants were asked to mark the highest degree they earned or what degree they are currently pursuing. 30% indicated that they had a PhD, and 8% indicated that they had a terminal master's degree. 188 of 226 respondents indicated that they were currently working on a degree (see Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2: Highest Degree Earned (n = 231)



Note. A terminal master's degree includes a Master of Fine Arts, a Master of Business Administration, etc. A professional doctorate degree includes a Doctor of Education, a Doctor of Psychology, etc.

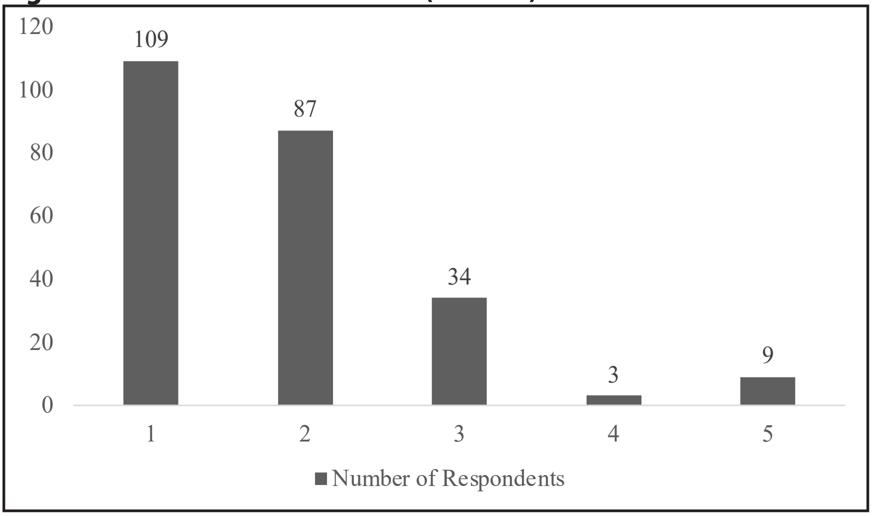
Figure 3: In-Progress Degree (n = 226)



Note. A terminal master's degree includes a Master of Fine Arts, a Master of Business Administration, etc. A professional doctorate degree includes a Doctor of Education, a Doctor of Psychology, etc.

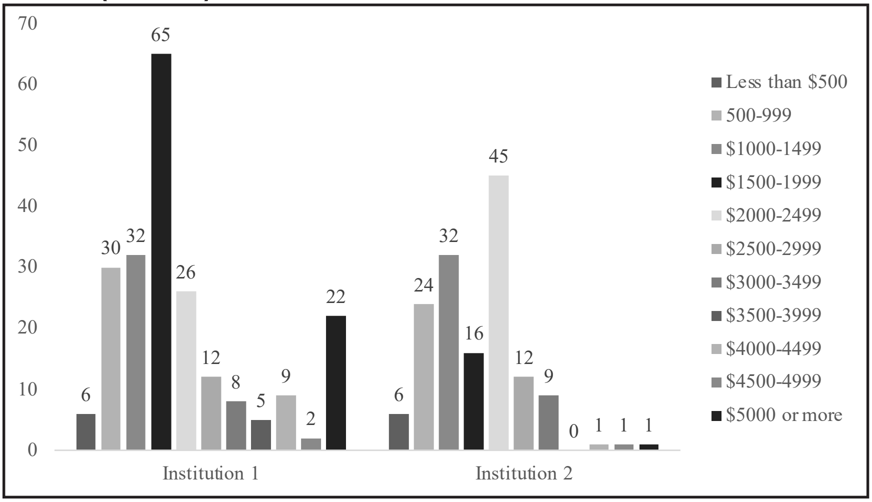
Notably, in terms of type of contingent labor position, 45.9% of respondents were GTAs, 46.8% were per-course adjunct instructors, and 36.5% were NTT instructors. 92.6% reported that they were teaching 1-4 courses during the term they participated in our survey, while the remaining respondents reported teaching 5-9 courses. Participants also shared the number of institutions where they worked at the time of the survey, either in TT or NTT/contingent roles (Figure 4), which highlights how many of these academics juggle positions at more than one university (n = 133; 55%).

Figure 4: Number of Institutions (n = 242)



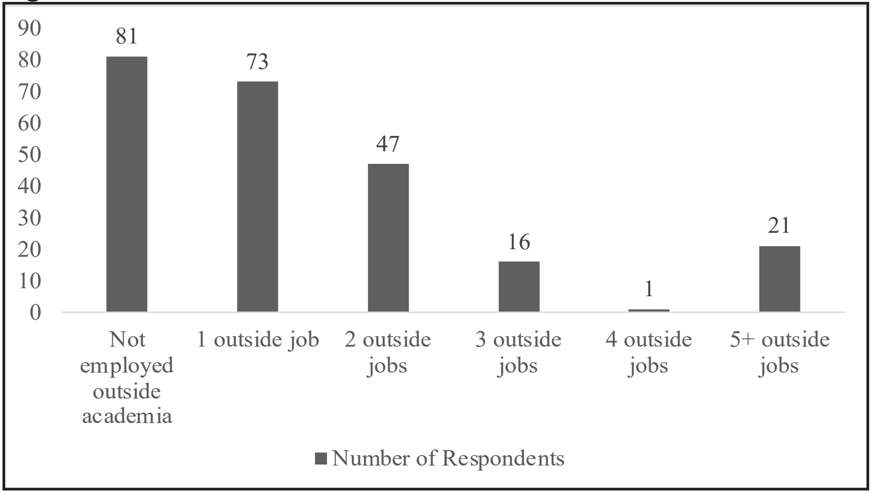
Understandably, compensation factors into both the number of courses and institutions respondents work at. The most commonly selected salary at the first institution for respondents was $1500–1999 per three-credit-hour course. Teaching a full course load of four courses at that salary is far below the poverty line in all states. Thus, many respondents worked at multiple institutions. See Figure 5 for participant salaries at just the first and second institutions.

Figure 5: Salaries at Institutions 1 and 2 per Three-Credit-Hour Course (n = 217)



As discussed previously, graduate students are often left out of labor conversations and research. GTAs are often asked to perform "20 hours" of labor, complete coursework, and sign contracts acknowledging that they will not seek work elsewhere. However, their stipends fall near or below poverty levels and well under the living wage averages (see poverty guidelines from Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation [ASPE], 2023 and the living wage calculator from Massachusetts Institute of Technology [MIT], 2022). Therefore, we were also curious to see if any survey respondents were employed outside of academia in addition to working in a contingent/NTT position. 239 people responded to this question, and only 81 were not employed outside of academia. 66% of respondents noted that they held non-academic positions; at the upper end of the data, 21 people—almost 9%—had five or more jobs in addition to their work in a contingent/NTT position (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Number of Jobs Held Outside Academia (n = 239)



In addition to questions about their jobs outside of the home, the survey contained two questions concerning caregiver status in order to illuminate how many contingent laborers also work at home. The two caregiver questions differentiate between those caring for people under the age of 18 and those caring for people over the age of 18. Of the 233 people who responded to the child-caregiver question, 77.7% (n = 181) cared for at least one child, and of the 234 adult-caregiver respondents, 40.2% (n = 94) cared for at least one person over the age of 18. Thus, our results show that most of our respondents were caregivers.

Our survey also requested information regarding professional development. Despite many respondents working multiple jobs both inside and outside academia and at home, 94% of respondents indicated that they would like to commit time to professional development opportunities. Almost 40% said that they would be comfortable spending 2-3 hours per semester on these opportunities. The majority of specific interests for potential workshops included assessment strategies, teaching tools, and pedagogy theory and tips. However, only about 30% of respondents marked that they were offered professional development opportunities.

In addition, the survey included questions regarding contingent/NTT faculty's overall views of their positions. We noted that less than half of the respondents selected that they were satisfied with their salary and health benefits at their first institution. 51% of respondents indicated that they had engaged in service without pay. Unfortunately, less than 30% of our respondents (or fewer for many questions) indicated that they were satisfied with opportunities for scholarly pursuits, teaching loads, work/life balance, prospects for advancement, flexibility, and leave policies. Notably, over half of our respondents said that they had considered leaving academia (n = 114 out of 227) and/or their current institution(s) (n = 128 out of 223) over the past year. Strikingly, only about 25% of survey respondents marked that they were satisfied with their job(s) overall at their first institution.

We share and discuss the qualitative results of the survey's short-answer questions in the next section.

Qualitative

In addition to our quantitative data, the results from qualitative questions offered a number of insights into contingent/NTT faculty support, recognition, salary, workloads, and more. From our recursive analysis of these open-answer questions, we identified several overarching themes (see Table 1) that we categorized into three levels based on who might be able to address the issue:

- Individual Level
  - Sub-themes: Collegiality, Value
- Departmental Level
  - Sub-themes: Communication and Governance, Service and Stability, Opportunities and Support
- Institutional Level
  - Sub-themes: Salary and Recognition, Care and Support

Individual Level

We identified a number of responses that discussed issues encountered at the individual level, such as personal frustrations, interpersonal relationships, perceived attitudes, and more. Two sub-themes were collegiality and value.

Collegiality. At the individual, personal level, our survey showed that contingent/NTT faculty often felt not only invisible or neglected but also disrespected and dismissed. Survey results, therefore, showed both a pattern of passive abuse and active subjugation:

- "Lack of respect from TT faculty, lack of understanding of the current vagaries of the job market"
- "Lack of respect from TT colleagues + the fact that it is a term-limited position"
- "The TT faculty infantilize and dismiss our work even though we bring in more revenue for the department than anyone, and fund their research."
- "Too many to list here but mostly being bullied comes to mind"

From these examples, some of the issues within the current system are clear. Contingent/NTT faculty feel disrespected, "infantilized," and even "bullied" within a professional workplace in a higher education setting. Moreover, contingent/NTT faculty may feel as if their personal labor is directly funding TT faculty research at the same time they are remanded to limited-term positions due to the current job market. While many systemic issues contribute to the abuse of contingent/NTT laborers, we also stress the importance of collegiality among faculty to avoid toxic workplaces as well as further abuse of contingent faculty.

Value. In line with increasing collegiality, our survey also returned responses more specifically focused on value. In the examples below, contingent faculty respondents discuss their professional positions and perceived value at the personal level:

- "Just a lack of respect in many ways—having all the jobs no one else wants dumped on me."
- "I am disrespected by T/TT faculty. My program doesn't respect my professional expertise. My program doesn't value collaboration or cooperation."
- "I do not always feel like an equal amongst my colleagues, and I often take on advanced responsibilities but am still not seen as equal."
- "forced in-person teaching (with no vaccine or mask mandate)"

In addition to a lack of interpersonal relationships with tenure/tenure track (T/TT) faculty, contingent/NTT faculty also discussed a number of ways in which they are made to feel inferior to T/TT faculty. Respondents discussed taking on additional roles and responsibilities without recognition, being made to feel as if their professional expertise is beneath the expertise of others, and being required to teach in an unsafe environment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Again, at the individual level, contingent/NTT faculty who responded to our survey indicate that they often feel devalued. Despite many contingent faculty having similar levels of education and experience to that of T/TT faculty, the hierarchy within departments and the resulting interpersonal relationships and/or types of communication seem to be creating a rift among colleagues that is most heavily felt by those in contingent/NTT roles.

Program/Departmental Level

We also identified issues encountered at the departmental level, such as stability of positions, support, professional development opportunities, training, and more. Overarching themes at this level include communication and governance, service and security, and opportunities and support. In each of these areas, respondents noted specific instances in which their department helped or hindered their work, feelings of support, or professional goals.

Communication and Governance. Important to any workplace, communication among various levels and representation or input for policies, practices, etc., is crucial. Many respondents indicate that one or both of these attributes is lacking in their department. In many cases, this lack of communication and shared governance leads to an increase in frustration and in disparity among colleagues:

- "Lack of clear communication about what tasks (HR paperwork, required training--Title 9/cybersecurity/etc, where to submit course syllabi, how to sheets on the LMS, where to submit textbook info, etc.) need to be completed before I started my job!"
- "In both instructor and minor departmental administrator roles, lack of communication from higher ups. Toxic departmental culture makes cooperation difficult. Relatively low pay and few opportunities compared to TT colleagues."
- "There is certainly a hierarchical feel in my department. The TT faculty believe strongly (in general) in their expertise and their protection from some service tasks. In the past, they have sought to tie up voting rights in our department. A few see themselves as social justice warriors, and I respect that; but their social justice does not extend to contingent faculty. They seem themselves as elite. I want to emphasize this is not department-wide, but the few squeaky wheels have done a lot of damage to our department. This damage has never in my opinion come from contingent faculty. The irony is that contingent faculty bear the heaviest teaching loads (by far) and have the most student contact."
- "There is a lack of communication from my department chair. There is not enough contingent representation in department/college/university shared governance."
- "The department is constantly over budget and has no funds according to announcements, and there's always layoffs and broken promises to adjuncts and grad students"

From these responses, the realities of the contingent faculty roles within departments are clearer. Lack of communication from administrators causes added frustrations and stress to faculty who are already frustrated and stressed. Many who feel disrespected by colleagues as individuals also feel devalued and disrespected by their departments and by administrators. Respondents discussed a lack of startup training, poor budgeting practices, "broken promises," and little communication or collaboration. In addition, contingent/NTT faculty expressed issues with governance, citing a lack of representation and/or specific disenfranchisement for contingent faculty—a clear issue of justice. One respondent noted that T/TT colleagues see themselves as "social justice warriors" but noted that "their social justice does not extend to contingent faculty." This was discussed as a highly problematic situation in which contingent faculty may be denied voting rights and representation. As established in the discussion of individual level issues, respondents indicated an active agenda of abuse directed toward contingent/NTT faculty.

Service and Security. While many responses indicated particular issues with colleagues and administrators, respondents also noted frustrations stemming from policies and practices within the department. Often, these responses showed a desire for increased job security that may be possible to address at the department level or at least by the department chair in advocating for contingent/NTT positions or in determining what roles faculty at various levels take.

- "I often work unpaid, but I never get a promotion or salary increase when I work overtime."
- "I love my current job as a full-time NTT instructor. However, I have no job security. I also fear that some of my colleagues would rather see my job done by adjuncts (or by me as an adjunct)."
- "No path to full-time employment"
- "The University of Colorado Denver is a great place for NTT Instructors to work. I have been in my position for 15+ years and feel respected and supported most of the time."

While we note here that departments often do not have the power to create permanent positions and may also not be able to offer multiyear contracts due to upper-level administration, we do contend that statements such as these should be highly valued within departments and programs. Contingent/NTT faculty typically operate with very little job security, yet they must perform at high enough levels to constitute renewal each year or possibly each semester.

Opportunities and Support. Similar to issues of service, respondents indicated that professional development opportunities and support from department-created or -assigned sources necessitated a specific balance. Many respondents discussed a desire for more opportunities and support or appreciation for current resources; however, others indicated that only specific types of opportunities and support were useful.

- "I only get one professional development opportunity every semester."
- "I wish I could teach more than Rhetoric 105, and I wish I could count on being able to teach those courses regularly."
- "Course shells are nice and I appreciate that my third college has assigned mentors to the adjuncts."
- "No. The syllabus I was provided for the course I am currently

teaching was terribly antiquated in its course overview, lecture-oriented approach, reading selections, etc. I didn't use anything from it."

- "Professional development from department is good. Micromanaging from upper admin (trying to standardize courses on LMS, requiring campus presence, etc) is not helpful"

As evident in these examples, survey responses called for balance from departments and program leaders when offering support and professional development opportunities. Standardization, micromanaging, and template syllabi may often stem from attempts to reduce labor for contingent/NTT faculty; however, they are often discussed in the survey as problematic, belittling, or annoying. In addition, several respondents expressed a desire to teach other courses and to participate in professional development opportunities more often. We contend that this is a clear indication that contingent/NTT faculty have a genuine and sincere desire to advance and that they should be offered more options and opportunities to do so. Assigning courses, offering professional development, pairing mentors, and creating materials falls at the department level, and heeding these suggestions can make for a much stronger department and program.

Institutional Level

Finally, a number of responses indicated issues that occur at the institutional level. These responses identified impacts beyond what individuals or departments were capable of addressing, such as compensation, benefits, budgetary considerations, and more. While we understand that large-scale change is needed to address these specific issues, we present them here to illuminate the struggles that many contingent faculty face and to give a voice to this struggle.

Salary and Recognition. The most oft-cited issue for contingent/NTT faculty was salary and recognition. Many faculty discussed the need for multiple positions and government assistance to continue their work. Low pay is a serious concern for all contingent faculty, including graduate students, and is an ongoing institutional issue. The responses below illustrate the difficulties that contingent/NTT faculty face in addition to those discussed above:

- "A lot of work for bad pay. I keep trying to find better places to adjunct, but haven't been successful."
- "I wish that there were more substantial raises. My raise for this year was less than 1k."
- "Living off $15000 per year with summer funding not guaranteed (this would be an extra $3000) is absurd. When that's taxed, it is nearly impossible to have enough money to survive. I had to apply

for the state assistance for food and health insurance because even though the school pays for the insurance, they obviously don't assist with any of the actual medical bills. We are also encouraged to go to conferences etc but get a limited amount of money to attend. This leaves us to choose between saving money for expenses or our careers.

- "Low pay—have to work a second job to make ends meet"
- "Salary could be higher, especially in relation to TT faculty. I've pretty much hit the limit of my promotion/professional growth at this institution. There's a lot expected of FT NTT faculty here, without a lot of material recognition."
- "At my institution, there is a whole class of people called 'Academic Professionals'—we're people with PhDs (or other terminal degrees) who basically do most of the heavy lifting for the school and still maintain active research agendas, yet we are criminally underpaid and viewed as unskilled. TT faculty are gods here."

These responses provide direct insight into the struggles that contingent/NTT faculty face in terms of salary and recognition. Many discuss an inability to live sustainably with basic needs such as food, healthcare, and housing. Several respondents noted that they have lengthy commutes or work at multiple institutions to make ends meet and still often fall short. Others maintain that they have reached the peak of their promotional opportunities despite their ongoing research agenda and terminal degrees. In another vein, several responses indicated a lack of recognition. This differs slightly from previous discussions at the individual and department level in that the job title itself as well as the responsibilities of the position seemed to be a factor—something we can assume is established by the institution.

Care and Support. In addition, many responses indicated a lack of care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that contingent faculty were often overlooked by the institutional support systems put in place during the crisis. These issues also related to workload and the policies surrounding pay scales as a result. Again, this seems to be an issue that the institution must address in order to create a more equitable working environment for contingent/NTT faculty:

- "Inability to change modality of course to online"
- "Recent cuts to advising and administrative assistant staff have made cross-College collaboration very difficult for me as Writing Program Administrator. I also feel worried that we will be pressured to move every course back to in-person for the Spring rather than keeping some online sections which have been a clear benefit to

our disabled, neurodivergent, caretaking, and/or working students. Also, the University should provide N95 masks for everyone."

- "Again, the lack of support by faculty especially during covid, is stark. They preach about mental health and say they are here for support without actually providing the necessary systems and tools."
- "To be 100% FTE in my current position, I would have to teach 120 students per semester (5x5 load). I can't physically do this as a writing teacher, so I have had to reduce my FTE to 80% (and lose 10K in pay) to make my workload more manageable. I wish I could be 100% FTE and teach fewer classes so that I could feel like a good teacher and have time for my own creative work. Nobody can teach 120 writing students and do the job they really want to do if they care about teaching writing."
- "Obviously, universities need to return to a model of more fulltime and tenure-line jobs. When I was able to move from part-time (at multiple institutions) to full time, it made a tremendous impact on my teaching and ability to contribute to the department. Before, I barely knew my students' names, let alone their individual writing and career goals. I had trouble keeping track of the different institutions' policies and learning outcomes. I had no ability to be flexible with students who needed extra support or time on assignments because I couldn't keep track of everything."
- "At the VERY least, when adjuncts are teaching core courses, multi-term contracts (even if they are still part-time) would help create some stability for faculty, students, and departments. They also wouldn't cost the university any more money."
- "We are grossly underpaid given the amount we earn for the university. Teaching load is too heavy for serious scholarship."

Because this survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, our results offer a great deal of insight into the frustrations and limited care and support that contingent/NTT faculty received during this crisis. For example, many institutions did not provide masks or did not provide quality masks for instructors. A number of issues resulted in budget cuts that affected instructors but did not offer any additional support for those instructors who would now have added responsibilities. Additionally, many responses indicated a lack of flexibility—such as not allowing faculty to request online courses or to switch their courses to an online offering when case numbers rose. Beyond the issues from the pandemic, many respondents noted that their own care for students and quality of instruction greatly outweighed the institution's focus on care and quality. As such, one respondent explained that they had taken a significant pay cut in order to offer quality instruction. This is also an issue that the institution must address in that 100% full-time equivalent (FTE) does not always translate to equitable working conditions or quality instruction. In addition, we must also note that several responses show how the adjunct position can lead to an inability to move up at any institution as instructors in these positions are unstable and underpaid and are typically in workloads in which they cannot conduct the research needed to move into higher paying positions.

In the following section, we draw from both our quantitative and qualitative data analysis to develop recommendations and suggestions for supporting contingent/NTT faculty.

Discussion

Based on our quantitative and qualitative data and our recursive, collaborative analysis of this data viewed via RT and an ethics of care lens within a transformative framework, we discuss possibility and hope for the future in this section. Utilizing the themes (individual, departmental, institutional) that we identified in the data, we present here tangible steps and suggestions for readers to take at each of those levels.

Recommendations and Suggestions for Support at Three Levels

Before we can make recommendations, however, we must consider the nature of the contingent/NTT labor issue. First, we must address the "rhetoric of despair" mentality that is often associated with it. "Rhetoric of despair" refers to the belief that we do not hold the power needed to create real change (Nardo & Heifferon, 2020). This feeling is an understandable one given the immensity and complexity of this issue. Labor reform is certainly a "wicked problem" (Murray, 2019). However, instead of falling into a rhetoric of despair and accepting current conditions because we view them as too large to solve or because we feel that we do not have enough power in our positions, we follow the efforts of Kahn et al. (2020) to provide "concrete steps to fight the exploitation of contingent faculty" (p. 7). Therefore, we provide here tangible steps—both small and large—for program directors, department chairs, TT allies, deans, higher-level administrators, and contingent/NTT laborers ourselves/themselves to employ. As Mark McBeth and Tim McCormack (2020) noted, when solutions are presented, they often call for revolutions and uprisings that are challenging to implement. We, therefore, take up the call to resist bureaucratic imperatives and search for concrete, judicious solutions, even if they are not "legibly revolutionary" (McBeth & McCormack, 2020, p. 43). We believe that even small change is worthwhile.

Second, in an effort to understand and address the nature of the labor issue in academia, we argue for RT at all levels and through multiple modalities. Not only is this concept useful and necessary in research methodology, as we have discussed above, but it is also an imperative tool for the entire issue at hand. RT can lead to change and strategic decision-making in departments and institutions through the sharing of information, resources, processes, limitations, and more.

As an example, Sarah experienced a lack of RT during a faculty meeting at an R1/D1 university where she was employed as contingent/NTT faculty. During the meeting, NTT and TT faculty discussed the need to hire two additional NTT positions. When a contingent/NTT faculty member questioned why these positions could not be transferred into a TT position, the department chair casually/dismissively indicated that it is not possible to simply transfer positions across various lines and went ahead with the meeting. While it is true that a simple transferring of titles is not possible, that numerous approvals and budgetary concerns apply, and that the chair is not the person who decides such things, the response to this question could have utilized radical transparency in order to not only allow the many contingent/NTT laborers in that meeting to better understand the inner workings of their job and feel heard but also to create a base for reform if needed. How can contingent/NTT faculty (and allies) work toward reforming the labor system in higher education if they are not aware of how the university system works?

While this is one small example of an opportunity for RT, we argue that it is a necessity among all levels of academic institutions. RT is an overarching recommendation within this study as we contend that those who are responsible for implementing support and making decisions must be willing to share the successes, struggles, and failures contingent/NTT individuals experience at every level. Doing so creates a more equitable workplace and creates a foundation on which to build reform. In addition to and within the RT umbrella, we offer a number of additional, tangible steps for support. In the following sections, we discuss suggestions for support at the individual, department/program, and institutional levels.

Individual Level: Suggestions for Support

While issues relating to both collegiality and value are likely a result of larger systemic issues, they are also among the most easily addressed. There are innumerable ways to show support to contingent/NTT faculty, whether through departmental awards/recognition in meetings or casual conversations/emails that acknowledge the additional work that contingent faculty do. Offering support without belittling and acknowledgement without patronizing may go a long way to ensuring that individual contingent/NTT faculty feel collegiality and value from their colleagues.

As our survey shows, contingent/NTT faculty are often caregivers who have more than one job and may be pursuing another degree while they are being systematically marginalized and grossly underpaid. Additionally, many respondents indicated a lack of respect from TT faculty in our open-ended questions and, in our quantitative data, less than 30% marked that they felt respected by TT colleagues.

Our first suggestion for support is simply to have empathy for co-workers who are paid much less to teach many of the same classes/loads that TT faculty do.

Program/Departmental Level: Suggestions for Support

Due to the readership of *Programmatic Perspectives*, we focus much of our discussion of support at the department and program levels in an effort to help improve the conditions of contingent/NTT faculty. Beyond the individual level, programs and departments have opportunities to create tangible support systems for contingent/NTT faculty.

Firstly, department chairs and all allies should be actively fighting for equitable representation and voting rights for contingent/NTT faculty. At no institution should professional instructors be disenfranchised within their own departments, yet our survey indicated that only 23% of respondents were included in faculty governance. Even if instructors only operate within that program or department for one semester or year, all contingent/NTT laborers—including GTAs (who were 46% of our total survey respondents)—should be involved in shared governance and given opportunities to participate in developing policies, practices, and more as all are directly impacted by these decisions. We suggest that individual departments develop opportunities for all contingent/NTT faculty to at least have representation—perhaps through one or more elected spokespersons—in program and/or departmental meetings where decisions are being made. Not doing so is a social justice issue. We cannot discuss the social justice turn in TPC or in the wider Writing Studies field while actively abusing contingent faculty. We must practice what we teach.

Secondly, we call for additional work toward balance. Those who run departments and programs are responsible for ensuring that contingent/NTT faculty are not given more labor—especially with no additional compensation. However, as our survey shows, over half of contingent/NTT laborers participated in service without pay over the course of the year. At the same time, we suggest that contingent/

NTT faculty who may be seeking full-time or TT employment should be given the option to add to their CV. This balance may be difficult to achieve, but it is necessary in order to create a more equitable program and department. For example, 94% of our survey respondents indicated that they would participate in professional development if it were offered. Many, however, are not offered such opportunities, perhaps due to issues of equity or because directors or chairs do not wish to further burden contingent/NTT faculty. We suggest that individual departments and programs develop tools for determining the needs and goals of all faculty and develop enrichment opportunities accordingly. In Appendix C, we provide a guide for department chairs and program directors that may aid in creating materials that survey all faculty members. Departments and programs can create opportunities that work toward balance and create equitable opportunities that are hopefully paid and are at least acknowledged.

Programmatic Change. Additionally, we call for individuals within all programs to consider the responses collected here as they communicate with their contingent/NTT colleagues. To do so, we suggest that departments and programs utilize our guide for program directors and/or department chairs (Appendix C) in order to help recognize labor issues. We offer this guide as a questionnaire and survey that draws attention to items such as cost of living, salary and benefits, labor equity, professional development opportunities, and more. We intend for this guide to give contingent/NTT faculty more of a voice and also as a way to collect data that can be presented confidentially to university administration and/or used to create a balanced work environment. For example, program directors and department chairs might inquire which (if any) contingent/NTT faculty in their program/department are interested in service work, professional development, and other opportunities.

Pedagogical Change. We also suggest that contingent/NTT faculty, especially graduate students, need further exposure to alternative career paths. For graduate students, one step toward exposure could be re-imagining the dissertation committee to include interdisciplinary members from within and beyond the academy (Lueck & Boehm, 2019). Further, if academia refuses to make changes that would create a more equitable environment for contingent/NTT faculty, one option not often discussed is leaving academia. As one respondent wrote,

> "I was on the alt-ac market for two months and received three job offers with six-figure salaries. My universities had convinced me I'm not worth much, until I went out there and confronted what real demand there is for my skills and experience. More NTT in writing

and literature need exposure to this so they can make informed decisions about labor practices."

We contend with this call for "informed decisions." Graduate students, for example, are often encouraged to pursue academic positions but are not made aware of the realities of the job market, labor practices, pay discrepancies, hierarchies, burnout, and other issues within academic institutions. The skills that TPC and Writing Studies graduates have, however, are often highly profitable elsewhere. We suggest that programs equip their graduates with information on alternative career paths as well as the realities of the field and institutional practices in order to avoid cohorts of future instructors who are faced with these same challenges.

Institutional Level: Suggestions for Support

In this section, we speak to upper-level administrators who deny departmental or program requests for multi-year contracts or new TT positions or who limit salary increases. Like others, we argue that much change is needed at the institutional level. Higher pay is a necessity. Professional educators at colleges and universities should be earning (more than) a living wage and should have their basic needs met. Institutional systems currently in place, however, rely heavily on adjunct labor as well as graduate student and NTT labor without adequate compensation. While increases in pay may seem difficult in terms of budget, it is clear that these positions are needed and that instructors within these positions care for students and place a high value on quality instruction. We suggest that institutions work toward increasing care and support for contingent/NTT faculty members. For example, when crises erupt, institutions should provide materials (such as quality masks during a pandemic), services (such as free mental health services), and added support (such as modality options) for all faculty.

Additionally, we suggest that institutions work toward more equitable teaching loads and compensation. Many contingent/NTT instructors are faced with high course caps and teaching loads well beyond what is considered best practices in order to earn a living wage. For example, over half of our respondents were teaching at more than one institution and over half had multiple contracts. One individual stated that they were "teaching at 3 colleges for Fall 2021. 1st College: 5 classes: Basic Writing, 2 sections of Freshman Composition, Social Media Writing, Rhetoric and Workplace Writing. 2nd College: 2 sections of Freshman Composition. 3rd College: 2 sections of Freshman Writing." Five courses across three institutions creates a heavy workload not only in terms of course preparation and grading but also expectations in terms of meetings, training, various learning management services, transportation, and more. And, in this example, we have not taken personal characteristics into consideration. As mentioned previously, the majority of respondents were also caregivers. As a field, we must find ways of addressing the workload and compensation issue with upper-level administrators. Higher-level administrators in institutions must be made aware of these struggles and take action to create a healthier work environment for contingent faculty at all levels. We suggest that an anonymous survey of contingent/NTT faculty (see Appendix C) would create a data set and that aggregate data could be shared with administration. Included with such data could be narratives or other information from these individuals that may help to impact institutional decision-making processes.

Activism at the Institutional Level: Unionization. Finally, and because we do not wish to ignore the systemic problems, we argue that unionization and other sweeping, large-scale actions are vital. As one respondent noted in their discussion of their more equitable position,

> "All of the positives I've marked were only created as a result of a union contract: security, raises, current pay floor, professional development fund, earlier reappointment notices, TT starting to acknowledge me—none of these were created by the institution or department independently."

Thus, we suggest that unionization and similar strategies are necessary in order to create any real change. The AAUP (2022b) provides an overview as well as specific steps for unionization. Additionally, those interested in forming a union can review the University Grad Workers of New Mexico (2022) website for an example petition and collective bargaining agreement as well as other resources. Again, we contend that the labor issues discussed here are social justice issues that must be approached in comprehensive ways. If institutions will not create more equitable practices, perhaps unionization is the best way forward.

Conclusion

The results of our survey reveal a number of important issues that contingent/NTT faculty face in English departments. Additionally, we offer recommendations for individuals, program directors and chairs, and institutions of higher education to create better labor conditions for NTT/contingent laborers. We have included a *Guide for Program Directors and/or Department Chairs* in Appendix C and *Concrete Next Steps for Support* in Appendix D to assist with this process.

We acknowledge, however, that our research has limitations.

Information in this study was collected from a survey distributed to a number of listservs in the English/Writing Studies field. As such, the results presented here do not necessarily portray the entirety of the field accurately, as respondents were only those who were signed up for those listservs or were forwarded the request by someone who is a member. In addition, we can assume that respondents were only individuals with the time to complete a lengthy survey by the deadline, etc. While we do not claim to present a representative overview of the entire Writing Studies field or the TPC field here, we do suggest that our results offer unique insights into various perspectives from individuals who wanted to voice their experiences.

Beyond our study, further research on this subject is vital in order to create a clearer picture of the labor discrepancies in the Writing Studies field, particularly within TPC. Subfields and departments may replicate this survey in order to analyze labor issues specific to their branch of Writing Studies. Additionally, we suggest that additional research methods may be useful in order to locate possibilities and strategies. For example, case studies of specific programs or narratives regarding specific strategies being used to combat labor issues at various levels may be particularly beneficial.

Finally, we encourage program chairs, department chairs, institutional leaders, allies, and tenure/tenure track faculty to commit to identifying and implementing concrete solutions that will lead to a more equitable, more just working environments for contingent/NTT laborers in their department, at their university, and across the TPC and broader English/Writing Studies workforce.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Our Personal Experiences

Katie Rieger, PhD

I served in contingent/NTT roles from 2015–2022. These roles include GTA, writing center consultant, assistant director, research assistant, adjunct, 3/4 NTT assistant professor, and others. My 3/4 contingent position turned into a TT position, which I stayed in for a year before I transitioned into an alt-ac career.

For me (and I'm sure many others), issues related to finances, family sacrifices, and health issues while in contingent/NTT roles were very difficult. During all my times of contingent laboring, there was never a time where I did not work 2+ other jobs in addition to my "main" contingent role. These roles started when I was a GTA in my master's program. In 2016, I made roughly $908/month (9-month contract) without health insurance. To make ends meet (paying rent, bills, student loans), I always lived with roommates and contracted myself out as a substitute teacher for K-12 schools, working on the days I didn't teach at the college and working morning and weekend shifts at a bank. My PhD stipend paid roughly $1700 (9-month contract) with health insurance. The summer between my master's and my PhD I got married, and my spouse became a "trailing spouse" and looked for careers in the city of my PhD program. He found one, where he was underpaid for his master's degree at $33,000, but it allowed us to be in the same city together and make ends meet. I am still immensely grateful for his choice to financially support us during this time and recognize that he did most of the house tasks while I was studying and grading, and I want to recognize the partners, family members, and loved ones who often do the same.

Even though he never shared anything but support, my not being able to contribute much bothered me. In an effort to try to try and support us more, I contracted myself out to even more jobs. During my last semester of PhD coursework, I worked 20 hours for the university, received approval for an overload to work four hours in another department, taught 2–3 courses/semester at a community college, and taught 1–2 courses/semester at my alma mater. It was during this time that my mental and physical health started to deteriorate. That semester, I started looking for full-time jobs to cut down on some of the hours and was lucky to secure a 3/4 NTT position that would cover health insurance, pay more than all my part-time jobs combined (total was ~$45,000), and be closer to extended family.

During my 3/4 NTT position, I taught a 4/3 load with an additional

2-3 overloads a year, served on several committees, and started the foundation for a writing center. I, like many other folks in contingent positions, tried to root myself in the school in the hopes of being offered a FTT position. I still worked as an adjunct at other universities, but I worked significantly less than I had previously, and I was able to dedicate more time to my graduate studies. I received awards for teaching, high evaluations from colleagues and students, developed a TPC course, presented at conferences, published peer-reviewed articles, and secured grants. While I felt overwhelmed at times, I more so felt thankful for having a position and more financial security. The second semester during my first year in this position (2020), COVID-19 began. Again, worried about the precarious nature of my role, I offered to build instructional materials and support faculty as we transitioned for the "two-weeks" online. I continued this service throughout the pandemic, largely unpaid for these additional roles. However, at the end of the 2020 academic year, a key administrator approached me with thanks and offered me a full-time, tenure track position. While this position was what I wanted, it turned out to not be exactly what I expected. The administrator let me know she would not be able to pay me a full-time wage—but that through a series of years she would add small bonuses to get me to a full-time salary. I would continue doing the same level of work I had been doing alongside additional duties of developing a writing center and a writing across the curriculum (WAC) program. For several reasons (many surrounding stability and security), I accepted the position. I want to take a moment to recognize that many contingent/NTT faculty root themselves in university system(s), win awards, publish, secure grants, take on several extra duties, etc., in hopes of securing an offer for a stable position. In other words, I want to recognize that this change in status from contingent/NTT to TT is an exception rather than the norm that many higher education laborers face.

From the time of starting this project to now, I have since moved to an alt-ac job. There were many reasons surrounding this change, most of them surrounding finances, family, and health. The experience of translating skills and learning new ones in the alt-ac realm has been extremely rewarding. I am very thankful for the work I do, for warm colleagues, for the ability to work remotely, for the ability to stay connected in research, and to feel fairly compensated for my time/labor. I miss teaching, the writing center, the students, and the day-to-day duties in academia, but for the first time in a long time, I feel relaxed and at peace.

Christina Lane, PhD

My experience as an educator has been extremely varied over the past 15 years in terms of what and whom I taught. Part of that variety is due to personal circumstances (like my desire to see the world after graduating college and my partner completing medical school and residency in different cities). But a major reason for my varied experience is because I love learning about new things and how to teach in new ways. In contrast to Katie, Sarah, and Lydia, for my first eight years as an educator, I primarily taught full-time at the secondary level, rather than in higher education. Here's the rundown of my diverse jobs during this time. Upon graduation from undergrad, I began as an EFL instructor at a private language school in Bangkok, Thailand; shifted to teaching sheltered and mainstream English classes in a Title I high school in Oklahoma City; coordinated and taught in the northside Oklahoma City Public Schools Refugee, Asylee, and Immigrant Center located in that same high school; moved to a reading and writing RTI (response to intervention) facilitator position and then sixth grade language arts position in an IB (international baccalaureate) middle school in Texas; and finally ended in an English and history position in a private Christian school in Texas. During my first two years back in the US while teaching full-time in Oklahoma City, I also completed a master's in TESL/bilingual education at night and in the summer.

When I had the opportunity to go back to school for a PhD in 2015, I decided to focus on my schooling and work in the contingent positions offered through a graduate assistantship, rather than continuing to work in a full-time secondary position. So, like Katie, Sarah, and Lydia, I have also served in a variety of contingent roles at the university level: writing center consultant, graduate teaching instructor, assistant director of a FYC program, and adjunct. But because my partner has had a well-paying and stable job since 2015, I have been privileged to not have to worry about whether these contingent roles paid well (they haven't), provided health insurance (the adjunct jobs haven't), or offered additional benefits like retirement, a laptop, office supplies, etc. (they haven't).

During the 2020–2021 school year, when other fellow Rhetoric and Writing Studies PhD student colleagues were seeking jobs in anticipation of graduating in May, I was taking care of my newborn son and worrying about my husband, who works in healthcare. So, I didn't apply to any full-time TT or NTT jobs. I decided to adjunct part-time for a community college and a four-year public university: two online courses for the university and one face-to-face course for the college. However, I was only able to do so because my recently retired parents who live nearby took care of my son while I taught.

Although the opportunity to apply to a TT position came up at the community college during the 2021–2022 school year, I decided to not apply and remain part-time in order to be able to be at home with my toddler as much as I can. Fortunately, my supervisor at the community college I'm continuing to work at is understanding of my situation. Over the past two semesters, he has consistently offered a class at the location and times that I have childcare. And I am grateful. But despite spending a significant amount of time building curriculum for these classes, both semesters I have been unsure until one week before class began that I would be teaching that class. Why? For reasons that are the same or similar to most contingent laborers. One, the amount of students in each class needs to hit a certain number. Two, classes can be shifted last minute to a TT professor if they need an additional course (like if their class didn't hit the required minimum).

Sarah Lonelodge, PhD

Like Katie, Christina, and Lydia, I have had varied experiences in higher education as a contingent/NTT instructor. Two weeks before my first semester as an MA student in 2011, I was offered a graduate teaching assistantship, which I immediately accepted. I found out later that the position paid $955 per month for teaching two courses and did not include insurance coverage. While I did receive a tuition waiver, I was responsible for paying for fees, books, and other necessities. Rent was over half of my monthly income even in the smaller town I lived in, which was nearly an hour commute to the university, and moving closer was impossible. In other words, I was not paid enough to live near my place of work. Therefore, instead of leaving the employment I was in before graduate school, I moved into a part-time position. This meant that I worked in an office for four hours each weekday morning, drove an hour, taught two courses, attended my graduate courses, held office hours, and commuted home another hour. During my "off" time, I created lesson plans, gave feedback on student writing, conferenced with students, and much more.

I worked almost constantly to finish my MA degree in two years and was ready to begin my career. At that time, I had very little understanding of TT versus NTT positions, yearly contracts, adjunct laborer conditions, or much else. I wrongly assumed that professor positions were steady and abundant and would be located somewhere I wanted to live. I quickly realized that most permanent, full-time positions required or preferred a PhD. What was available to me were mostly adjunct positions or full-time, non-permanent positions in different states that would require me to uproot my husband and our children.

This option seemed impossible since we had little to no savings after two years of graduate school.

I, therefore, applied for and was offered an adjunct position at the university where I received my MA. I was paid $700 per credit hour, which for four classes was about $1900 per month. I had no insurance, and I still could not afford to live near the university. Although my income was higher, I was essentially teaching a 4/4 load and being paid about 50% less than FT faculty teaching the same load. Eventually, expenses, including student loans, accumulated, and I took on an additional adjunct position at a community college. This position paid $660 per credit hour and added three courses to the four I was teaching. It also required more commuting and additional planning and grading due to differing program requirements.

After two years of adjuncting at two—and because adjuncts are not paid in the summer, eventually three—different institutions and increasingly feeling burnout, I applied and was accepted to a PhD program. It offered a stipend of about $1700 per month, included health insurance and a tuition waiver, and offered a scholarship for the first semester. Although the pay was low, I was able to publish and get needed experience in teaching upper division courses and in administrative work as an assistant director of first year composition (FYC).

Upon completion of my PhD program, I secured a full-time teaching assistant professor position that included adequate pay, though the cost for insurance and other resources were significant and no funding for moving expenses was provided. Although it was a one-year-renewable contract, the stability and income were a significant step up from adjunct and graduate student work. During my time as a teaching assistant professor, I applied for several TT jobs in hopes of securing a stable position with more resources and more support within the department, and I have accepted a TT position for the upcoming academic year.

Lydia Welker, MA

When I received my acceptance letter to my MA program, I also received an offer to be both a GTA and a digital publishing research assistant (RA). In return, I would receive a tuition waiver and a stipend of $15,900.

During my first year (2015–2016), I split my time between the two opportunities, meaning I taught one course each semester and also worked 10 hours per week as an RA. I especially thrived as an RA; the position was academically challenging, allowed me to grow as a professional, and helped me further develop skills that would benefit me outside of academia. I continued working as an RA throughout the summer of 2016 as well. From 2016–2017, I accepted a new graduate RA position in the college research office, where I helped arts and sciences faculty create competitive grant proposals and secure funding for their research.

I'm extremely grateful for these research and teaching assistantship opportunities—without them, I wouldn't have been able to attend graduate school at all—but even though I lived in a state and city with a comparatively low cost of living, I still struggled to cover living expenses and other bills. Fortunately, I was young enough to stay covered by my parents' health insurance plan, which cut down on some costs, and I was flexible enough to be able to live in cheaper housing with other graduate students that, while not close to campus, included free bus transportation to the university.

To supplement my income during my second year, I held additional paid positions. Not only did I continue working on some long-term projects as a digital publishing RA alongside my assistantship in the research office, but I also worked as the English Department's assistant technology coordinator for an additional stipend. I occasionally freelanced in the industry as a technical writer and editor, too.

I love researching, and I thrive as a teacher. But, after I graduated with my MA, I didn't seek out nor expect to find full-time work in higher education because I knew that all the well-paying jobs require a PhD—something I did not and do not have. Although it interests me, I have many reasons for not applying to PhD programs right now, many of which are covered in the results of this survey and paper (significant lack of stable/equitable hiring opportunities, high program costs with low stipend offers, lack of support, etc.).

Currently, I work as a technical writer, editor, and digital marketer. However, because I do so love to teach technical communication, I am also a per-course adjunct instructor at my undergraduate alma mater. Each fall semester for the last few years, I have taught a course for seniors and graduate students. I love teaching the class, and I'm grateful to the professional writing program for hiring me; I have control over the course material, I get to work with both undergraduate and graduate students, and I can prepare my students to do some truly fascinating work in the technical communication field. But, comparing the stipend I receive to how much time it takes to plan and teach the course every year, one thing is clear: I don't teach for the money. It's for the love of teaching.

Appendix B: Survey Questions

Below include the questions that were asked on the survey. Please note that most of these questions were multiple choice/multiple answers. The answers are not provided in an effort to consolidate the length of this article.

Overview of Support & Labor

- What are your area(s) of expertise? This could relate to your degree(s) and/or emphases you have in addition to your degree title.
    - Rhetoric, composition, technical/professional writing, linguistics, ESL/TESOL, literature, creative writing, Writing Studies, other
- How many institutions do you currently work at (either in TT or NTT/contingent roles)?
    - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5+
- How many NTT/contingent roles do you currently have? In other words, how many contingent "contracts" do you have? (For example: One may have a contract for a grad assistant position in the English dept., and they may have a research contract for another dept.)
    - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5+
- From 2015–2020, describe your teaching load (i.e., sections taught, number of institutions, etc.).
    - Short answer text
- Please describe your current teaching load for Fall 2021 (i.e., sections taught, number of institutions, etc.).
    - Short answer text
- How would you categorize your NTT/contingent role(s)? Select all that apply.
    - Graduate student instructor, Per-course/Adjunct instructor, NTT, other
- If you are in a contingent/NTT position, are you employed outside of academia? If so, how many additional jobs do you have?
    - Not employed outside of academia, 1 outside job, 2 outside jobs, 3 outside jobs, 4 outside jobs, 5+ outside jobs
- Is your full-time professional career outside of academia?
    - Yes/No
- How would you describe the contingent/NTT institution (or one of the institutions) you are employed at? Select all that apply.
    - Tribal college, associate-granting, special focus, baccalaureate-granting, masters-granting, doctorate-granting, R1 institu-

  - tion, R2 institution, liberal arts institution, HBCU, faith-based, private, public, small (0-4,999), medium (5,000-14,999), large (15,000+)
- What are your position(s) at these institutions?
  - Per-course/adjunct, graduate student, lecturer, visiting assistant professor, other NTT teaching position, NTT/contingent research position, NTT/contingent administrative position, other
  - If you selected other, please provide the title of those positions here.
- How long have you worked at this institution? If you have changed positions and are still in NTT/contingent roles, please count previous roles' time.
  - Less than 1 year, 1-2 years, 3-4 years, 5-6 years, 7-8 years, 9-10 years, more than 10 years
- If this position were to become TT, would you be interested in applying to the TT position?
  - Yes, no, maybe
  - If you chose maybe, please explain.
- For the current term, how far in advance of the term starting did you receive your course assignments?
  - Less than 1 week, 1-2 weeks, 3-4 weeks, 1-3 months, more than 3 months
- Have you sought a TT-position at any of these or other institutions?
  - No, yes/currently seeking a position, yes/within the last year, yes/1-2 years ago, yes/3-5 years ago, yes/5+ years ago
- In considering your reasons for teaching in your roles, please indicate whether you agree with these statements. Check all that apply.
  - My contingent/NTT position(s) is/are an important source of income for me, Compensation is not a major consideration in my decision to teach part time, NTT/contingent teaching is a stepping-stone to a TT position, My NTT/contingent position provides benefits (health insurance, retirement) that I need, TT positions were not available, My expertise in my chosen profession is relevant to the course(s) I teach

Resources & Compensation

- Please select the following office resources that you are provided with in your current role.
  - "Welcome" materials to orient you to the dept., class, HR needs, etc.; shared office; private office; shared computer; private computer; shared phone; private phone; limited printing/

copying capabilities; unlimited printing/copying capabilities; limited access to library resources (databases, ILL, checking out texts, etc.; unlimited access to library resources; professional development funds; an email account

- How much are you paid per course (3-hour credit) at each institution?
  - Less than 500 per course, 500-999, 1000-1499, 1500-1999, 2000-2499, 2500-2999, 3000-3499, 3500-3999, 4000-4499, 4500-4999, 5000+
  - If you selected less than 500 for an institution or 5000 or more, please provide your per-course compensation.
- How much was your total salary from each institution for this academic year?
  - Less than 5000, 5000-9999, 10000-14999, 15000-19999, 20000-24999, 25000-29999, 30000-34999, 35000-39999, 40000-44999, 45000-49999, 50000+
- Outside of your per course payment or salary, are you provided with any of the following?
  - Health insurance, compensated/semesterly trainings, raise in the past two years, other additional monetary compensation, other
  - If you selected other, please explain.
- Please select which statements you agree with:
  - I am offered specific training before teaching, I am responsible for primarily introductory courses, I have no guarantee of employment security, I am offered professional development opportunities once a semester, I am offered professional development opportunities more than once a semester, TT colleagues collaborate/interact with me, TT colleagues do not interact/collaborate with me, I'm required to attend meetings, I feel respected by TT faculty, I do not feel respected by TT faculty, I'm paid fairly, I have input in course designs, I am included in faculty governance
- If you are provided with professional development opportunities, which are the most beneficial to you?
  - Short answer text
- What type of professional development opportunities would you be most interested in?
  - Social justice workshops, labor-based assessment strategies, feedback strategies, useful classroom tools, lesson planning, field-related theories/research, pedagogy theory & tips, research/publishing workshops, job materials workshop &

feedback

- Thinking of your time, if professional development opportunities were offered throughout the semester, how much time would you want to give to these opportunities throughout the semester?
    - I would not be interested, 30/min semester, 1 hr/semester, 2-3 hrs/semester, 4-5 hrs/semester, 6-7 hrs/semester, 8-9 hrs/semester, 10+hrs/semester
- How would you like these opportunities presented?
    - In-person, hybrid (online and in-person), virtual recording, regularly (issued multi-semester) newsletters, emails, other

Demographic Information

- Personally, how important (to you) is
    - Research, teaching, service
    - Likert scale (essential, very important, somewhat important, not important)
- How many courses are you teaching this term (including all the institutions you teach at)?
    - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 or more
- Select the aspects of your job(s) that you are satisfied with. Select all that apply.
    - Salary, health benefits, retirement benefits, opportunity for scholarly pursuits, teaching load, departmental support for work/life balance, institutional support for work/life balance, prospects for career advancements, flexibility in relation to personal/familial/other emergencies, leave policies, overall job
- In the past year have you
    - Considered leaving academia for another job, considered leave a (or multiple) institutions for another academia job, engaged in service without pay, received a job elsewhere, sought a promotion
- Please mark the highest degree you have earned:
    - Bachelor's (BA, BS, etc.), master's (MA/MS), terminal master's (MFA, MBA, etc.), JD, PhD, professional doctorate (EdD, PsyD, etc.), none, other
- Please mark the degree you are currently working on, if any.
    - Bachelor's (BA, BS, etc.), master's (MA/MS), terminal master's (MFA, MBA, etc.), JD, PhD, professional doctorate (EdD, PsyD, etc.), none, other
- What gender do you identify with?
    - Female, male, prefer not to say, other
- How would you categorize your ethnicity?
    - Short answer text

- Are you a caregiver for anyone under the age of 18?
    - No, yes/1 person, yes/2, yes/3, yes/4+
- Are you a caregiver for anyone over the age of 18?
    - No, yes/1 person, yes/2, yes/3, yes/4+
- When were you born?
    - Before 1950, 1950-1959, 1960-1969, 1970-1979, 1980-1989, 1990-1999, 2000-2009

Frustrations/Other Thoughts

- With your position(s), what are (if any) frustrations do you have related to this position(s)?
    - Short answer text
- With your position(s), what office resources (not just those included above) would make your position better?
    - Long answer text
- With your position(s), what monetary resources (not just those included above) would make your position better?
    - Long answer text
- With your position(s), what professional development opportunities (not just those included above) would make your position better?
    - Long answer text
- With your position(s), what other resources (not just those included above) would make your position better?
    - Long answer text
- Are there any other items/compensation/opportunities that would better support you in these position(s)?
    - Long answer text
- Are there helpful initiatives (mentoring, course shells, etc.) or development (specific training, workshops, etc.) that you receive from your institution/department?
    - Long answer text
- Are there any additional thoughts you wish to convey about the support (or lack thereof) in your position(s)
    - Long answer text
- Are there any other thoughts you would like to provide that were not covered in the survey?
    - Long answer text

Optional Follow-Up

If you would like to be considered with follow-up opportunities (such as follow-up of questions and possibly supplying a narrative of your experience as a contingent/NTT laborer, please supply your email. If you add your email here, it will not be used in conjunction with any data you supplied in the questionnaire. In other words, your email will be stripped from data before it is reviewed.

- I would like to be considered for follow-up opportunities to share your experiences. Please provide your email.
    - Short answer text

Appendix C: Guide for Program Directors and/or Department Chairs

In an effort to provide tangible takeaways from our study, we present here a worksheet for program directors and/or department chairs in Writing Studies. The goal of this worksheet is to assess contingent faculty's labor and quality of life. In doing so, the data collected from this worksheet can be used to determine if/what changes are needed and to provide data to university administrators when calling for change. If you make a survey, we strongly encourage making it anonymous and not collecting any identifiable data, to protect contingent/NTT individuals and to get honest answers.

Part 1: Program Director/Department Chair Worksheet

The goal of this worksheet is to assess contingent faculty's labor and quality of life. In doing so, the data collected from this worksheet can be used to determine if/what changes are needed and to provide data to university administrators when calling for change.

Demographics

What contingent/NTT positions make up your program/department?	
How many contingent/NTT faculty are in each position?	
What is the average number of courses taught by these individuals?	
What is the average number of students served by these individuals?	
Are the number of contingent positions, the number of courses taught, and the number of students served relatively consistent each year?	
Do the above numbers indicate that a promotion system/multi-year contracts is warranted and/or should be expanded?	

Salary and Benefits

- Taking into account annual pay after taxes, insurance benefits, tuition (for GTAs), additional fees (parking, university fees, supplies, etc.), what is the estimated take-home pay each year for contingent faculty of various ranks?
- What is the estimated living wage for your county (see https://livingwage.mit.edu/)?

Sample: Oklahoma State University

Rank and Load	Annual Pay After Taxes*	Insurance Benefits	Tuition Waiver	Additional Fees	Estimated Take-Home Pay	Living Wage After Taxes for Payne County
GTA (2/2)	$17,773	Yes	Yes	Parking (-$150) University Fees (-$450) Textbooks (-$200)	$16,973	$27,180
Adjunct (4/4)	$23,414	No (-$500)	n/a	Parking (-$150)	$22,764	$27,180

*https://salaryaftertax.com/us/salary-calculator

- What is the difference between take-home pay and living wage for each rank?
  - Sample: GTA: (-$10,207); adjunct: (-$4,416)
- Do GTAs in the program/department receive tuition waivers? If not, deduct tuition costs from the take-home salary.

Based on the take-home pay of contingent faculty in my department and according to the MIT living wage calculator, are all faculty in my department are earning a living wage?

- If not, how much additional pay is needed for each rank to reach a living wage?
- Other than or in addition to salary increase, are other options for increasing take-home pay possible (e.g., free parking, insurance

benefits, etc.)?

Support

- Do faculty of all ranks in my department have access to the following resources?
    - Sample syllabi
    - Lessons and activities
    - Rubrics
    - Assignment sheets/prompts
    - Fully editable and fully optional course shells
- Does my department have professional development opportunities available to faculty of all ranks each semester?
    - If so, are these opportunities advertised to NTT faculty?
    - Does my department make an effort to schedule professional development opportunities at a time convenient for NTT faculty?
    - Are NTT faculty invited to collaborate on creating professional development opportunities?
- Does my department offer equal voting rights and/or input from contingent faculty on department/program issues, such as curriculum development, policies, etc.?
- Does my department provide guides for new faculty, such as how to submit startup paperwork, who to contact in human resources, etc.?
- How quickly are faculty given access to computer systems, learning management systems (LMS), etc.?
- What office supplies do contingent faculty have access to (computers, printers, copiers, etc.)?
- What office or lounge space do contingent faculty have access to?
- Is research (publications, conferences, etc.) required, encouraged, or used as a metric in any way for renewal of this position?
    - If so, is this metric communicated effectively to NTT faculty?
    - If so, does the university/department provide NTT faculty with funding?
    - If funding is offered, is reimbursement the only option for funding?
    - Is additional support provided for research (course release, reduced service, etc.)?
- Does my department host non-professional events (lunch, holiday events, etc.) welcoming faculty of all ranks?
- How early are contingent/NTT individuals notified if courses are canceled due to enrollment?

- Are courses taken from contingent/NTT and given to TT individuals?

Program Focus

- My program/department prepares graduate students for possible careers outside academia.
  - Courses that facilitate this alt-ac focus:
  - Job advertisements we have reviewed include the following skills:
  - Courses teaching these skills:
- Thesis/dissertation committee members may be outside of academia.
- My program/department has resources available to graduate students pursuing alt-ac careers.
  - List of resources available:

Part 2: Sample Survey Questions

Equally or perhaps more important than program director/department chair insight is inviting input from contingent/NTT faculty. The following questions are sample survey questions that directors/chairs could use to develop surveys or questionnaires.

We strongly suggest that the survey remain anonymous and that it does not include questions that would identify respondents, such as gender, ethnicity, etc., unless such items are absolutely necessary for doing advocacy work.

Demographic Information (Open-Ended)

- What is your current job title?
- What is your education level?
- How long have you been a faculty member at this institution?
- Are you a caregiver/do you have dependents?
- If you are an international worker, have you received adequate visa assistance?
- If you are an international worker, have you received assistance with finding housing?

Service (Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

- Are you interested in service work? If yes, what kind?
- Are you interested in having a mentor? If yes, what content should be provided?
- Are you interested in serving as a mentor? If yes, what content should be provided?

Support: Teaching (Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

- My department has an adequate repository of sample syllabi,

lessons and activities, assignment sheets/prompts, rubrics, course shells, etc.
- I receive my teaching schedule with adequate time for preparation for all my courses.
- I feel that I can reach out to colleagues with questions, concerns, etc. about teaching.
- I feel that my teaching is evaluated fairly by the department/program.

Support: Professional Development (Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)
- If a tenure-track position opened at this institution, I would apply for it.
- I feel that I would be a strong candidate for such a position.
- I am interested in professional development opportunities from the department/program.
- I would like to pursue professional development opportunities outside of the department/program.
- My program/department has offered support for positions outside of academia.
- My program/department has prepared me with skills to secure positions outside of academia.
- My program/department has provided me with knowledge about the nuances of the job market (not asking for salary, thank-you notes, etc.) and labor issues in my field.

Support: Salary and Benefits (Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)
- My current salary is enough to live on and support my household.
- I support my household through an additional job(s).
- My position offers adequate insurance benefits.
- I would prefer a multi-year contract for my position.
- My department provides opportunities for contingent/NTT faculty to be recognized.

Other (Open-Ended)
- What (if any) frustrations do you have related to your position(s)?
- What other resources (not just those included above) would make your position better?
- Are there other items/opportunities that would better support you?
- Do you feel that scheduling decisions are made in an ethical and equitable way?
- If scheduling changes are made, do you have adequate time to find other employment opportunities?

- Are there helpful initiatives (mentoring, course shells, etc.) the department or institution should provide?
- Are there helpful professional development opportunities (specific training, workshops, etc.) that our department or the institution should provide?
- In what areas do you feel your department chair is supporting you?
- In what areas do you wish your department chair could support you more?
- Are there any other thoughts you would like your department chair to know?

Appendix D: Concrete Next Steps for Support

Individual Level

- Learn contingent/NTT laborers' names
- Connect with them (chats, etc.)
- Share pedagogical, professional, and, perhaps, personal resources
- Invite contingent/NTT to meetings, collaboration efforts, and publication opportunities
- Offer mentoring, not just advising
- Listen to their needs and advocate at the program/departmental (or institutional) level
- Recognize that contingent faculty may have unique experiences and expertise that can benefit the program/department
- Have conversations with students about labor and inequities in higher education
- Have radical transparency conversations as related to salaries/compensation/labor/etc.

Program/Departmental Level

- Provide a more equitable spread of heavy-load courses between contingent and NTT individuals (entry-level courses, service courses, general education courses, etc.)
- Provide a more equitable spread of service/adding service as a component that can go toward TT (allowing contingent/NTT to fill, if they desire)
- Provide course release/s to contingent/NTT individuals as necessary for personal or professional reasons
- Provide awards and recognition for contingent/NTT individuals both as a category themselves and with TT individuals
- Provide consistent department recognition (in meetings or conversations) to acknowledge the work contingent/NTT do
- Offer support by listening to their needs
- Allow contingent/NTT individuals to serve on departmental and university committees and governance (with voting rights)
- Provide a handout or guidebook of tasks (and how to complete those tasks) prior to starting work: HR paperwork, required training (Title 9, cybersecurity, teaching standards, etc.), where to submit syllabi, policy overview (attendance, grades, where to requests textbooks), benefits that can be used with this position (printing, database access, parking, etc.), etc.
- Provide a list of resources (affordable housing opportunities in the area, food banks, healthcare resources, daycare resources, etc.)
- Provide free or greatly reduced parking fees or transit funds for

contingent/NTT individuals
- Provide sufficient office space with necessary supplies (computers, printers, copiers, staplers, etc.)
- Be flexible with office hours (modes, spaces, length, etc.)
- Make sure there is a contingent/NTT listserv that is updated each semester so individuals are connected to all key information
- Share key information with the contingent/NTT listserv
- Be transparent with the program/department budget
- Provide clear and consistent communication of promotion opportunities at the institution with clear steps and transparent criteria
- Reach out each semester to hear what professional development opportunities would be beneficial
- Record professional development opportunities and have a repository where all can access them
- Create course shells for heavy-labor courses (with ability to edit/alter them)
- Listen to contingent/NTT individuals about courses they want to teach and offer them opportunities to skill-up (if necessary) and teach those courses
- Work with upper-level administration to improve conditions for contingent faculty labor
- Provide more programmatic focus of opportunities outside of academia
- Provide a clear, ethical guide of the academic job market, labor practices, pay discrepancies, hierarchies, and other issues to undergraduate and graduate students to help them make informed decisions
- Provide encouragement and financial support for conferences
- Remove any non-competing clauses and/or clauses that hinder contingent/NTT individuals from working elsewhere
- Offer multiple modes for teaching (hybrid, online, in-person)
- Provide resources for mental health, work/life balance, etc.
- Institute longer contracts
- Support unionization efforts
- Have radical transparency conversations as related to salaries/compensation/labor/etc.

Institutional Level
- Offer pay that is equal to or more than the cost of living in the area for contingent/NTT individuals, including graduate students
- Provide services (mental health services, modality options, etc.) for all instructors
- Provide raises to contingent/NTT individuals

- Include clauses on syllabi templates that share compensation for teaching that course
- Amend policies that exclude NTT individuals from committee and other service opportunities, as appropriate
- Develop a system of promotion for NTT faculty (senior lecturer, teaching assistant professor, etc.)
- Provide tuition waivers for GTAs
- Support department chairs, program directors, etc., when they request that specific new positions have TT rank
- Have radical transparency conversations as related to salaries/compensation/labor/etc.

Author Information

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A R T I C L E

Perspectives from a Departmental Adoption of an Open Technical Communication Textbook

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Kennesaw State University

Abstract. In fall 2020, Kennesaw State University implemented an open educational resource (OER) as its required textbook across all sections of its TCOM 2010: Technical Writing course. Using results from a quantitative study of students and faculty using the *Open Technical Communication* textbook, this paper provides valuable perspectives on actual use of an OER in the technical communication survey course. Results of the study revealed both expected and unexpected insights that indicate topics for further research. From the faculty survey, there may be a positive effect of faculty involvement in the creation and adoption process on their perception of the OER, and the relationship between faculty perceptions of student engagement and students' actual academic achievement may not be a close one. From the student survey, students' actual use of OER is about as inconsistent as their use of traditional commercial textbooks, students' use of supplementary resources has a positive effect on their perception of the OER as long as they choose to use them, and students' interest in an OER and their perception of its quality do not appear to be related.

Keywords: open educational resources, programmatic adoption, faculty perspectives, student perspectives, technical communication, departmental adoption

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Introduction

As alternative course materials—such as inclusive access, textbook rentals, digital textbooks with and without companion websites, and resale textbooks—emerge and expand to combat high standard textbook prices, initiatives at the country, state, institution, department, and faculty level have emerged for creating and adopting open educational resources (OER) as a small piece to the affordable education movement. According to David Wiley (n.d.), OER are typically understood to be free course materials and textbooks that allow for five permissions which grant the user the ability to retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute the work. In the United States, OER are usually created by instructional faculty in collaboration with instructional designers, librarians, and university presses. There are also a few open publishers in the United States, including OpenStax and The University of North Georgia Press, that conduct peer review on their open textbooks.

As part of a state-wide affordability program in the United States' State of Georgia, five faculty members at Kennesaw State University (KSU), located just northwest of Atlanta, developed an open textbook using new material and existing materials remixed with permission. The OER underwent multiple redesigns and content updates, shifted between software platforms, and was renamed since its initial publication, but it is now available in a stable, online version as *Open Technical Communication* (*OTC*) (Tijerina et al., 2019). As of this writing, *OTC* includes a complete textbook hosted on an interactive platform with annotation features, a plethora of ancillary resources and sample syllabi, and an at-cost print option for students who prefer a hard copy. Thanks to its zero cost and supplementary resource, *OTC* has been adopted by faculty in at least 23 states and at 42 institutions (that we know of), as well as a few adopters outside the United States.

The developers of *OTC* have used it since its launch in 2015, but in Fall 2020, KSU's Department of Technical Communication and Interactive Design implemented *OTC* as its required textbook across all sections of its introductory-level technical communication class, TCOM 2010: Technical Writing, which serves over 1,200 students per year. Students taking this class save approximately $200,000 annually in textbook costs at KSU alone. As part of a grant reporting requirement, the authors of this article (the developers of *OTC*) conducted surveys with faculty members and students after the departmental implementation in Fall 2020, seeking perspectives on and experiences with the open textbook. We have continued to survey the students of TCOM 2010 every semester to garner feedback for continuous improvement of the course and the *OTC* textbook.

Background

Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants

Since 2014, the University System of Georgia (USG) has supported Affordable Learning Georgia (ALG), a state-wide affordability initiative run through the state library system, GALILEO. Through its primary grant program, Affordable Materials Grants (formerly known as Textbook Transformation Grants), ALG has saved students over $105 million in textbook costs (2022). These grants provide state funding to support teams of faculty and staff across the USG to create, revise, and/or adopt OER for their courses.

The year prior to ALG's inception, KSU (a liberal-arts leaning regional comprehensive university) and Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU, an engineering-focused university) had just completed a consolidation under the KSU name. As part of this consolidation, KSU's College of Humanities and Social Sciences gained a new department, now called Technical Communication and Interactive Design (TCID), which had formerly housed SPSU's English courses. Due to the technical nature of SPSU's Technical Communication majors and the differences between their needs and the coursework available from a traditional English department, the separation of KSU's English Department and the TCID Department stood firm. Even so, there are overlaps in the content of each department—particularly in the area of technical and professional communication. The English Department maintains a professional writing minor with corresponding courses, while the TCID Department maintains a technical communication major.

This partial overlap between the TCID and English departments at KSU positioned them in a strong position to pursue collaborative work. A group of faculty from each department teaching TCOM 2010: Technical Writing (TCID) and WRIT 3140: Workplace Writing (English) agreed that the commercial textbooks they were using were exceedingly and unnecessarily expensive for students, the most common one costing about $120 for a new copy. So, when ALG released its third round of Textbook Transformation Grants in 2015, this team of four faculty and one instructional designer applied as a group and received a $30,000 grant to develop a new, openly licensed textbook to satisfy the needs of both courses at zero cost to students. The authors of this article are two of the grant recipients and original authors of the resulting open textbook, now titled *Open Technical Communication* (*OTC*).

Open Textbook Development and Revision Cycles

With permission, the authors of *OTC* started with David McMurrey's

Online Technical Writing (n.d.), an older open online textbook, to develop a "remixed" open textbook, which is when OER developers combine and revise existing openly licensed works to create a new work, ideally with an open license itself. OTC was first published under its working title, *Sexy Technical Communication*, in 2016 with a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license (n.d.). That original publication is no longer available online, but Figure 1 gives an example of its "idiosyncratic" design.

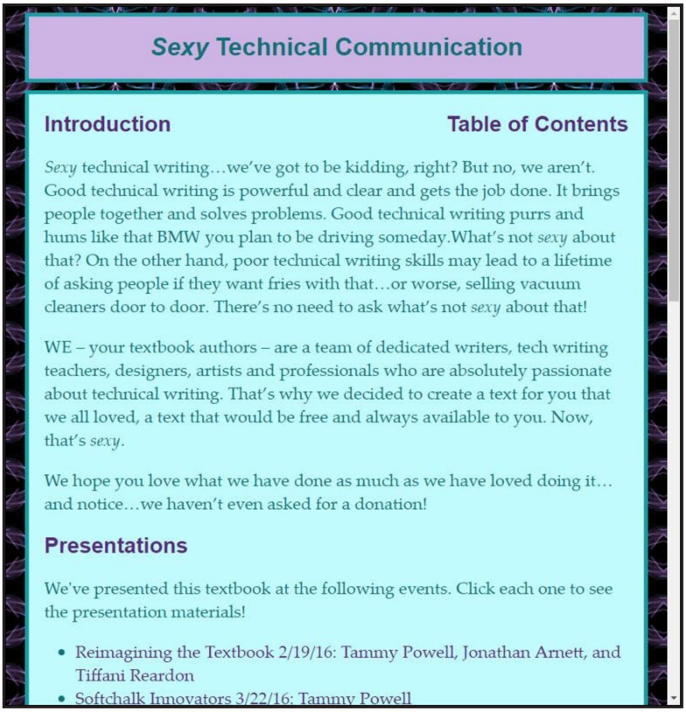

Figure 1: Sexy Technical Communication's original homepage (Tijerina, 2020).

This original version of the open textbook was what one might expect from technical communicators who were dipping their toes into OER development for the first time. The content was, overall, appropriate for an introductory course. The design, done by an undergraduate student, was as unique as the title, and the platform, SoftChalk, was the best and most convenient option available to the team at the time. The original version and its subsequent updates were published using a separate SoftChalk Cloud module for each individual chapter and chapter section (where applicable) and then connected via an HTML-based table of contents. In 2018, two of the textbook authors received a Mini-Grant from ALG (now called Continuous Improvement Grants) for a set of improvements on the textbook. The next version replaced the original and included a new color scheme, design, and logo (depicted in Figure 2); better accessibility and document design; consistent chapter objectives; Google Analytics; and an optional at-cost print version. It maintained the *Sexy Technical Communication* title, but this second version is where the most recent SoftChalk version of *OTC* received its design. The second SoftChalk version of *OTC* was published a year later, in 2019, after receiving a few new chapters and its permanent, more professional title of *Open Technical Communication*.

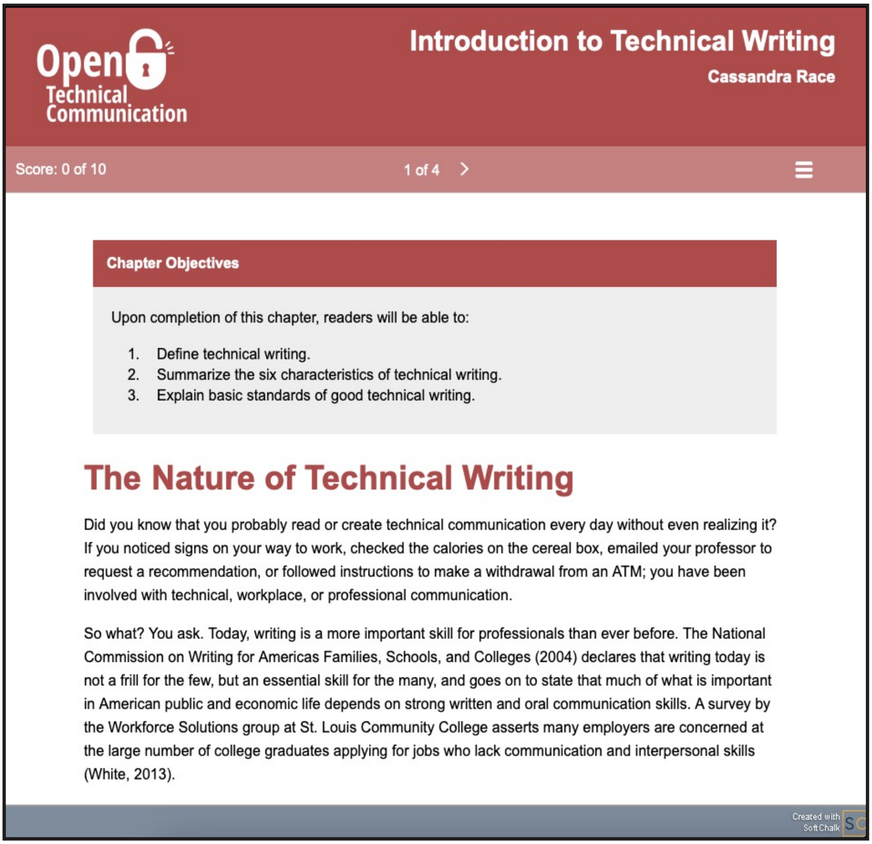

Figure 2: Chapter 1 of the second SoftChalk version of OTC (Race, 2019).

In 2020, *OTC* was migrated from SoftChalk to its current home, Open-ALG—the University System of Georgia's instance of Manifold, an open publishing platform. The SoftChalk version stayed live for anyone using it at the time (and remains so to this day), but it no longer receives updates. In the transition to OpenALG, the *OTC* textbook underwent significant design, usability, and accessibility improvements. The platform itself provides an easier path for accessibility, annotation features for users, and a more user-friendly interface. The current OpenALG version of *OTC*, depicted in Figure 3, receives regular updates and new resources.

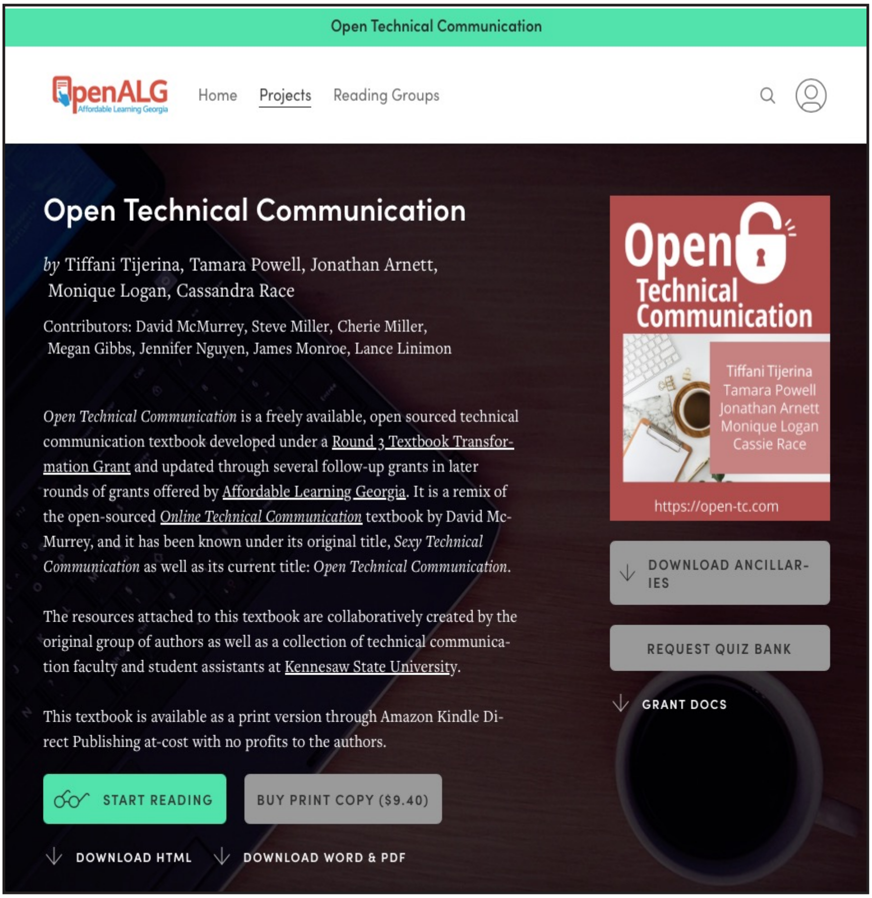

Figure 3: The homepage for Open Technical Communication's most recent version, available on OpenALG (Tijerina et al., 2019).

Department-Wide Open Textbook Adoption

After several years of TCID faculty members using *OTC* on a voluntary basis, the authors of this article applied for and received a second Textbook Transformation Grant from ALG in the amount of $25,800 with the specific purpose of "scaling up" the use of the *OTC* textbook to all sections of TCOM 2010: Technical Writing, a change that was implemented in Fall 2020. Prior to this formal adoption, slightly fewer than half the instructors were already using the second SoftChalk version of *OTC* in their courses, and the remaining instructors were using standard commercial textbooks of their choice.

Faculty were initially allowed to choose between the SoftChalk and OpenALG versions for the departmental adoption, and this study was conducted during that time. However, within a year of this study, all faculty were instructed to begin using the OpenALG version of *OTC* because it is the only version currently being maintained for accessibility, content, and usability. In addition, the TCOM 2010 course's curriculum had been inconsistent, so as part of the formal adoption process, the authors developed an online template course in KSU's learning management system as a resource to help instructors obtain the course materials they needed and to guarantee all sections meet departmental curriculum requirements.

As a way of encouraging department faculty to adopt *OTC*, the authors used some of the grant funding from ALG to offer a $1,000 stipend to faculty who were not authors of *OTC* but who contributed openly licensed ancillary materials for the current version of *OTC*. These faculty members developed materials for one identified course module, and they had the option of creating PowerPoint presentations, assignment and activity descriptions, and recorded lectures. These ancillary materials were then uploaded to the OpenALG version of *OTC* and deployed in the template course.

Literature Review

The existing literature on OER is interdisciplinary and expansive. In recent years, researchers have studied the relationship between OER use and student success (Hockings et al., 2012; Reardon, 2018; Colvard et al., 2018), student and faculty perceptions of OER (Benoit, 2018; Lin, 2019; Reardon, 2018; Illowsky et al., 2018; Vojtech & Grissett, 2017; Belikov & Bodily, 2016; Delimont et al., 2016), and other topics. OER are likely to garner more attention, and therefore more research, as the cost of higher education in the United States sees increased scrutiny.

Despite the plethora of research available on OER, however, there is very little available on OER in TPC specifically, and what little does exist comes from the same handful of researchers, with much of it looking at the same open textbook. Jonathan Arnett, Tamara Powell, and Laura Palmer (2016) detailed their experiences developing the OTC open textbook, which included many of the same logistical challenges that collaborative projects consistently see, such as team organization and a divided authorial voice. Henry Covey, Jordana Bowen, and Sarah Read at Portland State University (2021) recently published a framework for future research into OER challenges in TPC with emphasis on five categories: awareness, choice, quality, efficacy, and use. Covey (2021) also published an in-depth analysis of the user experience of digital textbooks in TPC, using *OTC* as its case study OER. In the same article, he proposed a framework for assessing the UX of OER in general, including everything from user profiles to technology and design. After the initial publication of *OTC*, Arnett (2018) then went on to study the actual student use of *OTC* using Google Analytics data, where he concluded that student use of OER likely looks near the same as that of traditional commercial textbooks. This small collection of articles is all that exists on OER in TPC, but there is much to look at beyond the TPC field.

Student success is a key goal in OER adoption, but data on the impact of OER use through the lens of student success measures such as grade averages and drop/fail/withdrawal rates is often unclear due to both acknowledged and unacknowledged limitations. There are simply too many factors to consider that could affect students' success rates, although researchers have tried (e.g., Hockings et al., 2012; Reardon, 2018). The one study that seems to have provided reliable results, by Nicholas Colvard, Edward Watson, and Hyojin Park (2018), looked at the student success rates at the University of Georgia and compared courses using OER to courses using traditional copyrighted textbooks. After disaggregating their data, these authors found that there is a statistically significant correlation between student success rates among traditionally underserved groups of students and the use of OER. Specifically, the cost benefits of using OER positively influence success rates among Pell-eligible students, non-white students, and part-time students.

Multiple authors have investigated student perceptions of OER and identified factors that affect these perceptions, particularly the expectations students carry over from printed books (the typical format of traditional textbooks) to digital media (the typical format of OER). Andy Benoit (2018) found that "[s]tudents value familiarity, convenience, and ease of use when reading print…[and] students bring these criteria with them to their digital reading experience" (p. 13). It's a common complaint that the tactile experience of reading a physical book isn't present in most OER, but the effect of that complaint on overall perceptions varies. Hong Lin (2019) found that students place greater value on the "textbook cost savings, that [OER] materials are dynamic and plentiful, that [OER] enable mobile learning, and that the use of [OER has information literacy benefits]." Similarly, student perceptions from affordability grant projects at Kennesaw State University showed that "while some students prefer to have a hard copy in front of them rather than a digital copy of materials, they still prefer free or low-cost digital options to expensive paper options--meaning that in general, students care more about cost than modality" (Reardon, 2018). However, despite Lin's (2019) findings that support digital OER, students also cited challenges with digital reading, including slow internet connections and a desire for the tactile experience.

Student perceptions of OER go beyond the modality and cost, of course. In the same previous study at KSU (Reardon, 2018), it was also found that "students care about the quality of their resources and that while they prefer free or low-cost options, they would rather pay for a textbook than sacrifice their success due to low-quality materials." Similarly, Barbara Illowsky, John Hilton, Justin Whiting, and Jordan Ackerman (2016) found that students view OER as equal to or better in quality than traditional copyrighted textbooks. However, it's also important to consider Arnett's (2018) findings that though we assume students respond to surveys about textbooks truthfully, in general, students don't actually use OER—or possibly any other—textbooks in any meaningful way. This lack of actual use is an important limitation of perception research, as it highlights a layer of unreliability in students' self-reported data.

Beyond research into student perceptions of OER themselves, Gabrielle Vojtech and Judy Grissett (2017) found interesting results on student perceptions of faculty who use OER in their courses. In a controlled study where students read two passages about a fictional faculty member in which the only difference in the passages was the textbook being used, students saw the faculty member using the open textbook as kinder, more encouraging, and more creative than the one using the traditional copyrighted textbook and expressed a preference to take courses from the faculty member using open texts. Comments from students indicated that the simple use of OER in place of copyrighted, high-cost textbooks is a sign to students that the faculty member not only cares more about the students and their financial situations, but also about their education, since OER can be customized to the needs of the course.

Existing research on faculty awareness and perceptions of OER is heavily weighted toward large-sample surveys of faculty as a collective rather than small-sample, targeted surveys of individual faculty going through the adoption process as with our study. Regardless, the research does show some insight into the values faculty place in their perceptions of OER. In Angela Murphy's (2013) study, instructors indicated high levels of awareness and understanding of OER, and most also showed interest in adopting OER for their courses. More recently, Kerry Walton (2020) and Marjon Baas, Wilfried Admiraal, and Ellen van den Berg (2019) found that most faculty had either never heard of OER or knew very little.

Olga Belikov and Robert Bodily (2016) found barriers and incentives to faculty adoption of OER. On one hand, faculty felt that they needed more information and that the resources were not easily discovered; there was also a common confusion between OER and digital resources in general, a sentiment that was echoed in other studies (Baas et al., 2019; Fischer et al., 2020). However, they also found incentives in the student cost benefits, pedagogical benefits, and institutional support provided. The values of financial benefits and institutional support were echoed by other studies as well (Delimont et al., 2016; Reardon, 2018; Elf et al., 2015).

Methods

Research Questions

In this study, we aim to fill gaps in the research by answering the following questions:

1. What perceptions do faculty teaching TCOM 2010: Technical Writing at Kennesaw State University have of the *Open Technical Communication* textbook?
2. What experiences did faculty teaching TCOM 2010: Technical Writing at Kennesaw State University have when implementing the *Open Technical Communication* textbook in their courses as the required department-wide textbook?
3. What perceptions do students in TCOM 2010: Technical Writing at Kennesaw State University have of the *Open Technical Communication* textbook?

Data Collection

For this quantitative research study, we obtained approval from the institutional review board at KSU before conducting two anonymous surveys, one each on students (IRB-FY21-191) and faculty (IRB-FY21-192), with an understanding that further research may be needed, depending on the results of this study. In these surveys, distributed at the end of Fall 2020 and reproduced in Appendices A and B, we asked all students taking the introductory-level technical writing course, TCOM 2010: Technical Writing, and all faculty teaching it questions about their experiences with *OTC* as well as their perceptions of the online textbook itself. These surveys primarily used Likert scales, with some opportunities for respondents to elaborate on their answers. All free-response comments were reviewed from a qualitative perspective only, without data coding.

Study Participants

Participation in this study included several layered roles. The authors of this study are the only remaining original authors of the *OTC* textbook in the TCID department. They received the 2019-2020 Textbook Transformation Grant together, and they conducted the surveys initially as part of the requirements for the grant. Neither of the authors participated in the study as subjects completing the faculty survey.

TCID faculty (not including the authors) had the opportunity to participate in the study in two ways—completing the survey and creating the ancillary materials. Some participated in both capacities, and other participated only in one or the other. One faculty member in the department participated only as a compensated contributor to the ancillary materials for the open textbook; that faculty member does not teach TCOM 2010, and therefore was not invited to complete the faculty survey. In Fall 2020, there were 13 faculty members teaching TCOM 2010. All 13 were invited to complete the faculty survey, and all 13 were invited to contribute to the compensated ancillary materials for *OTC*. We do not know for sure how many of the faculty who completed the survey also participated in the creation of ancillary materials because the survey was anonymous. We do know that at least some of them did participate in both capacities. Finally, there may have been a few faculty members who participated in the survey but did not contribute to the compensated ancillary materials for *OTC*, but we do not know for sure how many, if any, did so.

Nine of the 13 faculty teaching TCOM 2010 responded to the faculty survey, eight of whom then went on to answer all questions. One outlier responded that they did not use the textbook in their class, so that respondent was removed from the data, leaving seven faculty participants. Faculty participants included Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, Professors, Lecturers, and Part-Time Instructors; and they taught TCOM 2010 in face-to-face, asynchronous online, synchronous online modalities, or some combination of these.

Despite asking all 13 instructors of TCOM 2010 to share the survey with their students, we experienced a very low response rate to the student survey. If we assume that, based on student responses that identified their instructors, only three instructors shared the survey with their classes, then we can also assume that 240 students received the survey from their instructors. Still, only 24 students in TCOM 2010 responded to the student survey. One student responded that they never accessed the textbook, so we removed that respondent from the data. Of the remaining students, all but two stated that they were enrolled in asynchronous online classes. It was the original intent of the study to include all modalities (asynchronous online, synchronous online, hybrid, and face-to-face) and compare amongst them. However, the number of respondents was low and their distribution across course modality was narrowly focused on asynchronous online courses. Because course modality can significantly impact perceptions of course materials, we also removed the two students in a face-to-face class from the data as outliers, creating an unintended focus on asynchronous online courses for the student data. With these three students removed from the data, the respondents consisted of 21 students enrolled in asynchronous online sections of TCOM 2010.

Limitations

Sample size is a clear limitation to this research for both the faculty and the student surveys. The Department of Technical Communication and Interactive Design at Kennesaw State University is a small department with a limited number of instructors, each teaching multiple sections of the TCOM 2010 course. Replication of this study at multiple institutions or in a larger department with a larger sample size of instructors would help to better understand the implementation of OER in the technical communication service course. In addition, the student survey would likely produce more reliable results if we shared the survey to students directly instead of placing the burden of survey solicitation on the instructors.

The COVID-19 pandemic created an additional, unexpected limitation of this research: Kennesaw State University does not usually offer remote (synchronous online) courses, but during Fall 2020, such courses were offered as a response to the pandemic. Two of the instructor participants in this study were teaching remote courses with an unknown level of preparation to teach in that modality. We do not know if either of these two instructors participated in the faculty survey, but none of their students participated.

Finally, because so few students from face-to-face courses and no students from remote courses completed the survey, the student perception research is limited to the asynchronous online course format. Replication with courses in multiple modalities would help shape a more well-rounded understanding of the student perception of OER use in the technical communication service course.

Results

Faculty Survey

Faculty were asked to predict their students' average grades (Question #2). Of the seven faculty respondents, two reported anticipating their students would earn an average grade of A, and five instructors reported anticipating an average grade of B.

Faculty were asked to identify the version of OTC they were using (Question #3) and whether they used the ancillary materials developed by their colleagues (Question #5). Two faculty members reported using the older SoftChalk version of the textbook, four reported using the newer OpenALG version, and two reported that they didn't know which one they were using. Two faculty members reported using the ancillary materials provided with the OpenALG version of the textbook, two reported not using the ancillary materials, and three reported that they didn't know if they were using them or not.

Faculty were asked questions about their feelings and perceptions of OTC before they began using it as the required textbook for TCOM 2010 (Questions #4, 6, and 7). Of the seven faculty respondents, five reported that they had already reviewed and implemented *OTC* in their courses before it was required of them. One faculty member reported that they had not reviewed it before, and one reported that they had reviewed it before and deemed it insufficient for their needs; they did not provide explanations of why. When asked how they felt when they were notified that *OTC* would be the required textbook for TCOM 2010, two instructors reported being extremely happy about the decision, three reported being somewhat happy, and two reported being neither happy nor unhappy. No instructors reported being unhappy with the decision. Four respondents provided comments on their answers:

- "I think it is an easier book to use"
- "Making students pay for textbooks is unethical, so having a free and accessible option is great"
- "Students have a hard time coming up with the money to buy expensive textbooks."
- "It's free and formatted in a way that's easy for our students to understand and read through."

Faculty were also asked two questions about their feelings and perceptions of *OTC* after it was adopted as the required textbook for TCOM 2010 (Questions #8 and 9). One faculty member reported being extremely happy with the open textbook after implementation, four reported being somewhat happy, and two reported being neither happy nor unhappy. No respondents reported being unhappy with the open textbook after implementation. Five respondents provided comments on their answers:

- "It is an easy book to use"
- "Chapters need more details and more visuals. Many students no longer have context for events like the Challenger explosion, so more explanations would be helpful. The tone of the textbook can be negative and overly prescriptive."
- "Students like saving money."
- "I think that providing this resource is a big help to students."
- "I really like the book, I like the fact that it's free for students, and I appreciate the time and work that went into crafting it. That being said, I believe that there are some chapters that need updating and some content that could be added for students."

When asked about the contents of *OTC* (Questions #10, 11, and 12), three faculty members reported that the organization of the textbook complemented the course's organization extremely well, one reported very well, two reported moderately well, and one reported slightly well. Three faculty members reported that the contents of the textbook seemed complete, two reported that it lacks necessary information about the covered topics, and two reported that it is missing topics and it lacks necessary information about the covered topics. Four faculty members provided comments on their answers:

- "Overall, the book feels like it's been updated slowly over time. The chapters don't feel consistent with one another. It needs more visuals, more headings, and more bulleted lists."
- "No new topics but more on already covered topics."
- "It doesn't necessarily have a lot missing, it's just the order it's presented in could be different, and maybe it should contain different visuals or interactive elements, since it's inside of SoftChalk."
- "Some information regarding updated core topics to technical communication or even just more information on the field in general could be helpful."

Faculty were asked about their perceptions of students' engagement with the TCOM 2010 course (Question #13), their perceptions of students' engagement with *OTC* (Question #14), and their students' academic achievement in the course (Question #15).

Regarding student engagement with the TCOM 2010 course, five instructors reported perceiving that their students engaged equally with the TCOM 2010 course both before and after *OTC* was adopted. Two instructors reported perceiving a decrease in student engagement with the course after *OTC* was adopted.

Regarding students' perceived engagement with *OTC*, one faculty member reported that students engaged with the textbook more than in previous semesters, four reported that students engaged with the textbook about the same as in previous semesters, and two reported that students engaged with the textbook less than in previous semesters.

Regarding academic achievement, one faculty member reported that their students' academic achievement in the course was higher with the open textbook than in previous semesters, and six reported that it was about the same.

Faculty were also asked about how they accessed the *OTC* textbook (Questions #16, 17, and 18). One faculty member reported printing more than half of *OTC*, one reported printing about half of it, one reported printing less than half, and four reported not printing anything. Three faculty members reported saving/exporting parts of *OTC*, and four reported not saving/exporting any part of it. Of those who reported saving/exporting parts, one reported that they used Microsoft Word files, and two reported using PDF files.

Finally, faculty were asked to provide open feedback about the *OTC* textbook (Question #19):

- "Students like the online textbook but are often put off by the embedded activities within the textbook."
- "I appreciate your hard work, and how it has benefitted our students."
- "I have had students complain that the content of the book doesn't give them enough information to complete the assignments. I would lean more to say that they probably aren't reading it thoroughly. It might be helpful to add more interaction inside of the chapters to help reinforce concepts reviewed within the chapters, if you all are still planning to house it within SoftChalk."
- "This is an incredible resource and I appreciate all of the hard work that went into this. The students really seem to enjoy it (more than the fact that its free -- though that's a huge selling point), and the direction its moving towards in regards to textbooks in general is great."

Student Survey

Students were asked to predict their final grade in TCOM 2010 (Question #3). Of the 21 student respondents, 11 reported anticipating a final grade of A, eight reported anticipating a final grade of B, and two reported not knowing.

Students were asked about their ability to access *OTC* (Questions

#4 and 5). Twenty students reported accessing the open textbook without problems, and one reported that they had some issues but that they overcame them. No students provided qualitative comments.

Students were asked if they felt the *OTC* textbook's contents were complete (Questions #6 and 7). Sixteen students reported that the contents seemed complete, three reported that *OTC* lacks information about the covered topics, one reported that *OTC* was missing topics and lacked information about the covered topics, and one reported not knowing. One student elaborated on their response: "Additional examples and references of different document types."

Students were asked how much *OTC* helped them with their TCOM 2010 coursework (Questions #8, 9, 10, and 11). Of the 21 respondents, four reported reading chapters as assigned, ten reported using the open textbook to study before most or all the quizzes, and seven reported only using the textbook occasionally. Four students reported that the supplementary materials in the textbook were very helpful, eight reported that they were somewhat helpful, one reported that they were not helpful, seven reported not using the supplementary materials, and one reported not finding the supplementary materials. Students were then asked to rank the types of supplementary materials by helpfulness (Figure 4). On average, the quizzes were found to be most helpful, followed by the activities, then the videos, and then the sample documents.

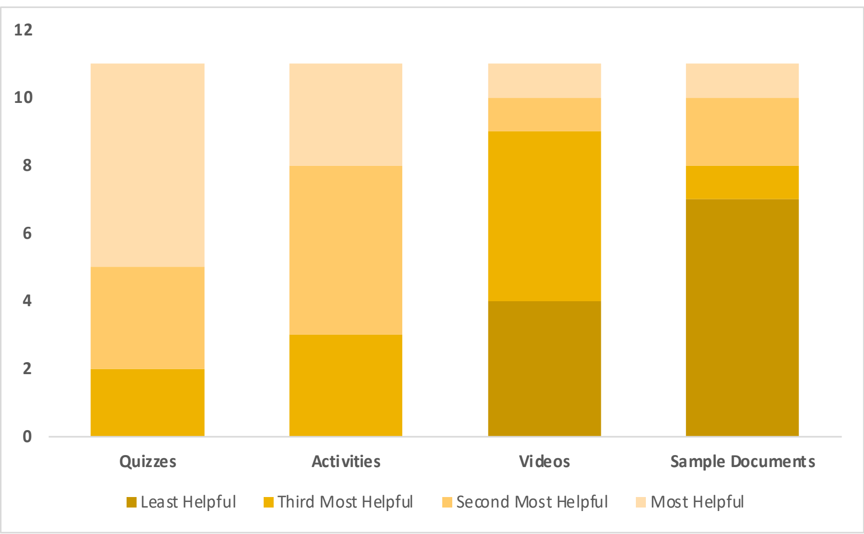

Figure 4: Helpfulness of Supplementary Resources in *OTC*

When asked to compare *OTC* to their textbooks in other classes

(Questions #13 and 14), six students reported that *OTC* was far more useful than other textbooks, five reported somewhat more useful, eight reported equally useful, and one reported somewhat less useful. Two students reported that *OTC* was much more interesting than other textbooks, eight reported more interesting, six reported equally interesting, and five reported less interesting. Four students reported that the textbook was far above average quality in comparison to other textbooks, seven said somewhat above average quality, eight said average quality, and two said somewhat below average quality.

Students were asked if they intended to use *OTC* after TCOM 2010 was over (Question #15). Four students reported that they intended to use the textbook beyond the technical writing class, eight reported possibly, five reported no, three reported that they don't know, and one did not respond.

Students were also asked about their feelings regarding the cost of the textbook and their modality preferences (Questions #16, 17, and 18). 19 students reported that they were extremely pleased with the $0 cost of the *OTC* textbook, and two reported that they were neutral about it. When asked whether cost affects their decision to buy textbooks for their classes, 10 students responded that they won't buy a textbook if it is too expensive, nine responded that they will try to find a used or rented option, and two responded that they always buy textbooks regardless of cost. Twelve students reported no preference for modality of textbooks, four reported that they prefer PDFs or Microsoft Word documents, one reported preferring e-books, two reported preferring printed textbooks, and two reported preferring interactive textbooks.

We asked students about how they accessed *OTC* (Questions #19–23). Nine students reported that they used the OpenALG version, five reported using the SoftChalk version, and seven reported that they didn't know which one they used. All 21 respondents reported that they did not print any of the textbook. Twenty students reported that they didn't save or export any parts of the textbook, and one reported that they saved parts as PDF files. Nineteen students reported that they never used a screen reader to listen to the textbook instead of reading, and two reported that they did use a screen reader occasionally.

Students were asked if they felt that the open textbook added value to their learning experience (Question #24). Seventeen students reported that it did add value to their learning experience, three reported that it had no impact on their learning experience, and one did not respond.

Finally, students were asked to provide qualitative feedback about any aspect of *OTC* (Question #25):

- "The class is good, but sometimes the quizzes can be impossible." ***Authors' Note:*** *We do not know if this response refers to the quizzes included in* OTC *or quizzes created independently by an instructor. We also do not know if this comment is referring to the quizzes' content or format.*
- "It's very interactive which forced me to learn and remember important terms; overall really useful compared to standard text-books."
- "I believe this is one of the classes that you should be able to CLEP out of. Personally, I have been in the professional field for quite some time and the information in this course is very familiar to me. I understand that other student may not have the same experience as I do, so it may be of more benefit to them."
- "I liked the textbook. It was all relevant information, and I think the textbook industry is a racket and abusive. Thank you for providing a resource like this. I really enjoyed the links to example documents or pages that were relevant."
- "*Open Technical Communication* is a helpful book. I like that its free that really means a lot in a college course."
- "Extremely easy to use and access. Seemed well organized. Would have been an extremely useful tool if I this was my [first] time being exposed to many of these topics. I am not crazy about being unable to search the entire book for a term. Search seems to be limited to the page or chapter you are accessing at the current time. Plus it is free, which is a big deal for college students. All in all, an excellent product."
- "I love this textbook. I found the text engaging and fun to read."
- "I feel that the textbook is well-suited for this course."
- "I'm positive that I'll be using a lot of the information taught in class will benefit me throughout the life but a lot of the quizzes are irrelevant or unimportant, only the major assignments seem to help"

Discussion and Insights

In this section, we will briefly review key insights from the surveys and discuss implications to the use of *OTC* in introductory technical writing courses.

Faculty involvement in creation and/or adoption efforts might be a positive influence on faculty perceptions of open textbooks.

Faculty were asked how they felt when they first learned that *OTC* was to become the required textbook in all sections of TCOM 2010 and how they felt about the change after it was adopted. Faculty reported feeling neutral or better about switching to the textbook both before and after adoption. This result was surprising because in initial meetings about switching to *OTC* as the required text, several instructors showed signs of unease. In response, this article's authors wrote a grant that we used to compensate faculty members who developed ancillary materials for *OTC* and the TCOM 2010 course. Thus, the survey results showing neutral or better feelings on both sides of the project may be a sign that including the faculty in developing materials led to greater acceptance, or it may just be a maturation effect; faculty members may have come around to the idea over time.

That said, two faculty moved down a satisfaction level after *OTC* was adopted as the required text. One moved from "extremely happy" to "somewhat happy," and the other moved from "somewhat happy" to "neither happy nor unhappy." When asked for details on why they felt this way after implementation, the comments provided valuable suggestions for improvement, including the following:

1. We need to update the chapters with more details and more visuals.
2. We need to provide more context for examples like the Challenger explosion as our students become farther and farther away from the reference.
3. We need to work on tone consistency.

These faculty members did not explain why their ratings changed, but we hypothesize that as they became more familiar with *OTC* over time, the instructors began to notice issues that their initial examination of *OTC* did not reveal.

In contrast, though, one faculty member moved up a satisfaction level after implementation, citing that students like saving money—a common reason for faculty adopting open resources (Chtena, 2019; Jung et al., 2017; Nagashima & Hrach, 2021).

Faculty perceptions of student engagement may not always be consistent with academic achievement.

The faculty's reported experiences with using *OTC* were interesting and almost contradictory. On one hand, seven of the nine faculty respondents reported their perceptions that student engagement with the course was unchanged, and two faculty respondents reported their perceptions that student engagement was lower. Similarly, most faculty reported their perceptions that student engagement with the textbook itself was unchanged; one faculty member reported perceived textbook engagement as higher, and two reported it as lower—the same two who reported lower perceived course engagement, which is noteworthy. However, despite the few reports of lower perceived student engagement, all faculty respondents reported unchanged or better expectations of their students' academic achievement.

Student use of open textbooks isn't consistent across the board, but it may not be all that different from their use of commercial textbooks, either.

Students were asked who their instructor was so that we could look for patterns in response based on individual instructors; however, no significant patterns existed for any question on the survey in relation to course instructor. Therefore, for the most part, we conclude that students completed the survey based on their perceptions of *OTC* itself rather than their perceptions of the course and/or instructor—which is what we wanted.

Students reported moderate use of *OTC*. Four students said that they always read the assigned readings, eleven said they used *OTC* to study before quizzes, and seven said they used it to study occasionally. Arnett (2018) conducted Google Analytics research on the original version of *OTC*, *Sexy Technical Communication*, to see how his students were using it, and he found that students did not use the OER in any meaningful way. As a group, the textbook authors have wondered if teaching style impacts that—for example, in lecture-heavy classes, do students read the readings the same way they would in a flipped-style class or across different modalities?

Supplementary resources can be useful to students who choose to use them, but not all students will make that choice.

When asked about the supplemental materials in the textbook, including those provided by the non-author faculty members in the department, more than a third of the student respondents said they didn't use the supplementary materials at all. However, of those who did, most said that they were at least somewhat, if not very, helpful. The students who indicated that the materials were helpful also ranked the materials. On average, the quizzes were ranked as most helpful, followed closely by the activities, then the videos, and then the sample documents.

Students don't have to be interested in a book for it to be useful or perceived as high quality.

On average, students rated *OTC* as no more or less interesting than their other textbooks, but students also rated *OTC*'s usefulness and quality as neutral or higher, suggesting that students are able to differentiate between their personal interest in a course text and in the text's quality. Further research into students' ability to differentiate between their personal interest in a course and their interest in the course's text may prove illuminating.

Conclusion

This study was originally conducted as a reporting requirement for the Textbook Transformation Grant we received for the project, The insights noted in the Discussion section above apply specifically to *Open Technical Communication*, but they may also be applicable to commercial textbooks and other OER. Further research of this sort could prove to be invaluable in identifying and evaluating best practices for developing OER and leveraging them in teaching technical communication service courses.

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Appendix A: Faculty Survey Questions

1. Are you teaching TCOM 2010 in online, remote, or face-to-face modality during Fall 2020.
   a. Online format (You never hold an in-person class, and you do not hold a regularly scheduled online meeting.)
   b. Remote format (You never hold an in-person class, but you do hold a regularly scheduled online meeting.)
   c. Face-to-Face format (You hold in-person classes at least a few times during the semester.)
   d. I am teaching multiple sections in different modalities.
2. What do you anticipate your students' average grade to be in TCOM 2010, across all sections that you're currently teaching?
   a. A
   b. B
   c. C
   d. D
   e. F
   f. WF
   g. I
   h. I don't know
3. Which version of the *Open Technical Communication* textbook are you using?
   a. The version published on SoftChalk (off-white background, static Table of Contents page)
   b. The version published on OpenALG/Manifold (white background, drop-down Table of Contents)
   c. I don't know which version I'm using.
4. Before you learned of the requirement to use *Open Technical Communication* as the required textbook for TCOM 2010, had you ever reviewed the textbook and/or evaluated it as an option for TCOM 2010?
   a. No. I'd not reviewed it before the announcement.
   b. Yes. I'd reviewed it, and I'd determined that it was not sufficient/appropriate for my needs.
   c. Yes. I'd reviewed it and determined that it was sufficient/appropriate for my needs, but I hadn't tried it yet.
   d. Yes. I'd reviewed it and determined that it was sufficient/appropriate for my needs, and I'd already started using it.
5. Did you use the openly sourced ancillary materials developed by TCID faculty that are attached to the OpenALG version of *Open Technical Communication*?
   a. Yes

   b. No
   c. I don't know
6. Which of the following most closely describes your feelings when you heard that *Open Technical Communication* would be the required TCOM 2010 textbook?
   a. Extremely happy
   b. Somewhat happy
   c. Neither happy nor unhappy
   d. Somewhat unhappy
   e. Extremely unhappy
7. Please tell us why you felt that way.
8. Which of the following most closely describes your current feelings about using *Open Technical Communication* as the required TCOM 2010 textbook?
   a. Extremely happy
   b. Somewhat happy
   c. Neither happy nor unhappy
   d. Somewhat unhappy
   e. Extremely unhappy
9. Please tell us why you feel that way.
10. How well do you think the *Open Technical Communication* textbook's organization works with the TCOM 2010 course's organization?
    a. Extremely well
    b. Very well
    c. Moderately well
    d. Slightly well
    e. Not well at all
11. Do you think *Open Technical Communication* is missing topics or is lacks necessary information about the covered topics?
    a. Yes, it lacks necessary information about the covered topics.
    b. Yes, it's missing topics.
    c. Yes, it's missing topics, and it lacks necessary information about the covered topics.
    d. No, the contents seem complete.
    e. I don't know.
12. What new topics or missing information would you add to *Open Technical Communication*?
13. Think about your TCOM 2010 students' engagement with the course itself. Did you observe any difference between your students' engagement in classes that required *Open Technical Communication* and in classes that required another textbook? (If *Open*

Technical Communication is the only TCOM 2010 textbook you've used at KSU, include your experience teaching courses equivalent to TCOM 2010 at other institutions.)

a. Students who used *Open Technical Communication* seemed less engaged with TCOM 2010 than students who used another textbook.
b. Students who used *Open Technical Communication* seemed equally engaged with TCOM 2010 as students who used another textbook.
c. Students who used *Open Technical Communication* seemed more engaged with TCOM 2010 than students who used another textbook.
d. I don't know.

14. Think about your TCOM 2010 students' engagement with the *Open Technical Communication* textbook. Did you observe any difference between your students' engagement with the *Open Technical Communication* textbook and their engagement with the textbook you used previously? (If *Open Technical Communication* is the only TCOM 2010 textbook you've used at KSU, include your experience teaching courses equivalent to TCOM 2010 at other institutions.)
    a. Students seemed less engaged with *Open Technical Communication* than with the textbook I used previously.
    b. Students seemed equally engaged with *Open Technical Communication* and the textbook I used previously.
    c. Students seemed more engaged with *Open Technical Communication* than with the textbook I used previously.
    d. I don't know.
15. Think about your TCOM 2010 students' academic achievement. Did you observe any difference between your students' academic achievement in classes that required *Open Technical Communication* and in classes that required another textbook? (If Open Technical Communication is the only TCOM 2010 textbook you've used at KSU, include your experience teaching courses equivalent to TCOM 2010 at other institutions.)
    a. Students who used *Open Technical Communication* had lower levels of academic achievement than students who used another textbook.
    b. Students who used *Open Technical Communication* had equal levels of academic achievement as students who used another textbook.
    c. Students who used *Open Technical Communication* had higher levels of academic achievement than students who used an-

    other textbook.
   d. I don't know.
16. Did you print any part of *Open Technical Communication*?
    a. No. I did not print any of it.
    b. Yes, I printed less than half of it.
    c. Yes, I printed about half of it.
    d. Yes, I printed out more than half of it.
    e. Yes, I printed the entire thing.
    f. I bought a print copy.
17. Did you save/export any part of *Open Technical Communication* to a different file format (e.g., PDF, HTML, MS Word)?
    a. Yes
    b. No
18. How much did you save/export, and what file format did you use?
    a. PDF
        i. I saved or exported parts of the textbook.
        ii. I saved or exported the entire textbook.
    b. HTML
        i. I saved or exported parts of the textbook.
        ii. I saved or exported the entire textbook.
    c. MS Word
        i. I saved or exported parts of the textbook.
        ii. I saved or exported the entire textbook.
    d. Other
        i. I saved or exported parts of the textbook.
        ii. I saved or exported the entire textbook.
19. We would love to have your feedback regarding *Open Technical Communication*. Think about the way it was organized, your experience integrating it into the course, its ease of access, helpfulness, usefulness, student response, and any other things you noticed. Please let the textbook authors know how you feel and share any ideas you have for improvement. Your input is greatly appreciated.

Appendix B: Student Survey Questions

1. Who is your instructor for TCOM 2010: Technical Writing for the Fall 2020 semester? (Names have been omitted for the purposes of publication).
2. Are you taking TCOM 2010 in online, remote, or face-to-face format during Fall 2020?
   a. Online format (You never attend an in-person class, and you do not attend a regularly scheduled online meeting.)
   b. Remote format (You never attend an in-person class, but you do attend a regularly scheduled online meeting.)
   c. Face-to-Face format (You attend an in-person class at least a few times during the semester.)
3. What do you anticipate your grade to be in TCOM 2010?
   a. A
   b. B
   c. C
   d. D
   e. F
   f. WF [withdrawal with academic penalty]
   g. I [incomplete]
   h. I don't know
4. An online textbook, *Open Technical Communication*, is required for TCOM 2010. Were you able to access the textbook?
   a. N/A -- I never tried to access the textbook.
   b. Yes. I accessed the textbook without problems.
   c. No. I never was able to find the textbook online, so I never used it.
   d. Sort of. I found the textbook online but never could open it, so I never used it.
   e. Sort of. I had troubles at first, but I eventually accessed the textbook and used it.
5. Please describe the problems you had with accessing *Open Technical Communication*.
6. Do you think *Open Technical Communication* is missing topics or is lacks necessary information about the covered topics?
   a. Yes, it lacks necessary information about the covered topics.
   b. Yes, it's missing topics.
   c. Yes, it's missing topics, and it lacks necessary information about the covered topics.
   d. No, the contents seem complete.
   e. I don't know.
7. What new topics or missing information would you add to *Open*

Technical Communication?

8. Does *Open Technical Communication* help you with your TCOM 2010 coursework?
    a. I occasionally use it to study before a quiz, just in case.
    b. I read the assigned chapters, and they deepen my understanding.
    c. I read the assigned chapters, but they don't add anything to the material taught in class.
    d. I use it to study before most or all of the quizzes.
9. Are the supplemental materials in *Open Technical Communication* (videos, quizzes, activities, sample documents) helpful in learning the course material?
    a. I did not find any supplemental materials in the textbook.
    b. I do not use/view the supplemental materials in the textbook.
    c. The supplemental materials are not helpful.
    d. The supplemental materials are somewhat helpful.
    e. The supplemental materials are very helpful.
10. You selected "The supplemental materials are somewhat helpful" or "The supplemental materials are very helpful." Please rank the types of supplemental materials (videos, quizzes, activities, sample documents) from most to least helpful.
    a. Videos
    b. Quizzes
    c. Activities
    d. Sample documents
11. You selected "The supplemental materials are not helpful." Please tell us why so we can improve them for future students.
12. Compare your level of interest in *Open Technical Communication* to other textbooks (not including non-textbook assigned readings) for your other classes. Do you find *Open Technical Communication* to be
    a. Much more interesting than average
    b. More interesting than average
    c. About average in terms of being interesting
    d. Less interesting than average
    e. Far less interesting than average
13. Compare the usefulness of *Open Technical Communication* to other textbooks (not including non-textbook assigned readings) for your other classes. *Open Technical Communication* is
    a. Far more useful than average
    b. Somewhat more useful than average
    c. Average in terms of being useful

   d. Somewhat less useful than average
   e. Far less useful than average
14. Compare the overall quality of *Open Technical Communication* to other textbooks (not including non-textbook assigned readings) for your other classes. *Open Technical Communication*'s overall quality is
    a. Far above average
    b. Somewhat above average
    c. Average
    d. Somewhat below average
    e. Far below average
15. Do you think you will use *Open Technical Communication* after TCOM 2010 is over?
    a. No. I will not access it again after the class ends.
    b. Possibly. I'll reference it if I take another class with similar writing assignments.
    c. Yes. I'll continue to access and reference it for future writing tasks in and out of college.
    d. I don't know
16. How does the $0 cost of *Open Technical Communication* make you feel about the textbook?
    a. Extremely pleased
    b. Somewhat pleased
    c. Neither pleased nor displeased
    d. Somewhat displeased
    e. Extremely displeased
17. In a class with a traditional textbook, how much does cost affect your decision on whether or not to buy the textbook?
    a. Not at all. I always buy textbooks without thinking much about cost.
    b. Somewhat. If I can find a used or rented option, I'll choose that over a new version.
    c. Very much. If a textbook is too expensive, I won't buy it.
18. Which type of textbook do you prefer, in general?
    a. Files that work on my tablet's e-Reader app.
    b. Interactive, online websites.
    c. PDF or MS Word documents.
    d. Printed, bound copies.
    e. Any kind. I don't care.
    f. I don't know.
19. Which version of *Open Technical Communication* do you use?
    a. The version with an off-white background and a static, web-

   page-format Table of Contents. (This version has a SoftChalk logo.)
   b. The version with a white background and an active, drop-down Table of Contents. (This version has an OpenALG/Manifold logo.)
   c. I don't know.
20. Did you print any part of *Open Technical Communication*?
    a. No. I did not print any of it.
    b. Yes. I printed less than half.
    c. Yes, I printed about half of it.
    d. Yes. I printed out more than half of it.
    e. Yes, I printed the entire thing.
    f. I bought a print copy.
21. Did you save/export any part of *Open Technical Communication* to a different file format (e.g., PDF, HTML, MS Word)?
    a. Yes
    b. No
22. How much did you save/export, and what file format did you use?
    a. PDF
       i. I saved or exported parts of the textbook.
       ii. I saved or exported the entire textbook.
    b. HTML
       i. I saved or exported parts of the textbook.
       ii. I saved or exported the entire textbook.
    c. MS Word
       i. I saved or exported parts of the textbook.
       ii. I saved or exported the entire textbook.
    d. Other
       i. I saved or exported parts of the textbook.
       ii. I saved or exported the entire textbook.
23. Did you use a screen reader to listen to *Open Technical Communication* instead of reading it with your eyes?
    a. No, I never use a screen reader to listen to the textbook.
    b. Yes, I occasionally use a screen reader to listen to the textbook.
    c. Yes, I often use a screen reader to listen to the textbook.
    d. Yes, I always use a screen reader to listen to the textbook.
24. Thinking about *Open Technical Communication*, which of the following statements do you feel is most accurate about your experience?
    a. *Open Technical Communication* had no impact on my learning experience in TCOM 2010.
    b. *Open Technical Communication* added value to my learning

experience in TCOM 2010.

25. Your professor and the textbook authors would love to have your feedback regarding *Open Technical Communication*. Think about the way it was organized, the way it is integrated into the course, its ease of access, helpfulness, usefulness, price, and any other things you noticed. Please let us know how you feel and share any ideas you have for improvement. Your input is greatly appreciated.

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Designing "Writing for Health and Medicine": Course arcs, anchors, and action

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Abstract: This article details how we developed a hybrid rhetoric of health and medicine and technical communication writing course in response to a call for a health sciences writing course. We anticipate that other institutions may be experiencing similar demand for these courses and thus introduce our process and course design as models for meeting this growing curricular need.

Keywords: Rhetoric of health and medicine, technical communication, course design, pedagogy, social justice

Introduction

Interest in the health humanities is on the rise and with it, questions about the role that technical communication scholars play within these programs (Angeli & Johnson-Sheehan, 2018; Campbell, 2018). From 2000 to 2021, health humanities baccalaureate programs have grown from 15 to 119 in the United States (Lamb, Berry & Jones, 2021). While writing and rhetoric still has a tenuous role within these programs (Gouge, 2018), rapid growth has led to more opportunities for writing in health and medicine courses. These courses can also emerge as part of writing in the disciplines (WID) requirements. Despite their various instantiations, we anticipate that other technical communication educators have found themselves with this charge: "Could you design a writing course for health sci-

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ence students?"

In fact, creating a writing for health and medicine course was one of the reasons we both were hired into Marquette University's Department of English. At the time, our university was rapidly growing its health sciences programs, including expanding online nursing education and building a new human performance lab. However, as we considered the diverse audiences for such a course, we struggled to develop one, single course that could meet students where they were, teach them valuable tools for health writing, and challenge them to think ethically and rhetorically about their future communication. We wanted students to better understand the wide range of roles people hold and the communities of care involved in health and medicine. Thus, we intersected the rhetoric of health and medicine (RHM) and technical and professional communication (TPC) to create a hybrid RHM-and-TPC course.

Approaches to writing in health and medicine pedagogy

As we surveyed approaches to teaching writing in health and medicine, we found that courses typically fell into one of two categories: TPC-focused and RHM-focused. TPC-focused classes tend to teach students how to write as a provider while introducing them to rhetorical foundations of communication and health-related genres, ranging from scholarly to clinical genres (Assad, 2013). Likewise, TPC-focused classes prepare students to translate information to multiple audiences and craft persuasive, evidence-driven arguments, including editing and citation skills (Kenzie & McCall, 2018).

RHM-focused classes assume a broad audience, tend to introduce students to health-related rhetorical theories, and frequently highlight patient experience and narratives (Landau & Thornton, 2015) with less emphasis on specific writing skills. For example, Catherine Forsa (2018) describes a "Writing about Health" course that emphasizes transfer and rhetorical flexibility of writing skills. Courses may take a deep dive into a specific topic, like reproductive justice (Adams, 2021) or rhetoric of cancer (Landau & Thornton, 2015).

Other authors share pedagogical approaches to teaching health writing and include both technical communication and RHM content (McKinley, under contract). Lori Beth De Hertogh and Danielle DeVasto (2022) argue that patient-centered care and user experience are compatible frameworks that can effectively inform course designs that "put students at the center of their classroom learning experiences" (p. 2). Similarly, Kathryn Swacha and Kirk St.Amant (2021) introduce a "Lego™ Learning" approach to RHM courses that reconceptualizes scaffolded curriculum into independent and interchangeable modules. These authors describe projects that span both RHM and TPC-based approaches, including rhetorical analyses of cultural texts, usability testing, and web design. Similarly, given that students at a wide range of levels—from freshman to seniors—and in both health and non-health majors enrolled in our class, we found ourselves creating similar assignments. This is telling because these articles were not in print when we designed the course, suggesting that we were not the only teachers building RHM and TPC-informed healthcare writing courses. In turn, Swacha and St.Amant, De Hertogh and DeVasto, and this article offer RHM + TPC writing models that can create opportunities for interdisciplinary and cross-institutional collaboration that is responsive to the constantly changing contexts of health writing.

"Writing for health and medicine" course anchors

Our first iteration of "Writing for health and medicine," initiated by the college, received interest but low enrollments. By tying the course to the "Basic needs and justice" core designation during a university-wide core curriculum redesign, we made it more visible. We now run three sections with waitlists, attracting majors from pre-health to business. In line with the social justice turn in technical communication (Walton, Moore, & Jones, 2019), we foreground questions of racial justice, gender equity, and diversity in healthcare throughout the class.

To balance technical communication and RHM theory, pedagogy, and practice, the course features a three-unit project during which students choose one health communication text to work with: 1) rhetorically analyzing its linguistic, visual, and multimodal choices; 2) researching its "document life cycle" to account for the range of authors and audiences involved in its creation, distribution, and reception (Payne & Graham, 2006); and 3) revising its content and design to better reach its audience. This project arc is bookended by personal reflective writing, beginning with a health narrative and ending with a health writing philosophy.

However, deciding what to prioritize in the only writing-intensive healthcare-focused class offered was a struggle. We found ourselves returning to core concepts that we wanted students to engage with: social justice, career paths, conversation with sources, and authenticity and autonomy. These anchors were capacious enough to evolve with topics germane to healthcare, and they were ubiquitous — successful healthcare experiences, no matter where someone falls on the patient care continuum, benefit from engaging with these concepts.

Social justice

Our course's positioning in the "Basic needs and justice" tier of our core curriculum gave us an explicit opportunity to center the course on social justice and healthcare writing (Adams, 2021; De Hertogh & DeVasto, 2022; Swacha & St.Amant, 2021). The three-project arc challenged students to consider how they might address their own biases as providers and/or how they could advocate for themselves and others as patients in an oppressive healthcare system.

In unit 1, students consider whose narratives are valued and who is seen as deserving of empathy in medical care. Unit 2 uses a cultural rhetorics approach to call attention to rhetorical strategies in scientific writing that erase or problematically categorize difference. In unit 3, as we consider document life cycles, accessibility, and design; we ask whose voices are part of the design process and why. Then, unit 4 discusses health literacy and frames communication choices not just in terms of effectiveness, but also in terms of access and ethics. As students work on drafting their health writing philosophies, we call them back to these social justice conversations, asking the class to reflect on how their care or their actions as patients can address gender, race, and class-based disparities in healthcare.

Career paths

Many students, especially those in pre-health majors, expect their career path will be as straight as an arrow, with no detours, doubts, or delightful diversions. Like Forsa (2018), we found health writing curriculum to be well-aligned with opportunities for forward-reaching transfer and considering connections to students' future professional goals. Thus, our class sought to break down career assumptions and show students that they could contribute to the medical field in a variety of ways and that most people do not have a linear career trajectory. Guest speaker visits introduce students to a range of healthcare careers, education opportunities, and writing involved in each speaker's career journey. To prepare for each visit, students read speaker bios and a relevant reading and then post discussion questions to a shared discussion board. After each visit, students write a one-paragraph reflection on what they learned, what surprised them, and applications to their own life. Students repeatedly share how surprised—and relieved—they are to learn that the career paths speakers took were not linear, thus broadening their perspectives about healthcare (Swacha & St.Amant, 2021). Likewise, students are encouraged to integrate guest speaker materials into all of their course projects, giving them the opportunity to put lived experience into conversation with course readings.

Conversation with sources

Overall, we want students' experiences with class readings and research to go beyond an information-extraction model. Students may have learned to approach readings purely for the facts or knowledge they will be responsible for repeating in an exam context. However, we hope they will come to see themselves as interlocutors with authors – pushing back on knowledge that seems problematic, asking difficult questions, and bringing their own experiences and disciplinary knowledge into the conversation, thus improving rhetorical flexibility (Forsa, 2018) and agency (De Hertogh & DeVasto, 2022).

The course-long reading journal assignment facilitates this conversational approach to readings. Before class, students post a short reading response to their virtual journal. The goals for these responses are to summarize key points, to make connections to other experiences or texts/contexts, and to provide a discussion question for class. Journals are graded for completion, and we bring them into the class conversation by asking students to use their entries as jumping off points for both full-class and small group discussion, putting students' responses and questions center-stage.

Autonomy and authenticity

No matter what field students enter, they need to develop autonomy and make decisions that feel authentic to themselves. Healthcare amplifies this need because pressure to follow demands of the medico-legal complex are high and can limit what providers feel is right for their patients. To strengthen students' authenticity and autonomy related to healthcare, course projects invite students to pay attention to what piques their curiosity and pulls them forward, and, in turn, tends to students' agency (De Hertogh & DeVasto, 2022).

The three-project arc pushes students to identify what they find boring, challenging, or compelling. Many students change focus midway through the three-project arc. Students offer each other feedback in group conferences about how to pivot. We nudge students to see these pivots as wins; much like a career path, identifying blocks pushes us in a different, often more authentic direction. Discussion posts and class discussion ask students to articulate why they wanted to work with their text beyond, "This text seems interesting." In turn, they need to attune to their own sense of what speaks to them. For example, one student, who wants to be a physician, chose a Mucinex commercial for the three-story arc, first conducting a rhetorical analysis on it, then tracing the lifecycle of pharmaceutical ads and how it impacts provider-patient relationships, and finally creating a TikTok video for college students suffering from cold symptoms. Like the participatory pedagogy that De Hertogh & DeVasto (2022) describe, this project proves to be both useful and usable for the student: "Useful in that students could choose activities that served their interests and usable in that students' preferences and needs as learners/users [are] centralized" (p. 10).

Course arc and anchors in action

To consider how all four anchors worked together to buoy student writing in the context of the course, we turn now to one student's final project.[1] A senior biomedical sciences student who was preparing for graduate school and ultimately a career in research, Cara chose a scientific research article for her ongoing project, enacting the course anchor of autonomy and self-directed learning. However, she was also intrigued by class readings on how scientific writing styles could lead to the spread of misinformation with severe consequences for particular groups, in line with the course's social justice anchor. Thus, she chose an article that argued for a causal relationship between receiving the HPV vaccine and decreased fertility that had ultimately been recalled. While this article proved an effective choice for a rhetorical analysis and a life cycle analysis, Cara struggled with how to repurpose it for the redesign assignment, demonstrating the course's emphasis on non-linear paths. She found the study design and argument so fundamentally flawed that she was not sure how it could be useful, until she came to the conclusion that it might be most effective as a model of the wrong way to write research. Drawing on the course anchor of critical source use, she then revised the article into a handy "What Not to Do in Research Writing" guide. She organized the guide around key mistakes like "Hedging," "Confusing Visuals," and "Misleading Statistics," and excerpted the article in each section to show the error at work.

Questions to consider

Recognizing that educators build courses within their own institutional contexts and respond to unique exigencies, we close with questions for readers to consider when designing healthcare writing classes:

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[1] This student signed a release for her work to be shared anonymously in classroom or academic publication contexts. "Cara" is a pseudonym.

- How do you navigate your own institutional barriers surrounding enrollments, credit for courses, and course demand?
- What kinds of student populations enroll in your classes? What are their unique interests, experiences, and needs?
- How do you balance rhetorical theory with technical communication practice in your course design and assignments?
- If you are teaching multiple sections at the same university, or collaborating with other teachers outside of your university (Swacha & St.Amant, 2021), what anchors do you and your collaborators share?
- How are students invited to take risks, consider new perspectives, exercise empathy, and try new thinking, skills, and viewpoints in your class? How are you doing the same?

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Lillian Campbell is Associate Professor of English and Director of Foundations in Rhetoric at Marquette University. Her research focuses on rhetorics of health and medicine, feminist rhetorics, and technical and professional communication. She is working on a book that examines how newcomers learn rhetorical body work in the fields of nursing, physical therapy, and tele-observation.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in TPC: Antiracist Pedagogy and Becoming an Antiracist Educator

Raquel DeLeon
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Abstract. As the field of technical and professional communication (TPC) continues to find and fill the gaps in research to create, promote, and implement strategies and knowledge around antiracist pedagogy, it is essential for all TPC instructors to take on the task of becoming aware and well-informed antiracist educators, as well as for TPC programs to participate in antiracism initiatives. Doing so will better serve historically marginalized communities and continue progressing as a field in higher education institutions (HEIs), thereby, making strides towards diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Keywords: technical communication, professional communication, technical and professional communication, programmatic administration, social justice, diversity, inclusivity

Introduction

Amid our political climate, the academic world has fought to become more inclusive and integrate culturally responsive teachings in our educational systems. It became national news when banning the teaching and use of critical race theory became a topic of conversation among the educational system. According to the National Public Radio (NPR) public universities began removing the requirement for students to take diversity training in states like Texas, who have been historically conservative with the kind of material they allow in the classrooms (Florido, 2021). The arti-

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cle reads "it would require teachers who discuss ugly episodes in history or controversial current events to explore 'contending perspectives without giving deference to any one perspective'" (3). Students come into higher education institutions wanting to have these conversations around race, and it is essential for all educators, especially in technical and professional communication (TPC), to become well-rounded and knowledgeable anti-racist pedagogy experts; to ensure that we are not deflecting our own racist tendencies, nor our prejudices or biases that may be influencing our own pedagogy; and in turn, directly influencing our students.

Education specialists including Mollie K. Galloway, Petra Callin, Shay James, Hariette Vimegnon, & Lisa McCall (2019) supported the "closing gaps in resources, access, opportunities, and outcomes for students of color and other minoritized groups requires educators to understand and enact culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy" (p. 485). Similarly, Niemonem (2007) explains that "antiracist education is understood as a set of pedagogical, curricular and organizational strategies that hope to promote racial equality by identifying, then eliminating, white privilege" (p. 160). A student's race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, among other identifiers cannot be left at the door. Their multifaceted identities follow them into the classroom and influence and shape the world around them. According to Pimentel, Pimentel, and Dean's (2016) chapter in Performing Antiracist Pedagogy in Rhetoric, Writing and Communication, "an antiracist pedagogical approach allows students and professors to "evaluate their own places of privilege or non-privilege within society while trying to displace instances of racism" (p. 112) in and outside the classroom.

Moreover, I call for mandatory training and accessible resources for educators, so they may pass on valuable knowledge and teachings through the utilization of antiracist pedagogy; more specifically, the professionals and educators of TPC. By doing so, we would develop a deeper understanding of the unique, diverse populations that join our institutions, as well as how to better advocate for them when indivudlas are faced with racism and/or discrimination in and outside the classroom. For example, Young K. Kim & Linda J Sax (2009) noted that "first-generation college students tend to less frequently assist faculty with research for course credit, communicate with faculty outside of class, and interact with faculty during lecture class sessions than non-first-generation students" (p. 452). Kim and Sax found that research-related faculty interaction enhanced "higher college GPAs and degree aspirations" and course-related faculty interaction predicted higher satisfaction (p. 458). Research on how BIPOC women faculty are tasked with additional service work is also well-documented (Black-Beard, S.; Murrell, A.; & Thomas, D.; 2012). According to Mary Ann Mason, Marc Goulden & Karie Frasch (2009), literature also suggests that minority graduate students also pay a "mentoring tax" in that they must expend more time and effort to develop relationships with mentors than do their White counterparts (p. 12).

Becoming an Antiracist Educator in HEIs

Galloway et al. (2021) found that educators discussed and agreed that engaging in antiracist and anti-oppressive pedagogy and practice means "teaching about white privilege and oppression; identifying and critiquing structural inequalities; highlighting students lived experiences within schools and other institutions as racialized; and calling out and addressing acts of racism" (p. 497). These are just many of the several concepts that we need to begin discussing and implement into our antiracist agenda. There are different steps and paths one can take to become an antiracist educator, but we must all begin now.

Moreover, a qualitative study conducted by Marie Claire Gwayi-Chore, et al. (2021) discussed that campus climates play a significant role in influencing success in recruiting and graduating students. The campus climate is made up of the physical spaces for teaching and learning, resources provided, as well as "perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of students, faculty, and staff regarding their institutions" (p. 2). These findings also supported that "adverse learning climates negatively impact academic performance" (p. 2). The way that higher education institutions (HEIs) are forming the culture and influence on campus, as well as the educators, faculty, and administrators on campus, significantly influences the student body experience.

Chris Dayley and Rebecca Walton (2018) stated that to increase recruitment of students of color into Technical and Professional (TPC) programs, we must "do more to name and shape our programs in ways that are recognizable and memorable to potential students" (p. 6). They point to the current problem by stating "unawareness and misconceptions" of the TPC field serve as barriers with implications not only for recruiting students but increasing the diversity of the student population in TPC programs, a "recognized weakness" of TPC academic programs (p. 6). Dayley and Walton expressed that there is great benefit to understanding underrepresented populations. By increasing our understandingwe shift who we are as a discipline, while also assisting us in identifying "where we might be lacking in terms of attracting students from underrepresented backgrounds" (p. 7). By enhancing our understanding, identifying the issues, we can actively address them—

we can become proactive, instead of reactive to these existing issues.

Finally, TPC programs should be committed to not only being diverse, but inclusive. As Dayley and Walton stated "the goal is not only to bring more diverse groups of people into the field but to welcome the range of expertise, experiences, and insights from underrepresented groups in shifting and shaping the identity of the field itself" (p. 10). Through the knowledge we gain from antiracist pedagogy, we are taking the correct steps to becoming more inclusive as a field.

Becoming an Antiracist Educator in TPC

Numerous HEIs have taken action to ensure that university faculty, educators, and administrators have resources, tools, and knowledge that allow them to understand the importance of antiracist pedagogy and how to become an antiracist educator. While we have made some progress in some areas of the U.S., there is room for improvement, specifically in the field of TPC. Through the recognition and awareness of social injustices that occur in and outside of the classroom, and how these external infleunces (i.e. racism and descriminiation) are directly influences our historically marginalized students, microaggressions and discrimination, we can better equip ourselves and others to fight back. Though the discussion topic of racism, white privilege, and oppression can be uncomfortable to discuss, it is essential to become knowledgeable in antiracist pedagogy so we can become well-rounded and culturally responsive educators.

Whether educators are at the beginning of their journey in becoming proactively antiracist or are already taking the steps to educate themselves and implement strategies, theories, and methodologies that align with antiracist pedagogy, or refining knowledge, research, and skills, we can work collectively in TPC to create and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in HEI.

Becoming antiracist applies to everyone, not just white educators. Anneliese A. Singh writes in The Racial Healing Handbook that all antiracists must not only commit to taking individual action, but collective action. This is what I, as a first-generation Mexican American doctoral student, am asking from every TPC educator. Singh suggested that becoming antiracist as a white person means taking responsibility for your power and privilege and cultivating a desire for understanding and growth. Singh also points out that becoming an antiracist as a person of color means recognizing that there are class differences between people of color, all racial groups are not always united in solidarity, and that we must always be challenging internalized White supremacy.

First, educate yourself on antiracist pedagogy. Second, examine how one can become an antiracist educator within TPC. Third, begin examining your own prejudices, perspectives, and biases, so you may address them and replace them. Fourth, call out and address those who do not engage in antiracist agendas and call university faculty, educators, and administrators to work collectively to become antiracist for the betterment of our communities and the historically marginalized populations being directly affected. And, finally, apply antiracist pedagogical practices and promote antiracist pedagogy and its importance across all educational institutions, and specifically, within the technical and professional communication field.

List of Resources

As a jumping off point, I offer a series of resources that can point one in the right direction as they begin or continue their journey in becoming an antiracist educator. As mentioned before, and with the political climate that we are in, we must acknowledge that not only does racism and discrimination exist in our nation but has a direct impact on the lives of our students, in turn, influencing their academic lives. By acknowledging this, we can lead crucial discussions around race, racism, and discrimination. As educators, it is our responsibility to create safe learning environments, where we recognize ongoing issues revolving around race and how we can collectively work to fight back against social injustices that may be preventing our students from succeeding in HEIs. Let's continue educating ourselves, building research around the importance of antiracist pedagogy, and moving towards becoming aware, antiracist educators.

1. Cagle, Lauren E.; Eble, Michelle F.; Gonzales, Laura; Johnson, Meredith A.; Johnson, Nathan R.; Jones, Natasha N.; Lane, Liz; Mckoy, Temptaous; Moore, Kristen R.; Reynoso, Ricky; Rose, Emma J.; Patterson, GPat; Sánchez, Fernando; Shivers-McNair, Ann; Simmons, Michele; Stone, Erica M.; Tham, Jason; Walton, Rebecca; & Williams, Miriam F. (2021). Anti-racist scholarly reviewing practices: A heuristic for editors, reviewers, and authors. Retrieved from https://tinyurl.com/reviewheuristic.

This document offers guidance on antiracist professional practices in the form of a heuristic for editors, reviewers, and authors involved in academic writing. The way this document can be utilized is broken down into five categories: editors (publicly and officially endorse this heuristic, require use of the heuristic by reviewers); reviewers (consult the heuristic during your review writing and before submitting your review, mention that you are using this heuristic in your reviews); authors (use this heuristic as a tool to call out and push back against racist editing practices [e.g., by citing it in responses to editors or reviewers], request or recommend reviewers who have signaled support for anti-racist publishing practices by signing onto this document); allies and accomplices (commit to mentoring, supporting, and advocating for marginalized and untenured scholars who encounter racist [and otherwise oppressive] academic publishing practices); and for anyone involved in academic publishing (question what might be missing from these practices once put into action in your specific context, openly discuss these practices with others involved in your process and brainstorm small adjustments based on needs).

2. Condon, Frankie & Young, Vershawn Ashanti (Eds.) (2016). *Performing antiracist pedagogy in rhetoric, writing, and communication*. Fort Collins, CO: The WAC Clearinghouse/University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/ATD-B.2016.0933

This book opens the discussion on addressing race and racism in readings and class discussion in writing, rhetoric, and communication discourses but also in wider public settings. The authors, "through various examples of classrooms and exchanges between teachers and students, show us possible directions for antiracist agendas in higher education, showing us paths to walk" (p. xix). This book serves as a great resource that offers research, knowledge, suggestions, and examples that can help us in becoming more antiracist educators.

3. CCCC Black Technical and Professional Writing Task Force. (2020). CCCC Black Technical and Professional Communication Position Statement with Resource Guide. Retrieved from https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/black-technical-professional-communication

The CCCC Black Technical and Professional Writing Task Force collectively created a position statement and resource list as initial steps towards "defining Black technical and professional communication practices and practitioners advocating for their inclusion in the body of mainstream disciplinary literature; and carving out the methodological, theoretical, and practical space that will enable other Black scholars in the field to see and do such work. The statement and resource list will also assist teachers and researchers of technical and professional communication."

4. Inoue, Asao B. (n.d.). Asao B. Inoue's Infrequent Words. Retrieved from http://asaobinoue.blogspot.com/p/about.html

Asao B. Inoue works on antiracist writing pedagogy and has a blog that is an extension of his academic work. On his blog, you can find books, media, articles, and chapters on several topics including antiracist classroom writing assessment and racism studies (white supremacy). Among the many works that are available to download and read on this site, there is mention of his new book Above the Well: An Antiracist Argument From A Boy of Color. The description reads: "Inoue explores race, language and literacy education through a combination of scholarship, personal history, and even a bit of fiction. Inoue comes to terms with his own languaging practices in his upbring and schooling, while also arguing that there are racist aspects to English language standards promoted in schools and civic life."

5. Singh, A.A. (2019). *The racial healing handbook: Practical activities to help you challenge privilege, confront systemic racism, and engage in collective healing*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.

This book comes with insightful handouts (PDF in references page), which reviews what it means to be antiracist, how to become antiracist as a white person, how to become antiracist as a person of color, and so much more. This handbook gives a step-by-step guide with resources to navigate through current and past experiences with racism, internalized prejudices or biases which readers may be blindly unaware of and how to address them without feeling significant guilt and shame. By healing ourselves, we can begin to help others process through difficult emotions revolving around racism and discrimination, whether we are directly or indirectly involved.

6. Walton, Rebecca; Moore, Kristien R.; & Jones, Natasha N. (2019). *Technical communication after the social justice turn: Building coalitions for action*. New York, NY: Routledge.

This book is one of my personal favorites. Jones, Moore, and Walton not only help technical and professional communicators (TPC) understand how the work of technical communication is complicit in oppression but provide a framework to scholars and practitioners who can integrate principles of social justice in technical communication; as well as recognize, reveal, reject, and replace objective practices. Jones, Moore, and Walton provide four steps to redress inequity in the daily work of technical and professional communicators: recognize, reveal, reject, and replace—also known as the 4Rs. They propose that TPC can recognize injustices, systemic oppressions complicities in them; reveal these injustices, systemic oppressions, and complicities to others as a call-to-action and (organization/social/political) change; reject injustices, systemic oppressions, and opportunities to perpetuate them; and replace unjust and oppressive practices with intersection coalition-led practices (134).

Programmatic Takeaways

The ultimate goal of this piece on antiracist pedagogy is to encourage all technical and professional communicators to seek the time and resources to further develop an antiracist pedagogy in their classroom so they can then call their colleagues to transform into culturally sensitive and antiracist educators. It truly takes a village to create a domino effect of changes throughout our classrooms and universities, but it all starts with ourselves. Ibram X. Kendi writes "the opposite of racist isn't 'not racist.' It is antiracist… one either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequalities, as an anti-racist" (Simmons, 2019).

As antiracist educators in technical and professional communication, we can work collectively to dismantle systemic racism that is ingrained in society that creates barriers for our students of color. This means that as scholars and educators in the TPC field, we must find ways to reconstruct our curriculum design to integrate antiracist initiatives and pedagogy. As we begin reconstructing our curriculum within the TPC programs, we would then implement program assessments to ensure that we are effectively teaching with compassion and understanding to our diverse and multicultural student body.

To begin that reconstruction and revision, we must focus on transforming ourselves first. With that, I would like to offer programmatic takeaways, as well as recommendations that can be immediately implemented in the classroom for all technical and professional communicators:

- **Engage in self-awareness**—truly allowing yourself the time and space to recognize your own prejudice and/or racist tendencies or ways of thinking as well as acknowledging the power and privilege you may have and how it can be utilized to empower students in the classroom through antiracist pedagogy.
- **Acknowledge the existence of racism**— being able to see past our own discomforts with discrimination and racism in the U.S.

It is essential to acknowledge the social construct of racism. By rising past our ignorance, we can truly listen and engage with our student bodies that experiences racism and discrimination in their social and academic lives, instead of ignoring them or pretending that these issues don't exist.

- **Educate yourself on antiracist pedagogy**—to become antiracist educators or activists in the academic and professional world, we must continuously educate ourselves, as well as compile a list of resources to pass on not only to our other colleagues, but to our classrooms. As more universities are becoming more passionate about becoming inclusive and diverse, it is important for us to understand the experiences our ethnically and culturally diverse students.
- **Participate in the conversation**—though there is a good amount of research on antiracist pedagogy, there is a lot of space in the areas of technical and professional communication for more evidence-based research on antiracist pedagogy, as well as pieces that offer frameworks and resources to educators. It would also be valuable to produce qualitative research projects that examine the use of antiracist theoretical frameworks, projects, and discussions in the classroom, so that we may continue to evolve.
- **Participate in the groundwork** —as we begin evolving into anti-racist educators, our programs and curriculum must follow. We are no longer in a social or political climate where we can continue to ignore the racism and discrimination directly affecting our students in their day-to-day lives, and in turn, affecting their academics. It is essential to begin laying the groundwork to reform our TPC programs and then create assessments to examine the efficiency of the implemented changes so we can continue to evolve and better serve our BIPOC students.

Additionally, some recommendations for technical and professional communication educators to contribute to their classroom would be:

- **Build a space for anti-racist discussion**—creating a safe space for students to be vulnerable and ensuring that boundaries are set before initiating conversation so we continue to protect and support our ethnic and cultural minorities.
- **Establish healthy communication**—reminding students of the benefit of professional communication when having discussions about sensitive topics like racism and discrimination—including using appropriate language, checking sources, and keeping an open mindset.
- **Encourage reflection and examination of personal rhetoric**—

encourage students to examine their own ideas, perspectives, and beliefs. Giving students the time and space to evaluate their own prejudices and perspectives can be valuable because they can then examine the root of those beliefs and/or mindsets, which can lead to a transformation into a more accepting and aware scholar. Remind them that their thoughts and words have the power to influence, persuade, and move others to action.

Closing Statement

As the world continues to change around us, so do our point of views, beliefs, biases, and agendas. We are facing a time where it is necessary for educators to truly focus on building and structuring their own antiracist pedagogies and agendas. Natasha N. Jones, Kristine Moore, and Rebecca Walton (2016) asserted that technical communicators should be committed to social justice because "injustices often live in the mundane choices that technical communicators make: how drop-down menus look, whether a form is translated into another language, if captioning is included in a tutorial video, the default setting on a topic-based authoring system" (p. 163). They, among other scholars and researchers, have continued to support the need for TPC to become antiracist educators and utilize antiracist pedagogical practices. When we join collectively as a field, we move towards inclusion. Jones, Moore, and Walton (2016) called all TPC to action in stating: "your individual devotion to inclusion and social justice matters" (p. 164). Use your power, privilege, and position to apply the theoretical framework and concepts that have been provided to you and do your part to move the field towards inclusivity and achievement of social change. Through collaboration in the brainstorming stages and then collectively taking action, we, educators and administrators in academia, can implement programmatic revisions and additions; thereby, promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education institutions across the United States.

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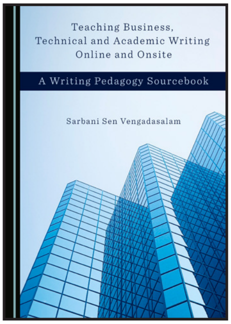

Teaching Business, Technical and Academic Writing Online and Onsite: A Writing Pedagogy Sourcebook

Sarbani Sen Vengadasalam

Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
Cambridge Scholars Publishing
2021, 146 pp.

Reviewed by Priyanka Ganguly
Virginia Tech

Sarbani Sen Vengadasalam's (2021) *Teaching Business, Technical and Academic Writing Online and Onsite: A Writing Pedagogy Sourcebook* offers the best practices for teaching online, hybrid, blended, or face-to-face technical and academic writing based on three aspects: "instructional design, participation management, and multimedia use" (p. x). The primary goal of this book is to provide technical and academic writing teaching principles that could address the long-lasting tension existing between the real-world (professional development) and academic expectations (exercises/assignments). Therefore, the author has written and designed each chapter with a practitioner focus.

Vengadasalam divides her six-chapter text into two sections. These two sections are preceded by a Preface and an Introduction written by William Marrino and followed by an Afterword by Miriam Jaffe. Part One, "Pedagogies, Instructional Principles, and Syllabus Design" includes three chapters that are intended primarily to help educators design their technical, professional, and business writing

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courses with an aim to diminish academic and real-world divides, promote student empowerment, and assist students in transitioning from learners to scholars. Part Two, "Facilitating Online Discussions, Incorporating Digital Multimedia Assets, and Using Visual Tools" includes three chapters that encourage writing instructors to adopt a multimodal approach to teaching, make use of unconventional teaching resources, including visuals, and implement a participatory approach of discussion in which students' presence is prominent without the erasure of the teacher.

In both Part One and Part Two, each chapter offers one or more teaching principles or best pedagogical practices that have been tried and tested by the author herself in her own online, onsite, and hybrid teaching. Instructors will find the lesson plans and rubrics (primarily attached to the appendix sections for most chapters) extremely valuable to apply the pedagogical tools and practices in their own courses. Another appealing characteristic of this book is the integration of practitioners' perspectives in each chapter that could help both educators and students to gauge the real-world expectations. In addition, this book's pedagogical relevance is further amplified by the inclusion of a vast array of technical, academic, and business communication pedagogical topics, tools, principles, theories, and practices that could be used by a range of online and onsite educators with different levels of experience.

Chapter One, "Superimposing R.E.A.L. Principles on the Project Writing Pyramid: A Paradigm Shift in Teaching Professional Writing," offers R.E.A.L. principles—reader-oriented, extensively researched, actionable solution, and looped composition—for educators teaching project writing courses, including proposal writing, in online, onsite, or hybrid formats. These principles are supportive in reducing the tension faced by professional writing teachers, i.e., the importance of making a connection between an assignment's academic credibility and real-world demands. Through these principles, a student can center reader-benefit heuristics, understand the differences between an academic research paper and an actionable proposal, carry out extensive research about their external audience (readers), and visualize and practice writing as a *process*, not as a *product*.

Instructors can use Chapter Two, "Transformative Pedagogy and Student Voice: Using S.E.A. Principles in Teaching Academic Writing," to encourage students to move from writing a well-cited to well-voiced paper in their undergraduate and graduate academic writing courses, including Writing Across the Curriculum and Writing in the Disciplines. This three-sectioned chapter offers a transformative pedagogical approach consisting of a triple enabler, S.E.A. (scaffolding, empowerment, and awareness), that could be helpful in creating a supportive, not normative, academic environment where student voices are fostered.

In Chapter Three, "Publish or Perish!: Sharing Best Practices for a Writing Instructor-Led 'Writing for Publications' Graduate Academic Writing Course," Vengadasalam argues that whether writing teachers as discipline-specific practitioners should teach "Writing for Publications" courses or not remains a debatable topic. However, there is no denial that graduate students and novice researchers need guidance in publishing and finding their identity in academia. Considering this need, she offers practitioner insights and the best practices for conducting online peer reviews and reader response notes by incorporating S-W-S (strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions) in graduate courses. This chapter also provides a sample syllabus with week-by-week activity for writing teachers who teach or want to teach an interdisciplinary "Writing fFor Publications" course.

Chapter Four, "A Learner Centered Pedagogy to Facilitate and Grade Online Discussions in Writing Courses," is useful for instructors who employ discussion boards and learning management spaces for their onsite, online, or blended teaching. In this chapter, the author primarily offers innovative online discussion management pedagogical tools and methods that reject a top-down (teacher-to-student) interaction and foster a bottom-up (student-to-student or student-to-instructor) conversation in an asynchronous discussion online learning space. In this approach, educators can adopt a learner-centered strategy by incorporating W.R.I.T.E. (Warm, Responsive, Inquisitive, Tentative, Empathetic) and avoiding W.R.O.N.G. (Wordy, Repetitive, Offensive, Negative, Gossipy attributes) principles. Through these principles, students will be able to move up the Bloom's taxonomy scale in their class discussion participation by creating discussion threads and trees. In addition, this chapter offers a progression-based cognitive rubric that can be used in basic to advanced, online or hybrid, undergraduate or graduate writing classes at all levels of institutions.

In Chapter Five, "Moving Towards an Open Educational Resources (O.E.R.) Pedagogy: Presenting Three Ways of Interfacing with O.E.R. in Business," Vengadasalam offers the best practices for using the open educational resource (O.E.R.) repository particularly for technical and business writing instructors and outlines a possible O.E.R. taxonomy and pedagogy. A potential O.E.R. taxonomy could consist of four parts: collecting relevant O.E.R. materials, connecting the identified sources with course outcomes, curating and localizing the O.E.R. materials, and contributing to new knowledge creation by transforming the existing

O.E.R. materials and sharing them publicly. Through this taxonomy, an instructor can move from a learner to a contributor not only by curating and localizing the existing O.E.R., but also by transcreating it for the benefit of the larger academic community. In this regard, a rubric containing five parameters has been offered for the best usage of O.E.R.: content, accessibility, format, shelf life, and wow factor. Finally, this four-sectioned chapter further suggests at least three ways for the educators to use O.E.R. in an organized manner: O.E.R. "as additional materials, as prescribed textbooks, or as additional educational materials in the institutions" (p. 115). Ultimately, the author argues that O.E.R. as multimedia assets can be the future in the academic writing community. The O.E.R. lesson plans included in this chapter's appendix section are extremely valuable for instructors to systematically plan O.E.R. usage in their pedagogy.

Chapter Six, "Infographics in Academic & Professional Writing," offers the practitioners' perspectives on the best practices for using infographics and two teaching principles and a rubric for implementing infographics-oriented pedagogy in technical, professional, and business communication courses. Because visuals are an indispensable part of technical and professional writing, the author argues that infographics—a combination of data and ideas—can play an invaluable role in pedagogy. Vengadasalam further suggests that to use infographics in an effective and accessible manner, instructors should be aware of audience, stylistic conventions, brevity principles, and logical orientation. In technical and professional writing courses, instructors can use the L.A.T.C.H. (location, alphabetical order, timeline, category, and hierarchy) and C.R.A.P. (contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity) principles to organize data, ideas, texts, and visuals in a logical manner and to focus on the actual data that will feed into an infographic, respectively.

Post COVID-19, when traditional classroom settings are no longer considered as norms, Vengadasalam's timely publication is extremely helpful for both educators and students to cope with online, hybrid, or blended pedagogical approaches. As responsible technical, business, and/or academic writing teachers, our obligation is to offer the necessary skills to our students who need both professional development and academic credibility. In this regard, this book is the first of its kind to offer some unique pedagogical practices that blend technology with multiple genres/formats and help create student-advocates.

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Priyanka (Priya) Ganguly is a third-year PhD candidate in Rhetoric and Writing at Virginia Tech (VT), where her research is at the intersection of rhetorics of health and medicine, technical communication (social justice), and transnational institutional/organizational communication. As she transitions into the dissertation phase of her program, her research interrogates how technical and professional communication (TPC) practitioners, working as public health communicators, exercise rhetorical agency and manage knowledge within their institutional domains and how their rhetorical decision-making and knowledge management impact transnational audiences' health.

Priya has been teaching in the Materials Science and Engineering Department's Engineering Communication Program (ECP) at VT for the past two years. Currently, she teaches Technical Writing courses to undergraduate students. Her recent publications include articles on the statement of purpose (SP) genre, online technical communication pedagogy, and the international reproductive justice (RJ) hashtag activism in journals such as *Xchanges*, *Technical Communication Quarterly*, *English for Specific Purposes*, and the *39th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication* (*SIGDOC'*21). She has presented at various conferences, such as RSA, CCCCs, ATTW, and SIGDOC.

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Assembling Critical Components: A Framework for Sustaining Technical and Professional Communication

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Reviewed by Myrna Moss

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A must-read for Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) and Rhetoric graduate students, faculty and SMEs, *Assembling Critical Components: A Framework for Sustaining Technical and Professional Communication* helps answer the questions, "What is TPC? How has TPC evolved? And where is the field going?" Readers are offered a robust overview of the following: defining characteristics of TPC, major foundational concepts that make up the field of study, and finally, an overview of current and emerging areas of TPC focus. In addition to fundamental TPC literature referenced in each chapter, readers are also provided with a veritable who's-who of rhetoric and TPC by way of citations, bibliographies and, of course, the authors of the chapters themselves.

Part One: Exigency for a Sustainable Identity

This section lays the groundwork for identifying what TPC is and is not. It provides the reader with key literature and mapping of the field – where it has been, where it is, and where it is going.

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The first chapter summarizes importance of incorporating pedagogical goals centered around practical application of workplace writing in TPC education. The next chapter reviews the evolution of technical communication research over the last forty years. The author analyzes technical communication journals and identifies trends in the most studied topics. Highlights include a transition from traditional technical communication practices, such as documentation and user manuals, to more contemporary topics like social media and user experience. The final chapter in this section reviews 82 core texts from 60 graduate syllabi in TPC courses. The analysis suggests that technical communication has developed a coherent body knowledge indicating a maturity of the discipline.

Part Two: Reflection and Maintenance of Major Concepts

Here the reader is exposed to more real-life TPC application and is provided with tangible examples and research in the field. Both simple and "wicked" TPC problems are explored here through both a theoretical and applied lens.

Chapter 4 highlights how TPC discourse is considered a distinct field aimed at constraining the excesses of capitalist and regulatory discourses. Chapter 5 explores the difference between descriptive technical discourse and procedural technical discourse, which can help people gain procedural knowledge. These differences are considered through the importance of usability testing of instructions. Chapter 6 emphasizes the importance of providing quality content in a complex information environment, which involves problem-solving within the context of the socio-technical situation.

The final chapter in this section reviews the existing boundaries in TPC artificial divisions throughout research, theory and pedagogy. The chapter closes out discussing how TPC scholars should engage in applied rhetoric to move outside of academia.

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Part Three: Reassembling with Emerging Relationships

The final chapters of *Assembling Critical Components* provide an overview of modern TPC dilemmas that scholars and practitioners currently face. Across healthcare, accessibility, and global technical communication, current issues that TPC researchers are only beginning to focus on are featured here. In Chapter 8, TPC scholars challenge dominant medical and scientific discourses. This reading focuses on regulatory documentation, which includes materials used by healthcare professionals in biomedical research and medicinal medical development. Chapter 9 suggests TPC scholarship has not kept current with developments in disability studies. The author proposes ways to grow TPC scholarship include participatory design and participatory action research. Chapter 10 analyzes articles in major TPC journals from 2014-2018 through the lens of transnational research. A greater need for persistent localization and ongoing adaptation is emphasized as a necessary next step in TPC research.

While *Assembling Critical Components* is likely to become and remain a fundamental part of TPC literary canon, there are several instances where this publication may serve particular use. Utilized as more of a reference or by reading the entire book from start-to-finish, *Assembling Critical Components* could either serve as a text in a general course or as recommended reading for newcomers into a TPC graduate program. Like a cookbook or reference guide, there are some texts that remain fundamental to a particular field. *Assembling Critical Components* can easily become a reference or "desk-guide" to TPC professors and scholars who need a quick refresher of a concept or a jumping off point for a class discussion. To that end, specific chapters can easily be assigned to graduate students in a variety of classes depending on the topic.

While TPC Scholars are the primary audience for this collection of densely focused chapters, the use-case for scholars is contingent on where they fall in their career. For first year TPC graduate and PhD students, *Assembling Critical Components* offers eye-opening, and perspective building information about the field that will assist them by providing broad context. Second- and third-year PhD students may find a slightly different use for the material, using it more as a tool to review their coursework to tie key concepts together and solidify TPC fundamentals. A recommended use-case for second- and third-year students is to include this work in their preparation and reading list for qualifying examinations. Given the foundational material required for PhD qualifications, *Assembling Critical Components* serves up much of this scholarly work in an easy-to-read, one-stop-shop manner.

Another recommended audience to consider are students applying to TPC graduate programs. Reading some or all the material in *Assembling Critical Components* would assist applicants in getting a wider view of the field. Furthermore, referencing material from this volume in their application would certainly help to show an understanding of the key concepts in the field of study and may even enhance the quality of their application.

This resource is incredibly useful for TPC scholars at all points in their careers. It offers readers key concepts, frameworks, theory, and names of important contributors to the field. Each chapter also inspires further academic inquiry and can serve as a jumping-off point for additional research. Key concepts are reinforced and important authors (current and past) to the field are referenced throughout. This collection is especially helpful for students considering and preparing for their qualifying exams and potentially for their dissertation defense.

Melancon and Schreiber have done readers a favor by providing scaffolding upon which to build their TPC knowledge and scholarship. The readings provide foundational and fundamental material in one volume–saving the reader time and money. Students and academics in TPC should not only take advantage of this work, but it should also be recommended reading for all incoming and outgoing PhD students and TPC professors.

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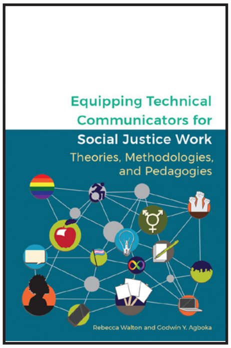

Equipping Technical Communicators for Social Justice Work: Theories, Methodologies and Pedagogies

edited by Rebecca Walton and Godwin Y. Agboka
Denver, Colorado

Utah State University Press
2021, 266 pp.

Reviewed by Jagadish Paudel

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Equipping Technical Communicators for Social Justice Work: Theories, Methodologies and Pedagogies, edited by Rebecca Walton and Godwin Y. Agboka, addresses technical communication theories, research methodologies, and pedagogical practices for teaching technical communication courses. The book comprises four sections, with three chapters in each section. In the introduction, the editors observe that there is still an important gap of knowledge in technical and professional communication (TPC) that directly interrogates theories, research methodologies, and pedagogical practices for enacting social justice.

Section one, "Centering Marginality in Professional Practice," interrogates social (in)justice and how to enact justice in our daily professional practice. In "Narratives from the Margins: Centering Women of Color in Technical Communication," Laura Gonzales, Josephine Walwema, Natasha N. Jones, Han Yu, and Miriam F. Williams discuss critically structural inequality and microaggressions they experience in everyday life, the workplace, meetings, and the process

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of academic publication from the Color of Women perspective. The microaggressions and marginalization they experienced are presented in narrative form. They discuss tactics and strategies which deal with microaggression for working toward social justice in and beyond TPC.

In "Inupiat Ilitqusiat: An Indigenist Ethics Approach for Working with Marginalized Knowledge in Technical Communication," Cana Uluak Itchuaqiyaq presents her voice from the indigenist ethics perspective of the Inupiat Ilitqusiat, a traditional ethnic culture of Northwest Alaska. She explains the "Indigenous Research Paradigm" and asks scholars to abide by the principle of "indigenous methodology ethics." Itchuaqiyaq focuses on three ethical values from the Inupiat Ilitqusiat community: responsibility to the tribe, knowledge of the family tree, and knowledge of the language.

Emily Legg and Adam Strantz, in "I'm Surprised that this hasn't Happened Before: An Indigenous Examination of UXD [User Experience Design] Failure During Hawai'i Missile False Alarm," discuss the need to embrace an indigenous framework for UXD that centers the local community and their needs in the design process in order to mitigate issues like the 2018 event in Hawai'i when Civil Defense authorities sent a text message with a false warning of an impending nuclear attack. The authors indicate a lack of indigenous peoples' input in designing UXD throughout the history of colonization and urge the use of more socially just approaches to design messages, primarily by envisioning users.

The second section, "Conducting Collaborative Research," highlights socially just research and methodologies for conducting, designing, and engaging in collaborative research. In "Purpose and Participation: Heuristics for Planning, Implementing, and Reflecting on Social Justice Work," Emma J. Rose and Alison Cardinal discuss the relevance of two components of heuristics in enhancing social justice in TPC: 1) purposes, which examine pragmatism, advocacy, and activism in enacting social justice work in TPC, and 2) participation, in which researchers involve people, particularly those from marginalized communities, in the research and design process.

In "Visual Participating Action Research Methods: Presenting Nuanced, Cocreated Accounts of Public Problems," Erin Brock Carlson examines how a visual participatory action research approach might be used in technical communication for enacting social justice. The participatory visual methods help researchers foster social justice in the TPC field. These methods invite participants to cocreate knowledge with researchers, offering an alternative to already established patterns. The author discusses two methods as tools for community-based inquiry: Participant-Generated Imaging (PGI) and Participatory Mapping (PI). In the PGI method, participants take photos of their daily activities, and in the interviews with them, they interpret the photos by identifying general patterns of the images. While in the PI method, participants center their goals directly on representing relationships between participants and their place. The PI method is especially used for challenging problems linked to a particular place and community.

"Legal Resource Mapping as a Methodology for Social Justice Research and Engagement," by Mark A. Hannah, Kristen R. Moore, Nicole Lowman, and Kehinde Alonge, discusses Legal Resource Mapping (LRM) as a methodology for engaging citizens and collecting research about policy-driven problems in TPC. To illustrate the idea of LRM, the authors present a case of the Citizen Police Oversight Agency in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and an overview of workshop findings, giving examples of locating the law, framing the issue, identifying actants, and surfacing values.

In the third section, "Teaching Critical Analysis," the authors instigate scholars to utilize critical analysis within pedagogical settings and implement various activities to teach TPC courses. In "Social Activism in 280 Characters or Less: How to Incorporate Critical Analysis of Online Activism into TPC Curriculum," Kimberly Harper discusses her pedagogical and curricular choices for facilitating a course entitled "Technical Communication in the Age of #BlackLivesMatter." The author discusses project-based learning and problem-based learning methods that she implemented in two class projects that were closely aligned with using social media and online activism.

Sarah Beth Hopton, in "The Tarot of Tech: Foretelling the Social Justice Impacts of our Designs," argues for predicting the social justice impacts of design with game-playing, specifically with Seattle Studio/ The Artefact Group's brainstorming tool, the "Tarot Cards of Tech" (TOT). Hopton argues that wicked problems can be solved through the intersection of technical communication, agriculture, and social justice by introducing TOT in a technical communication course.

"An Intersectional Feminist Rhetorical Pedagogy in the Technical Communication Classroom" by Oriana A. Gilson articulaes the potential of an intersectional feminist rhetorical pedagogy to reframe the TPC course for students. Focusing mainly on usability as a central concept in the TPC classroom, she offers an intersectional feminist rhetorical approach as a pedagogical tool for shifting students' view of the field from one focused solely on efficiency and consistency to one that is both interested in and working toward socially just practices.

The final section, "Teaching Critical Advocacy," illustrates how pedagogical tools can be used for acting toward social justice advocacy in TPC. In "Election Technologies as a Tool for Cultivating Civic Literacies in Technical Communication: A Case of the Redistricting Game," Fernando Sanchez, Isidore Dorpenyo, and Jennifer Sano-Franchini demonstrate why communication professionals need to explore how technologies are so often used as political weapons that discriminate and marginalize people. The authors make a strong and very timely case for continuing to interrogate election technologies as we collectively work to advance social justice in technical communication.

Liz Lane, in "Plotting an interstitial design process: Design Thinking and Social Processes as Framework for Addressing Social Justice Issues in TPC Classrooms," presents a version of the methodology that encompasses marginalized populations and reconsiders the notion of a framework for inclusivity: a socially just design interstitial that extends the genre.

In the final chapter, "*Kategoiras* and *Apologias* as Heuristics for Social Justice Advocacy," Keith Grant-Davie presents two classical rhetorical tools to enact social justice in TPC. The author argues that the tools can help discussants build arguments for change and forestall arguments against change. He offers some tools to help students develop kategorias relevant to apologias.

This collection is devoted to social justice methods and approaches, seeking to establish patterns of work that center on several marginalized groups. The most salient feature of the book is that various samples, real cases, resources, incidents, tools, tactics, strategies, classroom pedagogical practices, research methodologies, and approaches for enacting social justice are presented. In this collection, TPC program directors and instructors will find topics that they often discuss and manage in widely variegated contexts relating to social justice. Examples include the latest critical literacy theories and how they apply to election technologies and redistricting, microaggressions, indigenous frameworks and theories for research, design thinking, actants, decolonial theory, participatory action research, community engagement, heuristics, classical theories of argument, and many others. However, as a multilingual student in twenty-first-century America, I cannot help but notice that the collection inexplicably does not contain discussions of urgent current issues related to multilingualism and social justice in TPC.

The volume equips readers with both theory and practice for enacting social justice. Along with offering tools for enacting social justice, towards the end of each chapter, most of the contributors present implications, usefulness, prospects, practical takeaways, limitations, etc., all of which help readers to understand what is next and prospectively lend meaning and effectiveness to their future work in the field. As I, myself, am originally from a marginalized community, while reading the chapters, I can sense and feel how (in)justice happens in the academy and beyond it. It is a must-read book for all who work in TPC, as it discusses how to combat injustice and equip oneself to address social justice issues effectively, whether in the workplace, the community, or academia.

Author Information

Jagadish Paudel is a Ph.D. candidate in Rhetoric and Composition Studies at the University of Texas at El Paso. His areas of interest include social justice in composition studies, decolonizing composition studies, policies in rhetoric and writing programs, multilingualism, translanguaging, critical pedagogy, and non-Western rhetoric. At present, in addition to serving as associate editor of *Open Words*, he is an associate editor for the *Practices and Possibilities* book series for the WAC Clearinghouse. He is also associated with the Writing Program Administrators-Graduate Organization (WPA-GO) Leadership Council. Currently, he serves as its Vice-Chair and usually leads speaker series events in the organization.