

Including Critical Feminist Approaches in the Technical & Professional Communication Classroom: An
Autoethnography throughout Changing Rhetorical Ecologies

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Abstract

This research project analyzes one Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) course's materials and one instructor's (the researcher's) incorporation of social justice through diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) over the course of ten years (2013-2022). The materials analyzed included introductory materials (syllabi and course schedules), lecture notes, genre examples displayed, assignments, class activities, and the Learning Management System (LMS). The researcher relies on a critical feminist approach tailored to TPC, which includes six key principles: permissive listening, generative silence, welcoming difference, multivocality, collaborative labor, and gendered technology. The specific method of analysis involves autoethnography that combined thematic analysis and critical reflexivity. The results of the research indicated that the earlier years (2013-2016) needed significant revisions in order to incorporate DEI; by the most recent year (2022), the instructor had implemented more explicit incorporation of DEI and had attempted to role model DEI practices through the course materials assessed. However, more DEI implementation could happen in future sections of the course. To encourage more DEI implementation in the future for all TPC courses, the researcher provided actions all instructors could take within the classroom and encouraged the use of human-centered approaches, like critical feminism, in the classroom when framing TPC work.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| List of Tables | vi |
| List of Figures | vii |
| Chapter 1: Critical Feminist Action for Social Justice Outcomes in TPC Pedagogy – TPC’s Altered Ecology | 1 |
| 1.1 The course analyzed: Technical and Professional Writing | 5 |
| 1.2 Changing Ecologies | 6 |
| 1.3 Social Justice in TPC | 7 |
| 1.4 Chapter Overview | 10 |
| 1.5 Overall Focus | 12 |
| Chapter 2: Feminist Ecologies in TPC from 1991-Present | 14 |
| 2.1 The "viral intensities" leading up to the 1990's..... | 17 |
| 2.2 1991-1999: "Lay"-ing the groundwork for feminism in TPC..... | 18 |
| 2.3 2000-2009: Power, persuasion, and complexity | 22 |
| 2.4 2010-2019: Using critical feminism to discuss social justice action in TPC..... | 25 |
| 2.5 2020-2022 (present): Human-centered methodologies address oppressive structures | 28 |
| 2.6 The Critical Feminist Ecology Shift | 30 |
| Chapter 3: A Critical Feminist Approach in TPC Pedagogy | 32 |
| 3.1 Permissive Listening..... | 35 |
| 3.2 Generative Silence | 37 |
| 3.3 Welcoming Difference..... | 38 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 3.4 Multivocality..... | 39 |
| 3.5 Collaborative Labor | 41 |
| 3.6 Gendered Technology..... | 42 |
| 3.7 Naming the six critical feminist principles | 44 |
| Chapter 4: Methodology: Critical Autoethnography Combining Thematic Analysis & Critical Reflexivity | 46 |
| 4.1 Differentiating Autoethnography..... | 46 |
| 4.2 An autoethnographic methodology in conjunction with a critical feminist worldview | 50 |
| 4.3 Autoethnography in TPC | 50 |
| 4.4 Data Collection | 53 |
| 4.5 Methods used to analyze the data | 55 |
| 4.6 Pairing Thematic Analysis & Critical Reflexivity – A Feminist Move..... | 59 |
| Chapter 5: A Critical Feminist Analysis of a Technical Writing Course’s Decade-Long Evolution | 61 |
| 5.1 Social Justice and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion | 61 |
| 5.2 Introductory Documents | 68 |
| 5.3 Professional Genres | 77 |
| 5.4 Intercultural Communication..... | 82 |
| 5.5 Summary..... | 86 |
| Chapter 6: Reflections & Connecting TPC Pedagogy to Social Justice..... | 88 |
| 6.1 Permissive Listening..... | 88 |
| 6.2 Generative Silence | 90 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 6.3 Welcoming Difference..... | 91 |
| 6.4 Multivocality..... | 93 |
| 6.5 Collaborative Labor | 94 |
| 6.6 Gendered Technology..... | 97 |
| 6.7 Key findings and implications for TPC | 97 |
| 6.8 Autoethnography in TPC | 101 |
| 6.9 Conclusion | 102 |
| References..... | 104 |
| Appendix..... | 122 |
| A.1 Representative Syllabi (Fall 2013, Spring 2016, & Spring 2022) | 122 |
| A.2 Class Discussion Takeaways Example | 144 |
| A.3 Lecture Notes Example (2022, Day 3 of the semester) | 145 |
| A.4 Representative Assignment Sheets | 149 |
| A.5 Memo Example | 160 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1. Display of the critical feminist works influencing the TPC ecology prior to 1990 | 17 |
| Table 2. Display of the number of TPC sources from 1990-1999 incorporating feminism | 21 |
| Table 3. Display of the number of TPC sources from 2000-2009 incorporating feminism | 22 |
| Table 4. Display of the number of TPC sources from 2010-2019 incorporating feminism | 25 |
| Table 5. Display of the number of TPC sources from 2020-2022 incorporating feminism | 28 |
| Table 6. Display of the topics we read from the supplementary textbook | 64 |
| Table 7. Display of how often the course materials mentioned the respective DEI principles | 65 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1. Venn diagram displaying the overlapping DEI principles as social justice | 8 |
| Figure 2. Display of the critical feminist works influencing the TPC ecology from 1990-1999 | 19 |
| Figure 3. Display of the critical feminist works influencing the TPC ecology from 2000-2009 | 23 |
| Figure 4. Display of the critical feminist works influencing the TPC ecology from 2010-2019 | 26 |
| Figure 5. Display of the critical feminist works influencing the TPC ecology from 2020-2022 | 29 |
| Figure 6. Graph displaying the number of TPC sources integrating critical feminism throughout the years | 30 |
| Figure 7. Display of what the term “diversity” referred to | 66 |
| Figure 8. Display of the course schedules’ design from 2013-2022 | 73 |
| Figure 9. Display of the topics presented to students for each genre | 80 |
| Figure 10. Display of the various references to culture throughout the TPC course | 85 |
| Figure 11. A list of the “hard questions” for reflecting upon where students chose to sit on the first day of class | 90 |

Chapter 1: Critical Feminist Action for Social Justice Outcomes in TPC Pedagogy – TPC’s Altered Ecology

The year 2020 marked an anomalous shift in the United States’ prevailing social ecology. That quasi-apocalyptic year included the long-needed supplanting of Donald Trump, whose four vulgar years in office divided the American people in unprecedented ways; the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic, which a lack of collaboration exacerbated, thus leading to 1,128,404 Americans’ deaths since that time (“COVID-19”); and further instances of systemic inequities, apparent with the unnecessary deaths of Black Americans like George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Individually and collectively, these contextual factors heavily influenced the “affective” ecology (Edbauer, 2005, p. 9) that still persists today.

For the Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) field specifically, 2020’s magnification of the inequities experienced by marginalized populations led to important initiatives provoking change within higher education departments. In many ways, attention to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) increased. In the midwestern university where I taught at the time, for instance, our department formed a DEI Committee to discuss initiatives, goals, and resources. This committee organized seminars with titles like “My Role in Equity and Diversity” and “Navigating Challenging Conversations”; facilitated book discussions of Ibram X. Kendi’s *How to Be an Antiracist*; established a list of goals for our department to confront DEI in various aspects, including hiring practices, graduate student selection, curriculum, and overall “internal climate”; scheduled a retreat with Rev. Dr. Jamie Washington, who spoke about community and learning; and wrote an explicit DEI statement for our department expressing our commitment to antiracist actions, approaches and viewpoints. These commendable efforts demonstrated my department’s commitment to diversifying the voices influencing our department’s proceedings and to addressing the inequities apparent at the institutional level.

How these efforts transfer to specific courses, however, remains less clear. The classroom serves as another potential TPC site for supporting DEI efforts, and some instructors have embraced the challenge of incorporating DEI as practice when setting up their courses and/or as direct instruction in their curriculum, as these examples demonstrate: Using critical disability theory, Browning and Cagle (2017) encouraged the use of Critical Accessibility Case Studies (CACs) to teach accessibility, and Walters (2010) described the importance of implementing universal design in TPC classrooms to address the increasing number of students reporting a disability. Unfortunately, these unique approaches to DEI incorporation may be the exception rather than the norm. Through their study of 231 TPC programs (both graduate and undergraduate), Agboka & Dorpenyo (2022) found that “Only 23 [...] offered some social justice-related content” (p. 49-50). Bay (2022) provided a potential reason: Despite being introduced to DEI concepts, along with bias and social justice, “many students did not feel comfortable exploring topics that might challenge their worldviews. Instead, they chose aspects of diversity that allowed them to somehow identify themselves or easily understand how the concept of inclusivity might apply to them or their personal context. Thus, the more challenging concepts of DEI with respect to race were easy to keep at arm’s length for many students” (p. 11). Similarly, instructors, especially those in more privileged positions, may choose to ignore DEI in the classroom due to their own reservations of and discomfort in presenting concepts and topics potentially viewed as polarizing.

All in all, enacting DEI requires departments that support instructors (by providing resources, through training, by adjusting course requirements and curriculum, etc.) and instructors that support students (through class discussions, readings, activities, and assignments). If either level falls short of providing that support, then DEI risks being left out of the conversation and social justice seldom emerges. If the professionals making up departments and institutions *say* they care about DEI and social justice but then fail to enact them at various levels, they exemplify those providing lip service while

preserving inequitable systems. Agboka and Dorpenyo (2022) also emphasize the role of departments and curriculum in enacting social justice, for they say the following:

[P]rogrammatic and curricular platforms are important sites for assessing progress and enacting change. Programmatic platforms are where academic visions and structures are formulated, curricula are built, and knowledge is created; they are also the contexts for negotiating, critiquing, and contesting ideologies that shape the design of technical communication. Social justice curricular efforts also inform how pedagogical and instructional strategies can be thoughtfully designed to embrace diversity of thought and viewpoints as well as how they create opportunities for students to understand the roles TPC plays in promoting or inhibiting justice, particularly for marginalized or disenfranchised groups (p. 43-44).

Throughout this project, I assert that DEI work must happen at all levels, but I focus on the TPC classroom space specifically. Furthermore, I argue that a human-centered approach, like critical feminism, provides the actions needed to intertwine DEI work into existing TPC curriculum. The intentional incorporation of DEI as a whole enriches TPC curriculum, more fully prepares students for reaching a broader audience, and leads to our field's overall goal: that of social justice.

Despite the continued conversation about DEI and social justice and its importance, teaching students about DEI and social justice proves challenging. To find out whether TPC courses sufficiently intertwine DEI with TPC's set curriculum, I assess one instructor's (my own) technical writing course and analyze its evolution over the past ten years. Since 2013, I have been teaching TPC courses to mostly junior- and senior-level students at a midwestern university. Each semester, I meticulously go through all of my course materials to ensure that I am updating dates, fixing errors, fulfilling the department's requirements, addressing any contextual changes due to world events (like COVID-19), and overall

clearly communicating to my students the actions they must take to pass the course. This process requires scrutinizing the course's components, including assignments, lectures, activities, multimedia pieces, the syllabus, the course schedule, and the Learning Management System (LMS). Over those last ten years, my course has shifted in small, yet significant ways. While I have taught the same six units for all ten years (professional correspondence, technical descriptions, instructions/usability testing, proposals, formal reports, and presentations) in a particular course, Technical and Professional Writing, my approach to presenting these to my students shifted in important ways. Through this autoethnographic project, then, I show the importance of the instructor's role in forwarding key ideologies, like DEI, since classrooms provide opportune moments for supporting or fighting against prominent ideologies. Despite following a predetermined curriculum, many instructors possess agency in how they deliver information, and that delivery matters in emphasizing human beings over tasks and processes. At the same time, this project spotlights institutional symbolic action (or lack thereof) and overall analyzes the institution's role in promoting/supporting change at the local, classroom level.

More specifically, the project attempted to answer this main research question: **How have TPC classrooms involved DEI – as both practice and instruction – in response to the altered ecology that calls for more collective, urgent attention to social justice?** *DEI as practice* referred to how instructors themselves model DEI to create a welcoming and safe classroom space that encourages students to explore their personal and professional identities while learning to engage with others to produce action. *DEI as instruction* pertained to how instructors explicitly present those concepts to students whether through assignments or activities. Secondary research questions included the following:

- How can TPC instructors broaden students' perspectives on social justice when communicating about and with technologies?
- How much does classroom action promote particular ideologies – whether intentional or not?

- How can TPC instructors incorporate human-centered worldviews, like critical feminism, into their TPC courses to forward social justice?

To address these questions, I conducted an autoethnographic study using two methods. First, I thematically analyzed my past and current teaching materials of one TPC course, and second I conducted critical reflexivity to reflect upon the actions I made and the ideologies I forwarded. I detailed this plan further in Chapter Four: Methodology.

1.1 The Course Analyzed: Technical and Professional Writing

Throughout this project, I analyzed one course, Technical and Professional Writing, that I have taught over the past ten years at a large, midwestern university. Capped at 24 students, the course is a multi-section course with about forty sections offered (and filled) each year. All sections cover the same units, including technical descriptions, instructions and usability testing, proposals, formal/analytical reports, and presentations. How instructors choose to present the information to students, however, can vary. Some fully rely on a template displayed through the LMS; some partially rely on the template and supplement with their own teaching materials; and some rely on their own teaching materials altogether. For my courses, I chose the middle option, that of somewhat relying on the template while also supplementing materials like genre examples and required readings.

The timing of the course involves a 16-week semester in the fall, a 16-week semester in the spring, or an 8-week course in summer. My project analyzed course materials from all semesters when I taught the course, including Fall 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2015, Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Fall 2018, Spring 2019, Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Spring 2021, Summer 2021, and Spring 2022. The gaps in timing (Fall 2020, Fall 2021, Summer

2022, and Fall 2022) convey that I taught a different TPC course that semester. Another important note involves the modality of the courses taught. Most of the courses were delivered in a hybrid fashion with three of the four credits taking place in person and one credit taking place through the LMS. However, some of the sections (Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Spring 2021, and Summer 2021) took place completely online in an asynchronous manner.

The students who make up this course represent a variety of majors across the large university system. For instance, most recently, my students' majors consisted of Food Science, Applied Economics, Animal Science, Retail Merchandising, Computer Science, Agriculture and Food Business Management, Business and Marketing Education, Technical Communication, Biology, Criminal Justice, and Electrical Engineering. In other words, the students come from different colleges and academic backgrounds. Notably, the vast majority of students in this Technical and Professional Writing course are not TPC students but will use TPC within their own professions and specialties.

1.2 Changing Ecologies

To begin this project, I must express that I view my course as being part of an “ecology,” rather than a closed-off event involving siloed factors. More specifically, I borrow and forward Jenny Edbauer’s assertion (2005) that “[a]n ecological, or affective, rhetorical model is one that reads rhetoric both as a process of distributed emergence and as an ongoing circulation process” (p. 13). My class is not a separate occurrence unaffected by and not affecting events happening outside of the classroom. Using Austin, TX as an example, Edbauer demonstrated how “[a] given rhetoric is not *contained* by the elements that comprise its rhetorical situation (exigence, rhetor, audience, constraints). Rather, a rhetoric emerges already infected by the viral intensities that are circulating in the social field [...] What is shared between them is *not* the situation, but certain contagions and energy” (p. 14; original emphasis). Through

this analysis, I make apparent the “temporal, historical, and lived fluxes” (Edbauer, 2005, p. 9) affecting my classrooms throughout the years. Doing so allowed me to assess whether I accommodated, respected, and acknowledged all bodies – those of my students and those of the people whom we talk about within my course – or whether I re-inscribed and thus promoted an environment that solely centers white, male, able-bodied, heterosexual bodies.

Along with recognizing and analyzing the “fluxes” referenced earlier, Edbauer’s rhetorical ecology also involves noticing “counter-rhetorics” and “cooptation” that take place within an ecology. In her study, two local businesses spoke out against the city’s planned tax breaks to a chain bookstore by creating “Keep Austin Weird” stickers. Eventually, “counter-rhetorics” followed (with “Keep Austin Normal”), as well as “cooptation” (“Keep Austin Liberal Arts” and “Keep Austin Reading”). Edbauer described these variations in this way: “These various rhetorics overlap through a kind of shared contagion through the calls for local business support, the promotion of liberal arts, and the encouragement of literacy are hardly overlapping in terms of their exigencies or even their audiences. At the same time, of course, the weird rhetoric receives an increased circulation through these kinds of affective transmission” (18). As I analyzed the evolution of my technical writing course, I searched for the fluxes, counter-rhetorics, and cooptation that affected the adjustment of my course materials.

1.3 Social Justice in TPC

As my course has shifted over the decades-long period, the ecology within which those courses materialized simultaneously shifted. The prominent turn that stands out as affecting the past ten years in TPC consists of the field’s highlighting of social justice, as Carolyn Rude (2009) identified in “Mapping the Research Questions.” In this article, Rude named “social-change” as one of four central research topics prevalent in TPC research (p. 7). Since Rude’s article, numerous scholars have attended to social

justice concerns in TPC, including Haas (2012), Hart-Davidson (2013), Jones (2016), Rose (2016), Walton (2016), Petersen & Walton (2018), Edwards (2018), and Petersen (2018). In this research project, I embrace Rebecca Walton’s notion of social justice, which “inextricably involves human dignity and human rights, since it is by definition concerned with the agency of oppressed people” (Walton, 2016, p. 411). To clarify, DEI (as separate concepts) and social justice each represent varied bodies of scholarship. Although related, they each constitute a breadth of literature and can exist separate from one another. Despite DEI’s separate bodies of literature, I connect them for the purposes of this research and argue that, collectively, they epitomize social justice (see Figure 1). In other words, when technical and professional communicators attend to diversity, equity, and inclusion, they enact social justice. Social justice exists only at the intersection of all three of them.

Since social justice inextricably links to the humanness of all individuals and social justice makes up a crucial part of TPC’s foundation, I maintain that TPC scholars must rely on human-centered methodologies to analyze their research topics. For this project, then, I rely on an autoethnographic methodology and thematically analyze my course’s inclusion of DEI using a critical feminist method tailored

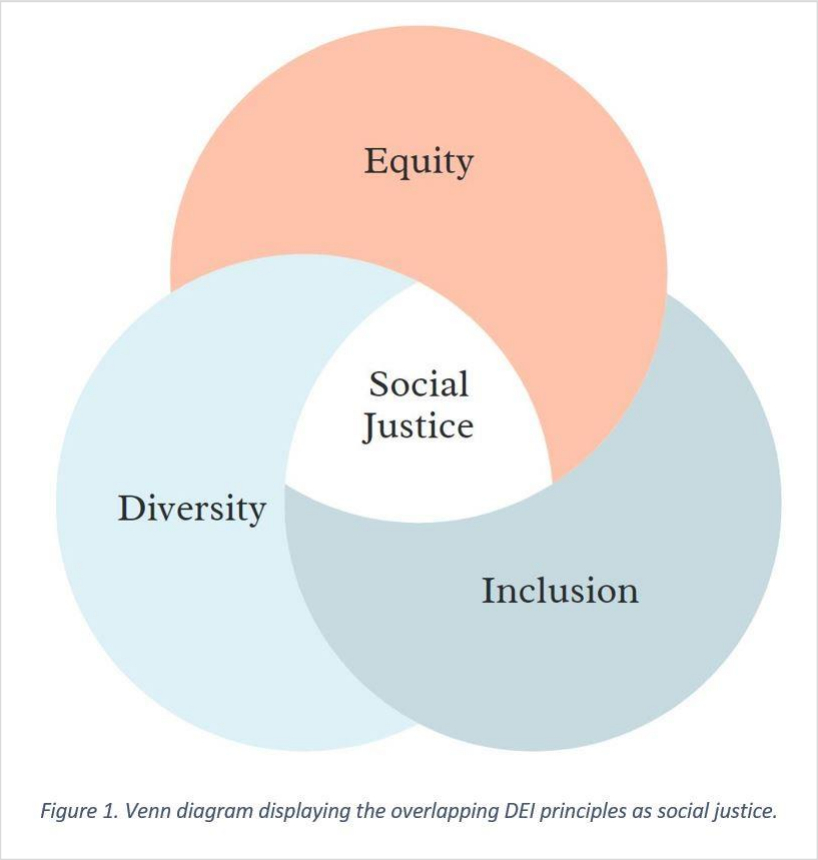


Figure 1. Venn diagram displaying the overlapping DEI principles as social justice.

to TPC (see Chapter Three). This tailored critical feminist approach includes permissive listening, generative silence, welcoming difference, multivocality, collaborative labor, and gendered technology. I argue that implementing these critical feminist moves leads to TPC course participants (instructors and students) more likely welcoming and practicing DEI (and ultimately social justice). While DEI and social justice serve as ideal *outcomes* of TPC pedagogy, the critical feminist approach provides the *action* for those outcomes to happen.

Admittedly, incorporating this framework in TPC presents some challenges. Many TPC courses already follow an established curriculum set to a cramped schedule. This limitation overloads instructors already strained to cover the existing material. Additionally, often DEI and social justice work serve as optional, as opposed to required, material that instructors may choose to incorporate. This lack of consistency between TPC courses sends conflicting messages to students about what makes up TPC's foundation and affects the collaborative vision of what constitutes our field. While a field's make-up need not require complete agreement among its leading professionals, it must convey agreement on key topics to keep the field intact. Without some solidarity, professionals outside of the field downplay the field's importance, which affects tangible assets like salaries. Ethically, if instructors and departments fail to practice and explicitly attend to these crucial principles within the classroom, then DEI will become a passing trend, rather than remain a foundational component of our field. A final challenge to mention involves instructors' varied comfort levels with implementing DEI and social justice. Not all instructors feel qualified to teach DEI and thus revert to the existing curriculum.

Overall, this research project demonstrates the importance of incorporating critical feminist approaches more prominently in TPC pedagogy to extend social justice and to promote our TPC students' understanding of their role in forwarding DEI. Using an autoethnographic approach, I show how the language instructors use within their courses promotes certain ideologies – whether intentional or not.

Incorporating a critical feminist approach provides the action for reaching DEI outcomes that collectively lead to social justice. The remaining chapters I cover include the following:

1.4 Chapter Overview

Chapter Two: Feminist Ecologies in TPC from 1991-Present

In Chapter Two, I compile the TPC literature that involved critical feminist approaches from 1991 to the present. Using the key terms “technical communication and feminis*,” I listed all results in ten-year increments from prominent TPC journals, including *Technical Communication Quarterly (TCQ)*, *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication (JTWC)*, *Journal of Business and Technical Communication (JBTC)*, and *Technical Communication (TC)*. I also included notable feminist works not directly associated with TPC to display additional influences impacting the ecology of each time period. My findings through this literature review supported Peterson and Walton’s (2018) concern that “[u]nfortunately, with a few notable exceptions (e.g., the work of Erin Frost, Kristen Moore, Dawn Opel, and Emily January Petersen), there has been a marked decline in TPC feminist research since the 1990s surge” (p. 420); however, the current decade provides hope. I ended the chapter by emphasizing the importance in forwarding critical feminism in TPC.

Chapter Three: A Critical Feminist Approach in TPC

Chapter Three identifies the critical feminist approach I used to analyze my course in the critical reflexivity chapter (Chapter Six). This human-centered approach included six key principles: permissive listening, generative silence, welcoming difference, multivocality, collaborative labor, and gendered technology. In this chapter, I defined and explained each principle in-depth, as well as described how they

look in action. Overall, I argued that implementing these actions into TPC courses provides the scaffolding needed to support DEI practice and instruction.

Chapter Four: Methodology – Critical Autoethnography Combining Thematic Analysis & Critical Reflexivity

In Chapter Four, I detail the methods I used to conduct research; these included thematic analysis and autoethnography in the form of critical reflexivity. I began the chapter by differentiating autoethnography from ethnography and autobiography. I then connected autoethnography with a critical feminist worldview and described the lack of autoethnography as a method in TPC. Next, I explained the four touchstones I used to organize the data for this research. The touchstones included the core components of my technical writing course: social justice and DEI; the introductory documents, including the syllabus and course schedule; professional genres, including emails, technical descriptions, instructions, proposals, analytical reports, and presentations; and intercultural communication (IC). The course materials I used throughout the course made up the data for this research. I ended the chapter by expanding on the specific methods used, both thematic analysis and critical reflexivity.

Chapter Five: A Critical Feminist Analysis of a Technical Writing Course's Decade-Long Evolution

Chapter Five consists of the main analysis of this research. I explored how my own TPC pedagogy changed over the past ten years. At the same time, I reflected upon the ecological shifts at the institutional and societal levels that impacted the courses. Using the six critical feminist actions as guiding points, I discovered moments where I incorporated and thus promoted DEI – sometimes separately and sometimes collectively for social justice. Most significantly, the early years demonstrated a lack of incorporation of the DEI principles while the later years displayed more intentional incorporation of them. While I do not know the exact effect on students' experiences and learning, analyzing my

incorporation of DEI revealed that in some ways I am contributing to necessary change, but in other ways my course and my presentation of certain material needed revision.

Chapter Six: Reflections & Connecting TPC Pedagogy to Social Justice

In the spirit of an autoethnography, I end the project by reflecting on the experience. Using the established critical feminist principles as a guide, I describe the activities assigned to explain their contribution to a social justice pedagogy, along with the missing components affecting the experience. At times, I refer back to the memos I wrote throughout the process to identify moments of discovery, growth, understanding, and insight. At the end of this chapter, I comment on my experience using autoethnography and whether the methodology works within a TPC research context; reiterate my argument and emphasize the need for including more human-centered approaches, like critical feminism, at the more local level of a classroom; and provide future research ideas. Finally, I offer next steps for TPC to implement critical feminism as a way to broach conversations about DEI. In doing so, I identify how my TPC courses (and other instructors' TPC courses, too) could improve in the future based on these research findings. I provide specific ideas for implementing critical feminism more intentionally with the assumption that doing so would lead to DEI practice and instruction in TPC classrooms. Students should not need to take a Gender Studies class to be exposed to a critical feminist approach, as if it is an exclusive and extremist methodology. Instead, it provides value inter-disciplinarily, just like TPC.

1.5 Overall Focus

This research project, overall, analyzes whether one TPC course incorporated DEI principles through practice and instruction to forward TPC's social justice efforts. It explored critical feminist actions that could serve TPC courses well by providing direction to instructors struggling to practice and

instruct on DEI. Without clearer guidance on how to forward DEI, social justice will continue to take a backseat to other TPC fundamentals. Ensuring we frame our courses using a human-centered outlook, like the critical feminist actions described in this project, could support the education of future TPC professionals and broaden their perspectives when considering bodies' varying needs when communicating about and with technologies. More specifically, students would obtain the language for discussing difference and end the course recognizing and implementing a human-centered approach to language that supports social justice efforts.

Chapter 2: Feminist Ecologies in TPC from 1991-Present

Providing a “history” of TPC implies a linear development where events take place singularly and acontextually, with less regard for interwoven factors and sentiments. To avoid a narrow, over-simplified, and hegemonized understanding of a singular past, I apply Jenny Edbauer’s rhetorical ecology approach described in Chapter 1. For this chapter, then, I use Edbauer’s (2005) “augmented framework” (p. 21) to map an available network of TPC pedagogy’s feminist rhetorical ecology. Overall, I lay out many of the sources that have influenced and continue to influence TPC’s treatment of and involvement with critical feminism.

To piece together the critical feminist ecology in TPC, I searched for “technical communication and feminis*” in four established TPC journals, including *Technical Communication Quarterly (TCQ)*, *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication (JTWC)*, *Journal of Business and Technical Communication (JBTC)*, and *Technical Communication (TC)*, since each journal’s inception to the present time (2022). From these journals, I exhaustively listed the sources that weaved feminism throughout in some meaningful way; in other words, a source needed to engage with the concept, rather than simply mention the term. I also conducted a general library search for “technical communication and feminis*” to find books and additional articles outside of those four specialized journals. Finally, I consulted prominent critical feminist works outside of TPC to connect feminist-focused research to TPC. I decided to exclude reviews in my data collection this time around; I used articles and books only. Notably, unlike the sources from the four TPC journals, the sources from the general library search and from inter-disciplinary sources did not constitute an exhaustive list.

The compilation of sources in this literature review shows the progression of TPC sources involving feminism. I display the findings below in decade-by-decade sections and, within each section,

include visuals to exhibit my findings. To be included, a source needed to integrate feminism in a significant manner as an ideology or methodology, rather than just mention the term or use the concept as an example. At times, deciding which articles to include came with complications. Some sources engaged with feminism, but only in a paragraph (or less); I omitted these articles since the goal for this compilation involved more consistent engagement throughout. Other articles demonstrated feminist moves, but didn't call those moves feminist. For instance, Cargile Cook (2000) analyzed the power dynamics affecting the reports written within the United States General Accounting Office, and Hausman (2000) described the embodied nature of technology (in this case, how a guidebook on breastfeeding reinscribed "a cultural context that is ambivalent about women's changing roles and the transformation of their practices as mothers" [p. 271]). I left these articles out of the collection, as well, since the focus of this research emphasizes feminism specifically. However, a future project could include these sources since they contributed to the feminist ecology of the time in important ways.

While this research attempted to present a rich overview of critical feminism in TPC up to now, it is not the first study to identify sources focused on feminism in TPC. Thompson (1999) helpfully laid out a timeline between 1989 and 1997 displaying 40 articles that attended to gender. Thompson & Overman Smith (2006) then updated that work and relied on Thompson's (1999) same process to do so. The first article showed that feminism "has been accepted within the academic purview of technical communication as a discipline" (Thompson, 1999, p. 175), while the second article revealed a decline (though not a complete absence) in that focus (Thompson & Overman Smith, 2006, p. 196). White et al. (2016) then updated the search again using Thompson's (1999) method; they noticed a further decline in articles involving feminism and described the focus as having "stalled" (p. 39). While many of the articles these sources mentioned overlap with articles I include in this research, not all of them overlap because their search parameters and overall process differed from mine. These scholars searched for multiple terms related to feminism ("female, feminist, gender, gendered, cross-gender, gender-neutral, sexual,

sexes, sexism, sexist, and women” [White, Rumsey, & Amidon, 2016, p. 30]); I zoomed in on feminism specifically. Sometimes writers used the term gender but didn’t frame it specifically as feminist. The focus of this research, however, emphasized characteristics specific to feminism. I did, at times, include sources that spoke about gender in the “General” column since those sources contributed to the ecology of the time in important ways. Overall, now that another five years have passed since White et al.’s article and considering the latest push for social justice in lieu of the Black Lives Matter Movement, COVID-19, and other factors, providing an updated version of TPC sources emphasizing feminist work, and more importantly *critical* feminist work, proves necessary.

2.1 The “viral intensities” leading up to the 1990’s

The 1990’s marked the first decade where the “technical communication and feminis*” search terms produced results from the library research. Prior to 1991, I found no sources that explicitly connected feminism and TPC. In the spirit of an ecology, however, I identify the affective influences from previous eras (in the “General” column) that inevitably impacted the 1990s and later years. Table 1 displays these influences.

The table shows the absence of feminism in TPC prior to the 1990’s, which most likely related to a combination of factors, two of which I describe here: TPC’s youth as a scholarly profession and sexism in technological fields. Two of the prominent journals were either not in existence yet (*TCQ*) or quite young (*JBTC*). Along with TPC’s youth as a recognized and scholarly profession¹ (though at this point a clearly established profession in practice), sexism within the field affected this absence. As of only a few decades ago, technical communicators were mostly men (Dicks, 2010, p. 51), and this tendency most

¹ According to the Society for Technical Communication (2023), the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics finally recognized Technical Writing as a distinct profession in 2009 – just over a decade ago.

likely related to technologies being “literally designed by men with men in mind” (Wajcman, 2004, p. 27). To maintain what Wajcman (2004) described as “men’s domination of science and technology” (p. 30), two myths kept women excluded from technical writing, according to Durack (2004): “women are not significant originators of technical, scientific, or medical achievement” and “women’s tools are not sufficiently technical, nor their work sufficiently important, to warrant study of their supporting texts” (p. 251). Durack (2004) dispelled these myths by 1) providing examples of women’s technological contributions, like Autumn Stanley’s (1995) mention of Madeleine Vionnet’s bias cut (a sewing term) and Harriet R. Strong’s reservoir system, and 2) broadening what constitutes technologies by including household tools that are used “by women *and* by men” (Durack, 2004, p. 256, original emphasis). Other

Table 1. Display of the critical feminist works influencing the TPC ecology prior to 1990.

| TCQ | JTWC | JBTC | TC | General |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| [This journal began in 1992, so no sources are available to search.] | [This journal began in 1971, but no sources explicitly connected TPC and feminist work prior to the 1990’s.] | [This journal began in 1987, but no sources explicitly connected TPC and feminist work prior to the 1990’s.] | [This journal began in 1967, but no sources explicitly connected TPC and feminist work prior to the 1990’s.] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miller’s (1979) “A Humanistic Rationale for Technical Writing” • Merchant’s (1980) <i>The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution</i> • Rothschild’s (1983) <i>Machina Ex Dea: Feminist Perspectives on Technology</i> • Haraway’s (1985) “A Cyborg Manifesto” • Kolodny’s (1985) “Dancing through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism” • Harding’s (1987) “The Instability of the Analytical Categories of Feminist Theory” • Harding’s (1987) “Introduction: Is There a Feminist Method?” • Campbell’s (1989) <i>Man cannot speak for her</i> |

scholars, too, have proven those myths incorrect (Wajcman, 2004; Hallenbeck, 2012). Yet even when TPC began to include more women and acknowledge their contributions, they made less money per year than men (Fisher, 1994).

Outside of this developing TPC field, however, research addressing gender issues and, more specifically, feminism, proliferated. Flynn (1997) described TPC as lagging behind linguistics and literary studies by “nearly two decades” (p. 313) before feminism started to influence the field. Many (not all) of the sources listed in Table 1 (Rothschild, 1983; Kolodny, 1985; Harding, “Instability,” 1987; and

Harding, “Introduction,” 1987) came from the reference pages of the 1990’s scholars’ work; other sources listed came from interdisciplinary scholars addressing gender and/or feminism of that time (Merchant, 1980; Haraway, 1985). Mary M. Lay’s (1991) ground-breaking article, for instance, cited Hardings’ works (both published in 1987), and Haraway (1985) changed the way feminists viewed the body and its connection to technologies. All of these scholars contributed to the feminist ecology, including within TPC. While this list certainly isn’t exhaustive, it provides a start to mapping the feminist ecology that inspired the TPC scholars of the next era.

On the other hand, while these sources often described inclusion and equality, many of them tended to imply that “woman” consisted of a singular conception, an unaltered body between individuals. This female construct in earlier literature often implied a White, able-bodied, heterosexual, cysgender body. In other words, the concept of womanhood forewent individuality and uniqueness, and it overall ignored the idiosyncrasies constituting varying bodies. Later feminist works, particularly critical feminist work, would address this alarming oversimplification and absence.

2.2 1991-1999: “Lay”-ing the groundwork for feminism in TPC

With the previously identified sentiments in mind, TPC experienced high-magnitude tremors in the 1990’s through the publications of several works that embraced feminist theories and viewpoints (see Figure 2). This quaking began in 1991 with Mary M. Lay’s pivotal article “Feminist Theory and the Redefinition of Technical Communication.” Published in the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, it was the first academic article connecting feminism and TPC specifically. In this trailblazing article, Lay identified “six common characteristics” of feminist theories (p. 350):

- “Celebration of difference”

- “Theory activating social change”
- “Acknowledgement of scholars’ backgrounds and values”
- “Inclusion of women’s experiences”
- “Study of gaps and silences in traditional scholarship”
- “New sources of knowledge”

| TCQ | JTWC |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gurak & Bayer’s (1994) “Making gender visible: Extending feminist critiques of technology to technical communication” ● Bosley’s (1994) “Feminist theory, audience analysis, and verbal and visual representation in a technical communication writing task” ● Ross’s (1994) “A feminist perspective on technical communicative action: Exploring how alternative worldviews affect environmental remediation efforts” ● LaDuc & Goldrick Jones’s (1994) “The critical eye, the gendered lens, and ‘situated’; insights – feminist contributions to professional communication” ● Sauer’s (1994) “Sexual dynamics of the profession: Articulating the <i>écriture</i> masculine of science and technology” ● Blakeslee, Cole, & Conefrey’s (1996) “Evaluating Qualitative Inquiry in Technical and Scientific Communication: Toward a Practical and Dialogic Validity” ● Kynell, Tebeaux, & Allen’s (1997) “Guest Editors’ Column” ● Durack’s (1997) “Gender, Technology, and the History of Technical Communication” ● Madaus’s (1997) “Women’s Role in Creating the Field of Health and Safety Communication” ● Haller’s (1997) “Revaluating Women’s Work: Report Writing in the North Carolina Canning Clubs, 1912-1916” ● E. A. Flynn’s (1997) “Emergent Feminist Technical Communication” ● J. F. Flynn’s (1997) “Toward a Feminist Historiography of Technical Communication” ● Johnson’s (1998) “Complicating technology: Interdisciplinary method, the burden of comprehension, and the ethical space of the technical communicator” ● Blyler’s (1998) “Taking a political turn: The critical perspective and research in professional communication” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sauer’s (1993) “Revisiting Sixteenth Century Solutions to Twentieth Century Problems in Herbert Hoover’s Translation of Agricola’s <i>De Re Metallica</i>” |
| | JBTC |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lay’s (1991) “Feminist Theory and the Redefinition of Technical Communication” ● Sauer’s (1993) “Sense and Sensibility in Technical Documentation: How Feminist Interpretation Strategies Can Save Lives in the Nation’s Mines ● Thompson’s (1996) “Competence and Critique in Technical Communication: A Qualitative Content Analysis of Journal Articles” ● Thompson’s (1999) “Women and Feminism in Technical Communication: A Qualitative Content Analysis of Journal Articles Published in 1989 through 1997” ● Herrick’s (1999) “‘And Then She Said’: Office Stories and What They Tell Us about Gender in the Workplace” |
| | TC |
| | [No sources explicitly connected TPC and critical feminist work in the 1990’s.] |
| | General |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Butler’s (1990) <i>Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity</i> ● Young’s (1990) <i>Justice and the Politics of difference</i> ● Harding’s (1991) <i>Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women’s Lives</i> ● Haraway’s (1991) <i>Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature</i> ● Glover’s (1992) “Trust, Distrust, and Feminist Theory” ● Flynn’s (1995) “Feminist and Scientism” in <i>College Composition and Communication</i> ● Balsamo’s (1996) <i>Technologies of the Gendered Body</i> ● Keller’s (1996) <i>Apocalypse now and then: A feminist guide to the end of the world</i> |

Figure 2. Display of the critical feminist works influencing the TPC ecology from 1990-1999.

Based on these informative characteristics, Lay (1991) proposed redefining TPC by “exposing the myth of scientific objectivity, adapting ethnographic research techniques, and studying collaborative writing” (p. 355). Prior to listing the six characteristics, Lay acknowledged the complication of narrowing feminist approaches to a singular set of assumptions by saying that “feminist theorists resist uniformity of

definition and methodology” (p. 349). As feminism transformed throughout the generations, this complexity became more apparent, particularly as it moved away from centering a white, heterosexual, cisgender, female body.

Since the publication of Lay’s article, numerous scholars have cited the piece as of this writing, including reputable critical feminist TPC scholars like Jones, Moore, & Walton (2016) and Frost (2016). This inclusion shows the influence of Lay’s work and the yearning at the time for a new direction in TPC that moved away from the status quo, a status quo that failed to acknowledge and appreciate female perspectives. An important distinction to make is that previous TPC scholars, like Elizabeth Tebeaux (1990), had written about gender and TPC. However, they had not explicitly used the term feminism or had used it in more casual passing, rather than in the nuanced way this research project calls for. Another distinction to acknowledge is that feminism had been explicitly included in fields related to TPC, namely, composition; however, this research focuses on TPC specifically.

Après Lay’s article, more scholars attended to feminism within TPC. As Figure 2 and Table 2 display, 20 articles addressed feminism within TPC in crucial ways in the 1990’s. Some of the main themes included the following: problematizing the absence, ignoring, and/or devaluing of women’s voices in TPC (Kynell, Tebeaux, & Allen, 1997; Durack, 1997; Madaus, 1997; Sauer, 1993); altering how the field perceives women’s contributions (Haller, 1997; Madaus, 1997); informing the field of what feminism is (Gurak & Bayer, 1994, E. A. Flynn, 1997; Lay, 1991); adjusting TPC’s methodology from a strictly objective approach to one that considers the researcher’s role in presenting information (Ross, 1994; LaDuc & Goldrick Jones, 1994; Johnson, 1998; Herrick, 1999); and calling for responsibility among technical communicators to take action for social change (LaDuc & Goldrick Jones, 1994; Savage, 1996; Johnson, 1998). Notably, Thompson (1999) expressed concern that even though TPC scholarship welcomes feminism, its extensions into “workplace or classroom practice are unclear” (p. 154), a similar focus area of this current research over two decades later. Feminist characteristics that these articles

clearly emphasized included collaboration, self-reflexivity, analyzing power dynamics, attending to the embodied nature of language, inclusivity, and responsibility. One source listed, Kynell, Tebeaux, &

Table 2. Display of the number of TPC sources from 1990-1999 incorporating feminism.

| 1990-1999 | | | | | |
|--|------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| | <i>TCQ</i> | <i>JTWC</i> | <i>JBTC</i> | <i>TC</i> | Total |
| Number of initial search results with the terms "technical communication and feminis*" | 47 | 10 | 12 | 29 | 98 |
| Number of sources incorporating feminism | 14 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 20 |

Allen's (1997) "Guest Editors' Column," introduced a special *TCQ* issue (Volume 6, Issue 3) consisting of essays "all written by feminist scholars interested in the history of technical communication" (p. 245). This issue "offers a discussion of women who used technical communication to make a difference in a variety of contexts" (p. 245) and included the following sources listed in the table²: Durack (1997), Madaus (1997), Haller (1997), Flynn, E. A. (1997), and Flynn, J. F. (1997).

Along with the TPC-specific feminist sources, this decade in general revealed a surge of resources addressing feminist concerns. The "General" column of the 1990's table, though not comprehensively identifying the articles and books contributing to feminist research of that time period, includes many of the sources that tagged as "technical communication and feminis*" (using the same parameters identified at the beginning of this chapter), as well as sources introduced to me via graduate courses and general library searches that influenced this research. The titles alone convey the connection these sources make between feminism and technology, and the influences on this research project become

² Nickels Shirk's (1997) "Contributions to Botany, the Female Science, by Two Eighteenth-Century Women Technical Communicators" also appeared in this special issue. However, the term feminist (including its variations) shows up only once and thus the article doesn't meet the parameters of this research for being listed in the table.

more apparent in Chapter Three, when I compile the actions TPC instructors can take to forward a critical feminist approach for social justice purposes.

2.3 2000-2009: Power, persuasion, and complexity

This next decade saw a decrease in TPC articles centered around feminism, a finding that supports Thompson & Overman Smith's (2006) claim. Of the 116 sources matching the search terms between the four journals, only fourteen articles spotlighted feminism (see Table 3 and Figure 3). These articles integrated feminism by critiquing patriarchal communities' discourses, like the medical field's

Table 3. Display of the number of TPC sources from 2000-2009 incorporating feminism.

| 2000-2009 | | | | | |
|--|------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| | <i>TCQ</i> | <i>JTWC</i> | <i>JBTC</i> | <i>TC</i> | Total |
| Number of initial search results with the terms "technical communication and <u>feminis*</u> " | 41 | 19 | 29 | 27 | 116 |
| Number of sources incorporating feminism | 4 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 14 |

treatment of the body (Wilson, 2000; Palmeri, 2006), the Royal Society's use of plain language (Tillery, 2005), and the scientific field's use of visuals (Rosner, 2001); emphasizing the need to consider user input (Ranney, 2000; Royal, 2005; Zdenek, 2007); analyzing persuasion through case studies (Cronn-Mills, 2000; Lippincott, 2003; Williams, 2006); disputing the notion that women, collectively, have one culture (Lippincott, 2003); and exploring feminism's continued influence in TPC (Koerber, 2000; Overman Smith & Thompson, 2002; Thompson & Overman Smith, 2006). Altogether, these sources conveyed an attention to power, persuasion, and complexity.

Three of the notable sources addressing feminism's influence in TPC related to this project's current purposes of analyzing TPC pedagogy and including human-centered approaches in the field in general: Wilson (2000), Thompson & Overman Smith (2006), and Koerber (2000). The first article described one writing course's implementation of a disability studies framework to critique problematic scientific language. Wilson (2000) even described examples of classroom exercises used to generate class discussions. This article provided helpful examples of opening discussions when critiquing established systems.

The second article, Thompson & Overman Smith (2006), related to this project since it identified a shift in the TPC ecology. It updated Thompson's (1997) research and argued that the feminist approach in TPC had switched from being "a moderate or radical concern for inclusion to a postmodern concern for critique of visual, verbal, and mechanical 'technologies,'" (p. 184). This observation marked a shift in the



Figure 3. Display of the critical feminist works influencing the TPC ecology from 2000-2009.

ecology of TPC feminism. At the same time, they, too, noted a decline in feminist-focused research (p.196), as mentioned earlier.

Koerber's (2000) article, the final article that related to this research, explored how feminism might impact TPC. Ultimately, Koerber highlighted three ways feminist approaches could influence the discourse on technology in TPC: broadening how we define technology, asking new research questions, and focusing on how consumers use technologies. Presenting these steps invited yet another welcome disruption in the ecology.

The general sources mentioned from this decade identified Writing Studies-specific influences, like Lay, Gurak, Gravon, & Myntti's (2000) book and Ratcliffe's (2005) book, and ground-breaking works for gender studies in general that more explicitly connected feminism and technology (Wajcman, 2004; Harding, 2008). Collectively, these works contributed to the long-overdue switch to critical feminism. Rather than viewing feminism as a white, privileged woman's construct, these sources attempted to acknowledge the many voices involved with feminism's concerns and how the language of technologies plays a role in constructing identities.

2.4 2010-2019: Using critical feminism to discuss social justice action in TPC

The most recent full decade saw an increase in the articles engaging with feminism and represented the decade with the most number of articles attending to feminism. Of the 90 articles that mentioned the term “feminism” in some form, 27 of them involved feminism in a crucial way (see Table 4 and Figure 4). These 27 articles integrated feminism by highlighting experiences with technologies as connected to embodied users (Hallenbeck, 2012; Yankura Swacha, 2018; Rohrer-Vanzo, Stern, Ponocny-Seliger, & Schwarzbauer, 2015; De Hertogh, 2018), challenging the history of TPC (Mallone, 2010; Rauch, 2012; Petersen & Moeller, 2016; Raign, 2018), disrupting professional and social conventions in TPC to recognize women’s contributions and their value (Skinner, 2012; Sullivan & Moore, 2013; Petersen, 2014; Moeller & Frost, 2016; Petersen, 2017; Petersen, 2018), involving silenced voice (Jones, 2016, “Narrative”; Petersen, 2017); invoking vulnerability and/or caring as part of ethical behavior (Colton, Holmes, & Walwema, 2016; Petersen, 2014; De Hertogh, 2018), attending to social justice

Table 4. Display of the number of TPC sources from 2010-2019 incorporating feminism.

| 2010-2019 | | | | | |
|--|------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| | <i>TCQ</i> | <i>JTWC</i> | <i>JBTC</i> | <i>TC</i> | Total |
| Number of initial search results with the terms “technical communication and feminis*” | 41 | 28 | 15 | 7 | 91 |
| Number of sources incorporating feminism | 9 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 28 |

(Haas, 2012; Colton, Holmes, & Walwema, 2016; Jones, 2016, “Narrative”; Jones, Moore, & Walton, 2016; Jones, 2016, “The Technical Communicator as Advocate”; Frost, 2016; Petersen & Walton, 2018; Cox, 2019; Novotny & Hutchinson, 2019), addressing agency (Hallenbeck, 2012; Petersen, 2018; Novotney & Hutchinson, 2019; Jones, Moore, & Walton, 2016; Petersen & Moeller, 2016), connecting with others/collaboration (Petersen, 2014; Schuster, 2015; Colton, Holmes, & Walwema, 2016; Turner et

al., 2017; Mallette, 2017; Moore, 2017), calling attention to TPC consistently and problematically presenting itself as “gender neutral” and objective (White, Kesler Rumsey, & Amidon, 2015; Frost, 2016), and examining the power dynamics of established systems (Haas, 2012; Petersen & Walton, 2018). Overall, these 2010-2019 sources expanded the TPC ecology, rather than forwarding an incomplete, one-directional history.

Many of the sources during this time frame analyzed the power dynamics of an established system. Petersen (2018) addressed how women navigate workplace power and take part in shifting it; Petersen & Moeller (2016) studied memos that reflected one company’s sexist policies regarding marriage and pregnancy; Haas (2012) discussed critical race studies and its connection to TPC

| TCQ | JBTC |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malone’s (2010) “Chrysler’s ‘Most Beautiful Engineer’: Lucille J. Pieti in the Pillory of Fame” Hallenbeck’s (2012) “User Agency, Technical Communication, and the 19th-Century Woman Bicyclist” Skinner’s (2012) “Incompatible Rhetorical Expectations: Julia W. Carpenter’s Medical Society Papers, 1895-1899” Colton, Holmes, & Walwema’s (2016) “From NoobGuides to #OpKKK: Ethics of Anonymous’ Tactical Technical Communication” Moeller & Frost’s (2016) “Food Fights: Cookbook Recipes, Monolithic Constructions of Womanhood, and Field Narratives in Technical Communication” Jones, Moore, & Walton’s (2016) “Disrupting the Past to Disrupt the Future: An Antennarrative of Technical Communication” Yankura Swacha’s (2018) “Bridging the Gap between Food Pantries and the Kitchen Table: Teaching Embodied Literacy in the Technical Communication Classroom” Petersen’s (2018) “The ‘Reasonably Bright Girls’: Accessing Agency in the Technical Communication Workplace through Interactional Power” Novotny & Hutchinson’s (2019) “Data Our Bodies Tell: Towards Critical Feminist Action in Fertility and Period Tracking Applications” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haas’s (2012) “Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: A Case Study of Decolonial Technical Communication Theory, Methodology, and Pedagogy” Rohrer-Vanzo, Stern, Ponocny-Seliger, & Schwarzbauer’s (2015) “Technical Communication in Assembly Instructions: An Empirical Study to Bridge the Gap Between Theoretical Gender Differences and Their Practical Influence” Frost’s (2016) “Apparent Feminism as a Methodology for Technical Communication and Rhetoric” Mallette’s (2017) “Writing and Women’s Retention in Engineering” Petersen & Walton’s (2018) “Bridging Analysis and Action: How Feminist Scholarship Can Inform the Social Justice Turn” Cox’s (2019) “Working Closets: Mapping Queer Professional Discourses and Why Professional Communication Studies Need Queer Rhetorics” De Hertogh’s (2018) “Feminist Digital Research Methodology for Rhetoricians of Health and Medicine” |
| | TC |
| JTWC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Petersen’s (2017) “Articulating Value Amid Persistent Misconceptions about Technical and Professional Communication in the Workplace” Moore’s (2017) “The Technical Communicator as Participant, Facilitator, and Designer in Public Engagement Projects” |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rauch’s (2012) “The Accreditation of Hildegard von Bingen as Medieval Female Technical Writer” Sullivan & Moore’s (2013) “Time Talk: On Small Changes That Enact Infrastructural Mentoring for Undergraduate Women in Technical Fields” Petersen’s (2014) “Redefining the Workplace: The Professionalization of Motherhood through Blogging” Schuster’s (2015) “My Career and the ‘Rhetoric of’ Technical Writing and Communication” White, Kesler Rumsey, & Amidon’s (2016) “Are We ‘There’ Yet? The Treatment of Gender and Feminism in Technical, Business, and Workplace Writing Studies” Petersen & Moeller’s (2016) “Using Antennarrative to Uncover Systems of Power in Mid-20th Century Policies on Marriage and Maternity at IBM” Jones’s (2016) “Narrative Inquiry in Human-Centered Design: Examining Silence and Voice to Promote Social Justice in Design Scenarios” Jones’s (2016) “The Technical Communicator as Advocate: Integrating a Social Justice Approach in Technical Communication” Turner et al.’s (2017) “WIDE Research Center as an Incubator for Graduate Student Experience” Raign’s (2018) “Finding Our Missing Pieces – Women Technical Writers in Ancient Mesopotamia” | General <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Layne, Vostral, & Boyer’s (2010) <i>Feminist Technology</i> Royster & Kirsch’s (2012) <i>Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, & Literacy Studies</i> Kafer’s (2013) <i>Feminist Queer Crip</i> Noble’s (2018) <i>Algorithms of Oppression</i> Hesford, Licona, & Teston’s (2018) <i>precarious rhetorics</i> Edwards’s (2018) “Inclusive Practices in the Technical Communication Classroom” Agboka & Matveeva’s (2018) <i>Citizenship and Advocacy in Technical Communication: Scholarly and Pedagogical Perspectives</i> Haas & Eble’s (2018) <i>Key theoretical frameworks: Teaching technical communication in the 21st century</i> Walton, Moore, & Jones’s (2019) <i>Technical Communication After the Social Justice Turn</i> |

Figure 4. Display of the critical feminist works influencing the TPC ecology from 2010-2019.

scholarship and pedagogy; and Cox (2019) spotlighted the need for LGBT rhetorical approaches to TPC, based on case studies from a retail company. Collectively, these sources, as well as many of the sources mentioned in the previous paragraph, represent a crucial reconfiguration of the TPC ecology. The clear increase in attention to critical feminism through these sources served as a start to correcting the lack of sources in the previous decade, as displayed previously and as acknowledged by Frost (2016), White, Rumsey, & Amidon (2016), and Petersen & Walton (2018).

Additionally, the variety of topics covered shows the dynamic possibilities of critical feminist approaches. They confronted issues affecting marginalized groups, rather than shying away from potentially uncomfortable topics when questioning existing situations. These approaches also seemingly naturally align with social justice efforts since many of the sources attended to both. This overlap exemplified Petersen & Walton's (2018) claim that "the common characteristics of feminist theory are intrinsically tied to the aims of social justice work" (p. 434). While this decade appeared to head in a direction that positioned social justice efforts at the heart of TPC, especially with the aid of critical feminism, this work still needed more diverse voices and methodologies to make change and ensure our students forward these ideas.

2.5 2020-2022 (present): Human-centered methodologies address oppressive structures

So far this decade, 33 sources already have significantly integrated critical feminism out of the 64 sources that mentioned the term (see Table 5 and Figure 5). Collectively, this promising amount of sources involved critical feminism by researching agency (Clinkenbeard, 2020; Yankura Swacha, 2021; Frost, 2021; Alexander & Edenfield, 2021; Harper, 2021; Rajan, 2021; Wang, 2021; Edwards & Walwema, 2022; Rivera, 2022), embodied experiences in connection to technology (Clinkenbeard, 2020; McCaughey, 2021; Yankura Swacha, 2021; Campbell, 2021; Green, 2021; Wang, 2021; Yusuf & Schioppa, 2022), professional legitimacy (Matheson & Petersen, 2020; Fiss 2021; McCall, 2021; Itchuaqiyaq, Ranade, & Walton, 2021; Rea, 2021), human-centered methodologies in TPC (Shelton, 2020; Phelps, 2021; McKoy et al., 2022; Pouncil & Sanders, 2022; Bay & Sullivan, 2021; Moore, Jones,

Table 5. Display of the number of TPC sources from 2020-2022 incorporating feminism.

| 2020-2022 | | | | | |
|--|------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| | <i>TCQ</i> | <i>JTWC</i> | <i>JBTC</i> | <i>TC</i> | Total |
| Number of initial search results with the terms "technical communication and feminis*" | 36 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 64 |
| Number of sources incorporating feminism | 23 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 33 |

& Walton, 2021), community (broadly construed) activism (Harper, 2021; Petersen & Matheson, 2020; Yankura Swacha, 2021; Agboka & Dorpenyo, 2022; Rea, 2021; Rivera, 2022), the influence and value of nonprofessional expertise (Harper, 2021; Stambler, 2022; Carlson & Caretta, 2021), documentation and oppression (Petersen & Matheson, 2020; Cannon & Walkup, 2021; Graham & Hopkins, 2022; Moeggenberg, Edenfield, & Holmes, 2022; Aguilar, 2022), and intercultural communication (Petersen & Matheson, 2020; Yusuf & Schioppa, 2022; Pihlaja, 2022). Notably, some of the themes from the previous

decade remained important for this decade, too, like the focus on agency and embodied experiences with technology.

One crucial shift in this most recent set of literature involved the methodologies used to research the chosen topics. Many of these sources implemented human-centered research practices that digressed from the traditional scientific method often solely relied upon. Some of these methodologies included Black Feminism (Shelton, 2020), the transformative paradigm (Phelps, 2021), apparent feminism (Frost, 2021), intersectional queer theories (Green, 2021), counterstory (Rea, 2021), world-traveling (Aguilar, 2022), and critical reflection (Pouncil & Sanders, 2022). Notably, all of these sources supported a social justice approach confronting oppression and highlighting agency within complicated power dynamics. Most likely the inclusion of human-centered methodologies opens the opportunity for noticing inequities.



Figure 5. Display of the critical feminist works influencing the TPC ecology from 2020-2022.

Additionally, these sources made apparent critical feminism's impact; it refers not to one type of body, but encompasses many, diverse bodies outside of normative structures.

Since my research focuses on TPC pedagogy, acknowledging the sources that directly addressed TPC education proves necessary. For instance, Shelton (2020) described the experience of implementing a Black Feminist pedagogy in a writing course and ultimately advocated for “decolonial methodologies and pedagogies” in TPC, a similar argument I, myself, make throughout this research. Campbell (2021) emphasized the use of scenarios to teach students about the embodied connection to technology, once again a similar argument that I make through this research. McCall (2021) studied female students majoring in engineering to understand their perspectives about how their field valued their work; these findings, McCall pointed out, would “better create inclusive classrooms that welcome multi-faceted competencies” (p. 89). Finally, Agboka & Dorpenyo (2022) examined whether curriculum at different TPC programs incorporated social justice. All of these sources supported improving TPC pedagogy by including social justice practices and overall helpfully inform the project at hand.

2.6 The Critical Feminist Ecology Shift

Notably, dividing the scholarship by decade produces large categories that perhaps hide the nuances within those decades; Figure 6 divides up the decades in a line graph to show the general progression by five years at a time. In general, the three decades displayed a shift in feminist practice, one from a more White, heterosexual, able-bodied woman perspective to a broader, more inclusive approach.

Additionally, as described in the previous sections, the TPC articles relying on critical feminism also connected TPC work to social justice goals. However, the opposite proved less true: Articles that focused on social justice didn't necessarily use the critical feminism phrase. Despite not using the critical

feminism terminology, though, these sources used principles considered critical feminist, like Cameron's (2022) discussion of agency, Schultz Colby's (2023) use of empathy, and Gerdes's (2023) emphasis on inclusivity in health communications.

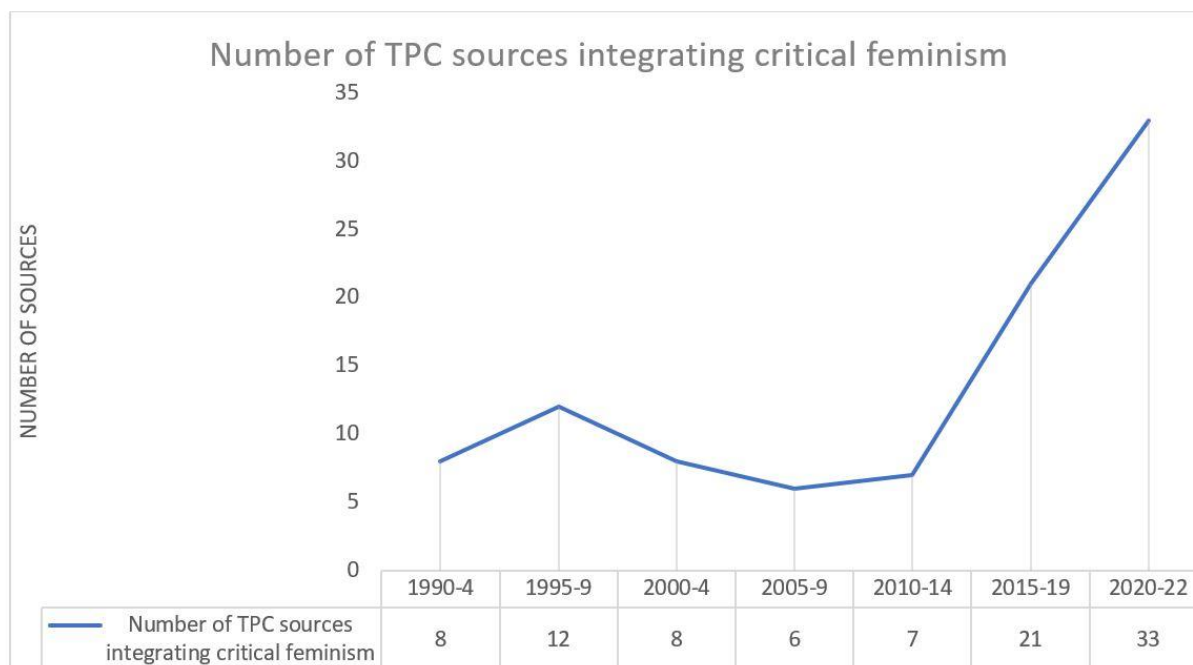


Figure 6. Graph displaying the number of TPC sources integrating critical feminism throughout the years.

Finally, the presented ecology identified a lack of a critical feminist foundation in TPC pedagogy. Some scholars described how their respective study's findings could affect the classroom, and they often explained them in terms of critical feminism (Wilson, 2000; Haas, 2012; Sullivan & Moore, 2013; White, Kesler Rumsey, & Amidon, 2016; Yankura Swacha, 2018; and Edwards, 2018). However, fewer sources than expected established their TPC courses as centered around critical feminism. With the different versions of feminism prominent in TPC research over the past thirty years, this missing component begs the question of whose ideologies are being presented and forwarded in TPC classrooms. In the future, then, critical feminist approaches must become a more crucial part of TPC pedagogy, similar to Shelton's (2020) call, and trigger a new motion in research.

Chapter 3: A Critical Feminist Approach in TPC Pedagogy

As Chapter Two displayed, critical feminist approaches are complex worldviews involving dynamic, continuously evolving ecologies. Considering feminist perspectives represent multiple bodies with diverse features and needs, highlighting the plurality of that phrase is important. When applicable, I refer to the breadth of feminist work as “approaches” in its plural form to make this complexity apparent. This section, however, narrows critical feminism to one approach useful for TPC pedagogy. While this narrowed approach does not comprehensively include all facets of critical feminist approaches, it does provide a starting point for enacting DEI in the classroom. Additionally, it provides a manageable way for me to articulate an answer to my research question of how a critical feminist approach could provide actions needed for forwarding DEI in the TPC classroom.

The necessary addition of the term “critical” in this critical feminist approach separates my current method from more traditional versions of feminism. Earlier “waves” of feminism privileged white, heterosexual, affluent women and essentially “ask[ed] women to become like men” (Petersen & Walton, 2018, p. 419). Eventually, new feminisms “interested in diversity and plurality, recognizing multiracial and multiethnic issues and sexual differences” (Petersen & Walton, 2018, p. 420) emerged. The addition of the term “critical” reflects this necessary understanding and inclusion of diverse and marginalized bodies when disrupting patriarchal systems that intend to normalize and privilege certain bodies over others. In other words, the critical feminism I forward involves a more complex, dynamic, and complicated version of identity that digresses from a more traditional version of feminism that homogenized one body’s (named “women’s”) experiences.

Critical feminist rhetorics encompass numerous viewpoints and represent various bodies and identities. As such, they vary in their foci. However, in general, they tend to critique the power dynamics present in the situations they study and challenge existing power structures for more equitable

communication, access, legislation, and practices. When challenging existing power structures, critical feminists push for “undoing patriarchy” (Layne, 2010, p. 21) and the normalized white, Western power structures. Discourses and/as technologies have power, as several feminist rhetoricians have noted, and their work has shown that power in action, as these examples demonstrate: Nordstrom (2010) described Queen Lili’uokalani’s messages to her people via *mele*, or song, in which she identified with her people while also established herself as queen so that they would continue to trust her; McKinley & Jensen (2003) described *Bienvenida Salud!*, a radio program that focuses on reproductive health and serves listeners in the Peruvian Amazon who have limited access to information; and Blair, Brown, & Baxter (2016) repudiated a report (written by three white male colleagues) attempting to downplay women’s scholarly contributions within the field of Communication. These rhetorical pieces, as “sites of power” (Shome, 2016, p. 560), show the speakers and writers using rhetoric to resist the oppressive systems in place. Unfortunately, the patriarchy, too, forwards its discourses that reinscribe problematic ideologies rampant in our world, which makes this “undoing” such a crucial goal. In short, power is always a factor in the creation, use, and disposal of various discourses and technologies. Critical feminist rhetorics attempt to analyze that power dynamic to identify inequitable dynamics of the systems in which we function.

Notably, classrooms, too, involve power dynamics – between the instructor and students, students of varying socioeconomic situations, genders, students who speak different languages, and so on. Selfe & Selfe (1994/2011), for one, analyzed MacIntosh’s interface, a common classroom technology, and discovered inherent racism; Poe & Inoue (2016) described the unfairness in writing assessment practices; and Noble (2018) analyzed Google’s search engine, another technology used regularly in the classroom, and found racism and sexism built into the algorithm. Considering these many examples of apparent inequity that affect individuals’ self-perception, conversations and practices centering DEI prove crucial.

Ignoring these issues in the classroom supports a re-inscription of the more harmful power dynamics outside of the classroom.

In critiquing a situation's power dynamics, critical feminists highlight the agency at play (Hardon, 2010; Balsamo, 1996; Chun, 2008; & Watchman, 2004), despite communicators functioning within often constraining and shifting power structures. More specifically, in TPC agency refers to "legitimizing non-elite technical and communicative expertise" (Rajan, 2021), with the "non-elite" descriptor referring to traditionally marginalized people. Throughout this project, I consider my students' agency in the creation and completion of their assignments, as connected to their own professional goals. I also consider my own agency as part of a large higher education system.

Considering this project's purpose, one way to challenge problematic power structures is through education. After all, "[p]edagogical practice is rhetorical practice" (Royster & Kirsch, 2012, p. 59). Noble (2018), too, emphasized the importance of education in her book analyzing the power of algorithms: "Every user of a search engine should know how the system works, how information is collected, aggregated, and accessed" (p. 25). Haas (2012) "demonstrate[d] how race and place matter to technical communication research, scholarship, curriculum design, and *pedagogy*. In fact, they are key to what can be imagined, what gets imagined, and who imagines in our profession" (p. 279; my emphasis). Finally reaching a point where all voices mattered and where humans could communicate with one another in engaging, meaningful ways, could lead to supportive technologies and discourses that productively solve both local and global issues.

After reading core TPC and feminist works and identifying the critical feminist ecology from previous works, I recognized six critical feminist principles that could benefit the TPC classroom and lead to a better understanding and incorporation of DEI. These principles include the following: permissive listening, generative silence, welcoming difference, multivocality, collaboration, and gendered

technology. The rest of this chapter provides a deeper explanation of these six principles that I then used in Chapter Six as part of this project's analysis.

3.1 Permissive Listening

Permissive listening makes up the first critical feminist action advantageous to a TPC classroom. By itself, listening is not new to TPC pedagogy. When detailing a history of writing pedagogy, a history that TPC shares with Composition Studies, Berlin (1987) identified the four main foci in communication courses, which included reading, writing, speaking, and *listening* (p. 96; my emphasis). The listening effort in traditional terms, however, involved listening so that one could identify weak points in the speaker's arguments and respond in an effort to conquer the speaker, similar to Foss and Griffin's assertion (1995/2016) that "[e]mbedded in efforts to change others is a desire for control and domination, for the act of changing another establishes the power of the change agent over that other" (p. 77). A critical feminist approach to listening, however, involves "a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in cross-cultural exchanges" (Ratcliffe, 2005, p. 1). While I use Ratcliffe's definition of rhetorical listening, I rename this type of listening to "permissive." After all, the traditional approach to listening is also rhetorical. Permissive listening, then, requires that the listener hear the speaker's argument with an open-minded attitude.

Through permissive listening, an audience learns about the speaker, but also learns about themselves. The audience might discover practical background information about the speaker or particular interpretations, positionalities, perspectives, and feelings the speaker presents (whether explicitly through what they say or implicitly through their tone and how they act). Through the speaker's story, the audience's own background, interpretations, positionalities, perspectives, and feelings become reframed (whether this occurs consciously or not). A communication exchange, in other words, changes

both parties, regardless of the role one represents as either speaker or audience and regardless if the audience accepts the speaker's perspective.

When adding listening *with an open mind*, the audience is approaching listening in a critical feminist way. By listening to the speaker with an open mind, the audience attempts to understand the speaker's stance based on the speaker's experiences, rather than the audience's experiences. Permissive listening, then, invites an open-mindedness that decenters one party's experiences and welcomes multiple viewpoints. For TPC, this principle is crucial during the usability testing process since it invites the technical communicator to genuinely consider the audience's needs for a specific piece of communication. In the TPC classroom, practice with permissive listening could occur when an instructor explicitly introduces the concept and then encourages students to participate in activities like class discussions and group work.

3.2 Generative Silence

A second critical feminist action beneficial to a TPC classroom is generative silence. A phrase coined by Kirsch in 2008-9 (p. 63; Royster & Kirsch, 2012, p. 96), "generative silence" refers to making time for silence so that individuals can think about encounters that have impacted their lives. It requires slowing down from the busy-ness of life and even turning off the distractions seeking our attention, including electronic media. Royster and Kirsch (2012) named this action "strategic contemplation" and described it in terms of a tactic researchers could use as part of their research process. I add it to the critical feminist approach for the TPC classroom because the undergraduates enrolled in my courses juggle many daily tasks and could benefit from this action's implementation. On a daily basis, students deal with limiting schedules involving attending classes, doing homework, working, having social lives,

being immersed in constant media, and more. Encouraging generative silence as part of their everyday practices, especially when encountering unfamiliar situations, concepts, and people, proves crucial.

Adopting a space that emphasizes “meditation, introspection, and reflection” enables participants “to pay attention to” both an “outward journey in real time and space” and an “inward journey” (Royster & Kirsch, 2012, p. 85). For Royster and Kirsch, that journey refers to a researcher’s process in collecting data and reflecting upon their analysis of that data based on their positionality. However, this notion also applies to a classroom setting. Through generative silence, students respond to the outward journey of completing assignments and participating in the course’s overall proceedings. At the same time, they experience an inward journey that closely relates to the critical feminist notion of reflexivity. Described quite extensively in Chapter 4, reflexivity involves reflecting upon what one has done/said/learned and how those actions/influences will impact future actions. Practicing generative silence “entails creating a space where we can see and hold contradictions without rushing to immediate closure, to neat resolutions, or to cozy hierarchies and binaries. The intent of such strategic contemplations is to render meaningfully, respectfully, honorably the words and works of those whom we study, even when we find ourselves disagreeing with some of their values, beliefs, or worldviews” (Royster & Kirsch, 2012, p. 22). When communicating technically in their fields, professionals could benefit from this critical feminist principle because it encourages considering how the topics and situations in industry impact the world. In the TPC classroom, generative silence takes the form of writing reflections, pausing between important points rather than rushing to the next topic, and providing contemplation periods to think about the activity/discussion just experienced.

3.3 Welcoming Difference

Critical feminist frameworks not only acknowledge differences, but also value them (as opposed to “tolerance”). This principle of welcoming difference, or, as Lay (1991) puts it, “celebration of difference,” serves the TPC classroom well since the future professionals need to understand audience in a more complex way in order to complete their job as technical communicators. Some critical feminist scholars who addressed this action included the following: Fernandez (2002), for one, hoped for “the possibility that differences could be read as something other than alienating or threatening qualities” (p. 31); Chun (2009) described the problem of using race as the “‘seeing’ of internal difference” that “makes accidental characteristics essential,” effecting “prescriptors rather than descriptors” (p. 11); and Harding (2008) argued for valuing differences to discover “what other cultures’ scientific and technological legacies have been and what they have meant to those cultures” (p.144).

Previous approaches to non-normative bodies have not always valued difference. Ratcliffe (2005) described “the logic of white supremacy,” which “imagines race as biological differences, positing a hierarchical racial chain of being via the five-races-of-man theory” and was “used to justify the existence of slavery” (p. 14). As is apparent, conceiving of gender and race using a biological approach establishes difference, but not in a way that values them. Even more disturbing, it ranks human beings and decides each person’s worth based on pre-existing and inescapably arbitrary categories. So-called “blindness” (Ratcliffe, 2005) has been another approach for “handling” difference. Those tied to this ideology claim to be “blind” to differences. However, these seemingly well-intentioned individuals end up neither acknowledging difference nor valuing it, which leads to racism, ignoring the privileges that white males are afforded (Ratcliffe, 2005, p. 134), and “unapparent” misogyny (Frost, 2016, p. 3).

Overall, disregarding difference (like the blind approach) means accepting the status quo; ignoring the privileges afforded some groups; not critically analyzing technology and society’s effects, especially on marginalized groups; failing to address inequities; continuing harmful, dualistic notions of

gender, race, and other identity markers; and so much more. Many critical feminist rhetorics, however, attempt to disrupt these notions, and this critical feminist principle applies to the TPC classroom in important ways. My courses bring together students with varying majors. They come from different departments from all over the university. Beyond academia, they come from all over the world and, thus, represent a range of backgrounds, interests, future goals, and so much more. As such, the TPC classroom presents an opportune setting to discuss differences and to demonstrate the richness that differences invoke. Respecting standpoints that differ from our own fits many critical feminist frameworks and supports the more recent TPC literature on DEI and social justice (Bizzel, 2011; Jones, 2016; Petersen & Walton, 2018; Palmer, 2018). This experience provides practice for similar situations within students' careers for collaborating with those who differ from themselves. Often students attempt to over-emphasize similarities between classmates, yet that approach leads to narrow-minded and like-minded ideas that prevent innovation and inclusivity from happening. To emphasize valuing difference in the TPC classroom, instructors might explicitly discuss this notion through case studies highlighting collaboration between professionals. They might also offer experiences where students collaborate on a project and then discuss how their differences enriched and challenged the project's completion. Ultimately, rather than shying away from discussions on difference, highlighting differences and their value could prove productive in the TPC classroom.

3.4 Multivocality

In direct opposition of the Western masculine canon, many critical feminist rhetorics construe truth as socially constructed by multiple voices (and thus multiple "truths"). Related to the notion of welcoming difference, multivocality serves as an important critical feminist principle fitting for TPC classrooms. Multivocality means that "[a]ll individuals have their own diverse technical expertise" that is valuable; this assertion requires a "revis[ion]" of "our understandings of audiences as diverse, rather than

just male” (Frost, 2016, p. 20) and, I will add, white. Critical feminist rhetorics often view truth as socially constructed, as “multivocal,” meaning that the participants are “identifiable.” The participants, not “a managerial figure,” compile and interpret the work, and the space is welcoming (Davis, 2019, pp. 136-7).

As part of this multivocality, paying attention to the absent and/or silenced voices matters, as Lay (1991) pointed out, since absence helps identify what is present. Demonstrative of this absence, technology fields lack female professionals, as both Wajcman (2004) and Harding (2008) have described, and this absence says much about the occlusion of women by men in those fields. Rather than this absence being “women’s problem,” however, Wajcman (2004) challenges men “to relinquish their hold on technology and give up the privileges and power that go with this construction of masculinity” (p. 112). Incorporating multivocality at all stages of technology would highlight missing perspectives that could ultimately improve design processes and decrease waste produced throughout those processes.

As part of multivocality, intentionally making a space for talking back becomes necessary, and this notion applies to the classroom, as well. Talking back is an “act of speech [...] that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of our movement from object to subject—the liberated voice” (hooks, 1989, p. 9). Talking back is not for those with dominant identities. Instead, talking back, or “[m]oving from silence into speech[,] is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited” (hooks, 1989, p. 9). To be clear, the previously mentioned essence of generative silence does not refer to remaining silent while inequities continue to harm individuals. Generative silence refers to moments of silence, moments upon which to reflect. Talking back, however, means speaking out against oppressors, and multivocality establishes a space to make talking back possible and potentially easier for those previously silenced. In the TPC classroom, multivocality presents itself in the forms of discussion forums, audience analysis activities, and even instructor evaluation forms.

3.5 Collaborative Labor

Another principle reminiscent of many critical feminisms includes collaboration and valuing collaborative labor over solo or cooperative work. Collaboration refers to “achiev[ing] a critical level of congruence in understanding, in purpose, and in other intellectual dimensions of a project” (Yancey & Spooner, 1998, citing John Smith, p. 52). In other words, collaboration consists of a “working shared knowledge and a dynamic process of contribution, adjustment and synthesis among members—and between members and the group” (Yancey & Spooner, 1998, p. 52). Participants within this group make up a “collaborative organism as a functional collage of connected awarenesses,” as opposed to cooperation, which consists of a “clear structure, division of roles, division of knowledge, efficiency — ‘hierarchy’ in its neutral or positive dimension” (Yancey & Spooner, 1998, 52). Noticeably, the words used to define each term convey strong ideological ties in similar ways to how my course materials revealed particular ideologies. Some key words used to define collaboration included “shared,” “dynamic,” “synthesis,” and “organism”; these terms evoke values similar to many critical feminist approaches encountered through this research. Two examples of the critical feminist literature involving collaboration in some way are as follows: McKinley & Jensen (2003) described the collaboration between a radio program and its listeners to provide information on reproductive healthcare in remote areas of the Amazon; Hardon (2010) detailed the collaboration “between women’s health advocates and researcher scientists in the development of microbicides” (p. 154). Key words used to define cooperation, on the other hand, included “division,” “efficiency,” and “hierarchy”; these terms implied a more neo-liberal approach favoring tasks and processes over people. While both concepts and practices prove necessary in different situations, collaboration conveys a more critical feminist frame of mind.

The critical feminist action of collaboration works well for the TPC classroom since many TPC sources also address collaboration. Previous conceptions of TPC revolved around solo work that focused on “self-introspection, characterized by rather narrow definitions of our field, work, and capabilities”

(Spilka, 2010, p. 4), yet “[i]n recent years, we have been developing, instead, a new self-perception as team-players, as collaborators who contribute now to larger, team-oriented projects and goals, and who do our work both within and across multiple departments and disciplines, and in some cases, both within and across industry and academy” (Spilka, 2010, p. 4). Evidence of TPC’s acceptance of more collaborative approaches is apparent in a multitude of ways: collaboration with users/audiences (Rowan, 2018; Ceraso, 2013; Clark, 2010; Blakeslee, 2010; Spinuzzi, 2015), between industry and academia (Andersen, 2014; Spilka, 2010), in classroom practices (Duin & Pedersen, 2021; Palumbo & Duin, 2018; Starke-Meyerring, Hill Duin, & Palvetzian, 2007), and between disciplines (Bennett, Eglash, & Krishnamoorthy, 2011; Spinuzzi, 2015). Collaborative efforts are even apparent through the many co-authored works now so prevalent in TPC. The collaborative efforts described seem to echo Miller’s (1979) assertion that “certainty is found not in isolated observation of nature or in logical procedure but in the widest agreement with other people” (p. 616).

As a concept extensively covered in both critical feminist works and TPC bodies of research, collaboration proves to be an important action contributing to TPC work and thus warrants intentional and significant incorporation in TPC courses, perhaps through collaborative projects, in-class discussions with partners or small groups, and peer review sessions. These activities are reminiscent of TPC work in professional fields, and instructors could, therefore, frame them as such.

3.6 Gendered Technology

The final principle garnered from the critical feminist resources involved understanding technology as gendered. Technology as gendered happens during its production, consumption, and disposal, including through the conversations during each part of those stages. Contrary to popular belief,

technologies are not “neutral,” (Harding, 2008, p. 180; Koerber, 2000, p. 58; Noble, 2018, pp. 2 & 108; Wajcman, 2004, p. 21). They participate in shaping culture, for even objects go through what Wajcman (2004) called “the gendering process” (p. 47): “Gendering does not begin and end with design and manufacturing. Domestic technologies are also encoded with gendered meanings during their marketing, retailing and appropriation by users. Whilst the technology is made into a physical object during production, the symbolic meanings attaching to it are continually being negotiated and reinvented” (Wajcman, 2004, p. 47). The microwave, originally marketed to single men, was originally placed near televisions (and similar products) in stores, but then moved to the appliances section when women “appropriated” the device (Wajcman, 2004); “curb cuts, ramps, and larger specially designated restroom stalls” were added to public spaces for those using wheelchairs but ended up accommodating parents with strollers, too (Layne, 2010, p. 11); users of social media, at times, relied on sites like Twitter during emergencies, an example being Hurricane Irene (Bowdon, 2014). All of these examples demonstrate the shifting meaning-making objects imbue, and students, as future communicators of technologies, must understand this complexity.

Along with the assertion that technologies evoke constructed meanings in connection to varying identity markers, critical analysis of technology, often construed in language as “masculine” (Wajcman, 2004, p. 15), “is always based on exploitation of and domination over nature, exploitation and subjection of women, exploitation and oppression of other peoples” (Wajcman, 2004, p. 21), and “[i]f we regard technology as neutral we will be blinded to the consequences of artefacts being designed and developed in particular ways that embody gendered power relations” (Wajcman, 2004, p. 23). Noble (2018), for instance, showed how Google’s algorithm promoted sexism and racism in its display of Black girls. While technologies like Google’s search engine come across as providing “credible, accurate information” that seem “depoliticized and neutral” (Noble, 2018, p. 25) due to the normativizing inclusion of such a vast information machine, “[a]fter technologies are designed, produced, and marketed, they are typically incorporated into existing institutions and practices, which cause[s] them to reinforce

status quo meanings of phenomena such as race and gender rather than foster new meanings” (Koerber 68). The institutions to which Koerber refers include universities and other higher education entities. For all of the reasons stated above, critically analyzing technology’s role in meaning-making brings to the forefront oppressive practices that otherwise remain hidden. Put another way, “[a]dding technology to feminist agendas is necessary to ongoing struggles to achieve gender equity and equality because the technological often coproduces and maintains systems of power that affect women's [and all oppressed people’s] lives” (Vostral, 2010, p.137).

In the TPC classroom, we teach our students how to communicate about technologies, yet male bodies often design, create, and produce those technologies for male bodies. All bodies rely on technologies to make lives healthier, easier, and more fun. However, bodies differ from one another, and involving different perspectives on the creation and production of technologies would accommodate bodies’ various needs and ultimately benefit all. Considering technology makes up a defining feature of TPC, incorporating discussions in TPC classrooms about the gendering of technology proves necessary. Analyzing those technologies in terms of power, similar to previous TPC and critical feminist scholars’ works (Dwoskin, 2015; Noble, 2018; Massanari, 2017), could lead to necessary conversations among students where they identify inequities apparent in specific technologies within their fields. These discussions could change students’ approaches to varying topics within their majors once they enter their careers.

3.7 Naming the Six Critical Feminist Principles

The six principles identified above reference several critical feminist works and, collectively, work to support the TPC classroom in implementing DEI for social justice purposes. They convey a manageable snapshot of some critical feminist ideals that could impact a semester-long TPC course.

Involving these actions in TPC curriculum would not only emphasize that using technologies is embodied, but also inspire my students, future communicators of technologies, to consider their users' varied needs. The principles mentioned here do not encompass all critical feminist characteristics. Rather than an exhaustive list, these six actions serve more as a combination suited to the current ecology. While this framework could work well in other courses, too, it especially fits TPC because of the field's collective attention to technology, communication, and social justice .

For the purposes of this research, these principles provide useful direction for analyzing my moves throughout the ten years of teaching the TPC course. They open discussions about whether I implemented a critical feminist ideology and forwarded it to my students through my course materials' wording and presentation or whether I forwarded harmful ideologies counter-intuitive to social justice. In other words, I use the six principles to show my course's involvement of DEI throughout its re-construction each semester and acknowledge how my course represents one organism/community making up the ecology of the time.

Chapter 4: Methodology: Critical Autoethnography Combining Thematic Analysis & Critical Reflexivity

To address the research questions, I implemented a methodology combining thematic analysis and autoethnography. I analyzed many of the course materials of a technical writing course taught every year (sometimes up to three times per year) over the past ten years. Through my analysis, I identified what worked well (what “generate[d] useful ways of creating knowledge” [Ettorre, 2016, p. 1]) and what fell short (what “wound[ed]” [Ettorre, 2016, p. 1] students and/or the groups/individuals represented in the course materials we discussed). Below, I describe autoethnographies in more depth, my autoethnographic approach, the state of autoethnography in TPC, the data I collected for analysis, and the specific methods I used to analyze the data.

4.1 Differentiating Autoethnography

Generally, autoethnography “consists of three characteristics or activities: the ‘auto,’ or self; the ‘ethno,’ or cul-ture; and the ‘graphy,’ or representation/writing/story. Projects defined as ‘autoethnography’ engage *all three characteristics*” (Adams, Jones, & Ellis, 2021, p. 3; original emphasis). Elizabeth Ettorre (2016) explains that “narrative methods [like autoethnography] generate useful ways of creating knowledge about individuals, collective agency and the interior language of emotional vulnerability and at times, wounding” (p. 1). For the purposes of this research, three similar terms warrant differentiation: ethnography, autobiography, and autoethnography. Ethnography relies on observation, rather than participation, of the community researched. It is “detached from the community studied” and “hidden in the text as he/she adopts ‘realist’ descriptive techniques in deference to an objective representation and analysis of the culture” (Canagarajah, 2012, p. 114). Autoethnographies,

however, require participation from the researcher; they are “a highly visible social actor within the written text” (Anderson, 2006, p. 384). Autoethnographies are “stories of/about the self told through the lens of culture” (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015, p. 1). They differ not just from ethnographies, but from autobiographies, as well. Whereas autobiographies situate the “I” within a personal, as opposed to a cultural, context, autoethnographies situate the “I” “firmly within a cultural context” (Ettore, 2017, p. 2). They “make personal and social change possible for more people” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 277). Overall, autoethnographies involve using a researcher’s experience to critique the cultural context, valuing relationships with other social actors described, self reflecting, identifying the meaning of people’s experiences, balancing “intellectual and methodological rigor, emotion, and creativity,” and seeking social justice (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015, p. 1).

As a cross-disciplinary application, autoethnographies encompass a range of different approaches to data collection and analysis, and many scholars have attempted to categorize those varying approaches, which tend to plot on a subjective/objective spectrum. On one end, the subjective, the researcher writes an *evocative* autoethnography that “are those stories told primarily for the purpose of sharing an experience” (Kaufmann, 2020, p. 400). On the other end of the spectrum, the objective, the researcher writes an *analytic* autoethnography that “is not simply to document personal experience, to provide an ‘insider’s perspective,’ or to evoke emotional resonance with the reader. Rather, the defining characteristic of analytic social science is to use empirical data to gain insight into some broader set of social phenomena than those provided by the data themselves” (Anderson, 2006, p. 386-7). Anderson (2006) argued that evocative autoethnographies’ merely representational, as opposed to analytical, approach fails to extend beyond the research at hand. In response, evocative autoethnographers Ellis, Adams, & Bochner (2011) emphasized that analytic autoethnographies surrender to the realist notion of truth because they rely too heavily on existing, normative theories: “those who advocate and insist on canonical forms of doing and writing research are advocating a White, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper classed, Christian, able-

bodied perspective” (p. 275). Kaufmann (2020) mentioned a third type, *performative* autoethnographies, and argued that, as artistic performances that involve theory, these works “span the evocative/analytic categorization” (p. 400). A final type of autoethnography covered in the literature consisted of the *critical* autoethnographic approach, which “links the concrete and the abstract, thinking and acting, aesthetics, and criticism” (Fa’avae, 2018, p. 130, paraphrasing Holman Jones, 2016). In this construction, researchers “actively tell their stories alongside/by/within theory or theories” (p. 130) and thus present a balance of the evocative and analytic. Holman Jones (2016) explained that the term “critical” in this type of autoethnography “reminds us that theory is not a static or autonomous set of ideas, objects, or practices. Instead, theorizing is an ongoing process that links the concrete and abstract” (p. 1). Considering the complexity that critical autoethnography allows, I positioned my own research within this framework. The focal point of this research involves one TPC course that represents not a singular epistemology, but a whole department’s/university’s/field’s epistemology. The critical autoethnographic approach values each individual’s story and allows for that flexibility of autoethnography-informed theory that will transform existing problematic canons.

Another arrangement of autoethnographic work appears in Ellis, Adams, & Bochner’s (2011) article, where they established these categories of autoethnography: Indigenous/native; narrative; reflexive, dyadic; reflexive; layered accounts; interactive interviews; community; co-constructed narratives; and personal narratives. Each of these types of autoethnography “differ in how much emphasis is placed on the study of others, the researcher’s self and interaction with others, traditional analysis, and the interview context, as well as on power relationships” (p. 278). Considering this framework, I positioned my research within the reflexive category, which Ellis, Adams, & Bochner (2011) describe as “document[ing] ways a researcher changes as a result of doing fieldwork” and “studying her or his life alongside cultural members’ lives,” among other descriptions (p. 278). Through my research, I pointed out how my course and I, the instructor, changed over the course of ten years. I also identified how,

because of doing this research, I must change my course and my presentation of the materials in the future.

While the paragraphs thus far have explained many of the benefits of using an autoethnographic methodology, this type of research also presents limitations, often in the form of ethical challenges. The majority of the ethical challenges relate to the self and/or the other social actors involved in the autoethnography. When considering the ethics involving the self, researchers in autoethnographies are vulnerable, for they “risk[s] stigma (Visse & Niemeijer, 2016), negative judgments by university colleagues, and undesired career consequences” (Lapadat, 2017, p. 594). They also rely on emotions to tell their stories, yet shifting from supposed objective research to subjective still makes some researchers uneasy (Anderson [2006] serves as one example demonstrating that uneasiness). Additionally, time passed impacts the reiteration of a story, so that distance problematizes the genuine interpretation of the experience detailed. Finally, fact-checking an autoethnography’s claims for validity proves difficult (Lapadat, 2017, p. 596).

For the ethical challenges related to others, autoethnographies “implicate relational others in our lives” (Lapadat, 2017, p. 593), which sometimes means obtaining consent from the parties mentioned (Canagarajah, 2012, p. 122), member checking (Canagarajah, 2012, p. 122; Lapadat, 2017, p. 591), and struggling to anonymize close social actors (like parents, significant others, etc.) (Lapadat, 2017, p. 593). This element of involving the other also pertains to Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) since it complicates the typical processes outlined in IRB forms.

Despite these limitations and ethical concerns for both the self and others in autoethnographies, they ultimately challenge the restrictive research practices conducted thus far and add personal voices to the issues talked about in an effort to make necessary social changes. Additionally, we TPC professionals

concern ourselves with user experience. This project's implementation of autoethnography exemplifies one user's experience teaching within the profession.

4.2 An Autoethnographic Methodology in conjunction with a Critical Feminist Worldview

As mentioned in the previous chapters and above, this research implemented a critical autoethnography methodology and a critical feminist lens, two approaches that naturally overlap. First, generative silence, or reflexivity, makes up a key component of both approaches. Discussed in the previous chapter, as well as more extensively later in this chapter, generative silence requires that the researcher contemplate their personal experience in connection with the larger cultural context, which includes local/global happenings, theory and literature on the topic, established norms affecting the situation, and more. Another overlapping element is multivocality. While one autoethnography includes only one researcher's perspective, the research methodology as a whole invites multiple perspectives and, I would argue, requires it. If only one perspective remains the focus, then the methodology is no better than the exclusionary and highly regulated positivistic science approach. Yet another overlapping element pertains to power dynamics. Both critical feminist approaches and autoethnographies connect research to political structures needing substantial revision. In other words, both approaches aim to effect change for social justice.

4.3 Autoethnography in TPC

While scholars in other fields, like Communication Studies, Education, and Gender Studies, have embraced autoethnographies as a research method (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Lapadat, 2017;

Ettore, 2017; Fa-avae, 2018; Elbelazi & Alharbi, 2020; Anderson, 2006; Kaufman, 2020; and Pensoneau-Conway, Adams, & Bolen, 2017), TPC has not yet established a solid body of literature employing autoethnographies. In fact, a library search of “autoethnography and technical communication” produced just two sources: Tham, Rosselot-Merritt, Veeramoothoo, Bollig, & Hill Duin’s (2020) article that compiled and analyzed vignettes of the authors’ experiences in the Wearables Research Collaboratory, a group that tests and analyzes technologies designed for the body; Virtaluoto’s (2014) article that expressed concern over TPC’s direction as a field at that time. I later discovered another TPC article with a slightly adjusted spelling of autoethnography (“auto-ethnography”): Cecelia Shelton’s (2020) “Shifting Out of Neutral: Centering Difference, Bias, and Social Justice in a Business Writing Course.” In this article, Shelton describes the experience of enacting a Black Feminist pedagogy as a Black rhetorician. Besides these three articles, however, no other TPC articles surfaced that explicitly centered autoethnography as their methodology.

On the one hand, this absence surprised me considering our field’s humanistic turn, which neatly aligns with autoethnographies’ interrogation of positivism. In “A Humanistic Rationale for Technical Writing,” TPC scholar Miller (1979) argued that “whatever we know of reality is created by individual action and by communal assent. Reality cannot be separated from our knowledge of it; knowledge cannot be separated from the knower; the knower cannot be separated from a community. Facts do not exist independently, waiting to be found and collected and systematized; facts are human constructions which presuppose theories” (p. 615). Echoing a similar notion, “[A]utoethnographers are sceptical of positivistic research, they question ‘grand narratives which claim objectivity, authority and researcher neutrality in the study of social and cultural life’ and reject ‘the assumed ubiquity of stable meanings, existing independently of culture, social context and researcher activity and interpretation’” (Ettorre [2016] quoting Short et al. [2013], p. 3). Again, considering this humanistic shift in TPC and its alignment with the fundamental premise of autoethnography, the lack of autoethnographic work in TPC seems long

overdue. My research, then, added an autoethnography example to our field in the hopes that TPC scholars will consider this methodology in the future, especially considering our field's social justice turn.

On the other hand, this omission comes as no surprise. Burgeoning as a field during World War I, TPC stems from a heavily technical and scientific past. Understandably so, TPC's foundational purpose remains intact: communication about technologies and science between the audiences involved. Anchored to the scientific and technological, TPC naturally relies on the scientific method so embedded in the so-called hard sciences. However, generally speaking, the conceptualization of what constitutes research has significantly broadened since WWI. Along with autoethnographies, research methodologies like grounded theory, narrative inquiry, and oral history have perforated the traditional scholarly methodologies and slowly gained esteem in some fields. TPC, too, recently began to expand the conception of what constitutes scientific inquiry, as demonstrated in Chapter Two. This research project, then, attempted to show our field the validity and reliability of yet another research methodology, that of autoethnography, in order to subvert the existing, dominant ideology that so often excludes marginalized voices.

Another potential contributor to TPC avoiding newer research methodologies, especially like autoethnographies, relates to the inability to account for reliability and validity. Closely related to the previous paragraph, an autoethnographic study cannot reproduce the same results between researchers because the researchers all have unique backgrounds and experiences that informed their own study. Without that consistency, colleagues committed to the scientific method would question the study. Similarly, those same colleagues could question an autoethnography's validity since the story, based on one person's account, could be untrue. The autoethnographer could pick and choose details from the story in order to prove a certain result or argument. In the end, for TPC researchers to accept the reliability and validity of autoethnographies, they must trust that their colleagues have captured the details of the story in a most genuine way. They must also acknowledge that their colleague's contributions serve as one person's truth, rather than as a generalizable fact.

Finally, along with the entrenched scientific method, TPC's general omission of methodologies outside of the scientific method also relates to the subjective and objective discussion mentioned earlier. Autoethnographies intentionally and without reserve convey emotion and incorporate the subjective perspective that traditional research methods strove to cover up. At play here is a gender component since previous generations' limited understanding of the complexity of gender linked women to (immeasurable) emotions and men to more (measurable) objective tasks. Keeping these misled assumptions in mind, men in TPC would most likely avoid autoethnographies since expressing emotions belonged to the other gender; women in TPC would most likely avoid autoethnographies in an attempt to subvert the stereotype that only women experience and express emotions. Overall, TPC recently began depending on newer research methodologies to bring in voices not easily incorporated with the traditional scientific method alone, so the lack of autoethnographies in TPC incites less concern than previous decades. Considering our field's turn to more humanistic treatments and endeavors, this combination of methodologies proves key to propel our research in new directions that center marginalized voices.

4.4 Data Collection

The course materials I created, displayed, and assigned to my students over the past ten years of teaching the course make up the data for this research. As I analyzed my pedagogical approaches over the last decade, I focused on four main touchstones that make up the technical writing course's core subject matter of late: social justice and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), the introductory materials, the professional genres, and intercultural communication (IC). Below, I describe the data obtained from each.

Social Justice and DEI

The first touchstone involved analyzing how I incorporated DEI and social justice as a whole throughout the course through explicit conversations and activities. In other words, I determined whether I articulated these terms to my students or ignored them. To find these moments, I searched for the DEI terms in all courses' syllabi, course schedules, daily lectures, assignments, activities, and examples displayed. The "foundational concern of TPC" (Walton, 2016, p. 411), social justice must take precedence as the main goal of all participants when participating in communicative interactions, and searching for the DEI principles in the course materials showed whether and how I enacted social justice within the classroom and beyond.

Introductory Materials

For the next touchstone, I analyzed whether I role modeled DEI practices in the courses' introductory materials, specifically, in the syllabi and course schedules. Students represent a variety of backgrounds and experiences, and classroom spaces must enact equitable policies that allow everyone to succeed. These introductory documents set the tone for the course and serve as a sort of contract for course proceedings, so ensuring students understand and can access the content within these opening documents proves necessary.

Professional Genres

For this next touchstone, I once again analyzed whether I role modeled DEI. This particular technical writing course focuses on practicing composing professional genres, including professional correspondence, technical descriptions, instructions/usability testing, proposals, formal reports, and presentations. For this stage of research, then, I analyzed the foundational framework I used to introduce each genre. I then scrutinized the genre examples I displayed and the assignments and activities I required

students to complete. Overall, I looked for moments that supported DEI, as well as the gaps needing revision, in the course materials.

Intercultural Communication

Lastly, I assessed my courses' instruction on intercultural communication (IC) since the broad-encompassing concept of culture impacts an audience's actions in profound ways. To do so, I searched all course materials for the term "culture" and then analyzed its uses and functions in the course. IC makes up a key component in the instructions unit of my TPC course, for I connect my students with translation partners located in Europe through the Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Project (TAPP), an opportunity where "students become aware of the diversity of the world community in which their documents travel" (The Trans-Atlantic & Pacific Project, 2021). For this research, then, I analyzed the materials I used for scaffolding culture and integrating IC in general and TAPP more specifically. By discussing IC via a critical feminist lens, I hoped to provide new language on how to talk about TAPP.

4.5 Methods Used to Analyze the Data

This qualitative research project combined a critical autoethnographic approach with a critical feminist approach. When analyzing the course materials, the units of analysis, I looked for moments that forwarded DEI and those that implemented critical feminist ideologies like those named in the previous chapter. I also looked for moments that counteracted DEI and critical feminist ideologies and explained the harm caused by those moves. Acknowledging those moments indicated how the course could improve in the future. To analyze the data, I employed two main methods, thematic analysis and critical reflexivity, that together depart from the Western masculine approach to research.

Method 1: Thematic Analysis

One method I used consisted of thematic analysis, which “involves a search for the relationships among domains and how they are linked to the culture as a whole” (Saldaña quoting Spradley [1979], 2016, p. 185). In this research, the “domains” referred to my courses’ materials, including the syllabus, the course schedule, lectures, assignments, activities, the LMS (Moodle for earlier years; Canvas for later), the course’s assigned textbook, examples, and multimedia pieces. The “culture as a whole,” in this case, refers to the ecology established in Chapter Two and constitutes a compilation of social justice, critical feminist practices, the TPC field, and generally world happenings affecting the courses’ proceedings. More specifically, I coded the course materials throughout the ten years by looking for the DEI principles, “social justice” phrase, and “culture” term to show how my courses supported DEI and critical feminist ideals or, conversely, reinscribed a normative (white, male, heterosexual, neutral, able-bodied, etc.) environment. Additionally, I documented differences between the earlier documents and the later ones.

Generally speaking, thematic analysis worked well for this project for two reasons: First, it “present[ed] themes and topics generated through data analysis” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019, p. 403). In this case, “categories developed from the author’s examination of recorded data” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019, p. 403). As I coded my course materials, I identified trends in the wording and structure that supported particular ideologies. At times I determined a theme using the explicit wording from the course materials (like the category “Design”), while at other times I attached a theme based on a course material’s general ambience (like the category “Access”). Throughout this qualitative process, I acknowledged the subjectivity involved when identifying emerging themes and as a result remained transparent about my methodological moves.

Second, thematic analysis can “rely on categories already available in previously published theory and research” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019, p. 403). Existing themes on which I relied are the DEI principles explained in Chapter 1 and the critical feminist intensities determined in Chapter 3. The DEI principles involved looking for moments that used inclusive wording; relied on diverse authors and viewpoints; discussed TPC in an equitable manner for the groups my course materials reference; and presented information in an accessible way for my students. It also referred to challenging my students to think critically about enacting those principles and to keeping social justice issues at the forefront of TPC concerns in our course. The critical feminist principles involved looking for moments demonstrating (not necessarily stating) permissive listening, generative silence, welcoming difference, multivocality, collaborative labor, and gendered technology. Naming these themes and noticing specific instances in my course materials of the conveyances of those attributes helped me to determine whether I am supporting particular ideologies and, if so, which ones. Doing so provided insight into my delivery of information and how students might interpret that delivery.

Method 2: Critical Reflexivity

The other method I employed included critical reflexivity, an important feature of both critical feminist work and autoethnographic methodologies. Critical feminists Royster & Kirsch (2012) describe critical reflexivity and its importance in this way:

[...] attend[ing to] the twofold challenge of being aware, not only of what enters our field of vision—what we see and recognize—but attuned also to our blind spots in order to consider with critical intensity what may be more in shadow, muted, and not immediately obvious. These reflective and reflexive practices have predisposed us to understand the inevitability that, more than likely, there will be factors and dimensions of scenes and situations that we may not notice and especially so if we fail to exercise a direct and specific commitment to look and look again, listen and listen again, think and think again recursively (p. 76-7).

TPC scholars, too, have addressed reflexivity. For instance, Blakeslee, Cone, & Conefrey (1996) wrote extensively on how qualitative practices (namely, “accountability, multi-vocality, and self-reflexivity” [p. 126]) and credibility are not mutually exclusive. They even argued that they, “in fact, can be very compatible” (p. 126). The authors go on to explain that reflexivity acknowledges “participants’ biases, positions, and perspectives” (p. 142), not just the researchers’, and they eventually provide suggestions of how to go about “being reflexive,” which included asking relevant questions. Practicing critical reflexivity “sheds light on the assumptions that underlie what we do, on the factors and circumstances that influence our problems and questions, on the views and voices represented in our work, and on our audiences and purposes” (p. 142). Along with my personal “commitment” to look for “blind spots” in my course materials, this project allowed me to look with fresh eyes at the moves I made over the past ten years within my technical writing courses. Since several years have passed for some of the courses, this project allowed me to revisit the materials from a removed position.

Part of critical reflexivity involves identifying one’s own positionality. Blakeslee, Cole, & Conefrey (1996) quoted revolutionary feminist Donna Haraway as arguing for “politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situation, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims” (p. 142). In this spirit, I “unmask” myself, to use Herrington’s term (Blakeslee, Cole, & Conefrey, 1996) and acknowledge my own privileged position. I am a white, educated, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied woman who, as the course’s manager, facilitator, lecturer, assessor, assignment-creator, and more, holds most of the power within my classroom. Keeping this power dynamic in mind as I reflected upon my teaching methods was key to understanding how much my course reinscribed harmful normative practices.

At the same time, the design of this research project left me quite vulnerable. I explained my moves in a quite revelatory fashion by showing both my successes and failures as an instructor of the TPC course. However, that honesty will open the conversation about the local level’s role in contributing

to or fighting against the powers-that-be. I also attempted to add a research methodology not typically used in my field. Finally, being a graduate student on the job market puts that much more pressure on this project. However, by approaching the research in this more personal and personalized way, I am “talking back” (hooks, 1989) to the established structures that often minimize the human factor of research. I am attempting to carry on a more complex, more complete, and feminized tradition.

4.6 Pairing Thematic Analysis & Critical Reflexivity – A Feminist Move

Combining thematic analysis and critical reflexivity digressed from the traditional positivistic approaches that assumed a façade of objectivity. Generally speaking, feminist rhetorics employ a variety of nonnormative methods to uncover the power dynamics within the situations they study. While thematic analysis has a long tradition in normative settings, I used it in conjunction with critical reflexivity. This pairing challenged those Western traditions in important ways. First, this research attempted to highlight the agency (or lack thereof) individuals have within their own lives and attempted to uncover what power dynamics might be preventing that agency from happening. As the instructor of the technical writing course, I possessed much agency in determining how I presented the course’s information to students and how much agency I gave my students throughout each task. This research revealed just how much agency I invited or thwarted for students.

Second, this pairing also humanized the data since I, the researcher, presented the successes and downfalls of my teaching materials. This assessment of my own course materials in relation to the culture writ large, contributed to autoethnographic research since “autoethnography exposes the individual in a matrix of always and already political activities as one passes through one’s cultural experiences” (Ettorre, 2017, p. 2). At the same time, I analyzed the cultural atmosphere of my TPC classroom that I have established for my students. This “authentic method [...] locates research experience in the changing

ebb of emotional life, allowing interpretations of personal ‘truths’ and speaking about oneself to transform into narrative representations of political responsibility” (p. 3). As the person most in a position of power within my course, I have a responsibility to my students. The fact that my course could impact their future communication habits made my role that much more profound and my assessment of my moves in the course more necessary.

Chapter 5: A Critical Feminist Analysis of a Technical Writing Course's Decade-Long Evolution

This chapter reveals the results of the thematic analysis supported by the critical feminist framework identified in Chapter Three. Using the DEI principles, I analyzed how the TPC pedagogy I presented to my students evolved over the past ten years (from 2013-2022) to uncover whether my course represented an impactful contribution to achieving social justice through TPC pedagogy. To display the results, I organized them by the four touchstones described in Chapter Four:

- Social justice and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
- Introductory Documents
- Professional Genres
- Intercultural communication (IC)

By the end of this chapter, I critically analyze many of the course materials presented to students over the past ten years. I analyze whether social justice efforts permeated the course, which remains the goal, whether I attended to them solely on scheduled days, or whether I ignored them altogether. Ensuring that social justice imbues the course means providing my students with a better understanding of how the four touchstones impact TPC within their respective fields.

5.1 Social Justice and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

As described in Chapter One, especially since TPC's social justice turn, the field has attended to DEI efforts in important ways. In the technical writing courses I have taught of late, I attempted to both role model DEI practices and explicitly discuss DEI principles with my students. The analysis in this

section focuses on the latter by analyzing whether I implemented these crucial principles into my technical writing courses as points of discussion and attention.

Social Justice

To begin, a general search for the phrase/code “social justice” throughout all course materials produced a result not until Spring 2022. In that year, I implemented a conversation about social justice on Day 1 in the syllabus (see the appendix) in at least two ways: through a paragraph introducing my expectations of students’ conduct during daily conversations and through the new, supplementary textbook incorporated into the course. Regarding the paragraph introducing my expectations of student conduct, the new paragraph read,

Becoming a university-educated individual means recognizing that behind the face value of situations comes entire systems promoting or preventing various relationships and communicative practices in general. Identifying the contexts that inspire, support, hinder, sway, harm, etc. individuals will help you identify injustices that often begin in and are reinscribed through our day-to-day interactions. When contributing to our class, then, I expect the following behavior from all students to ensure a focused and productive learning environment.

I then listed eleven actions via bulleted list identifying specific expectations. In one of them, I quoted Rebecca Walton’s paraphrase of Jürgen Habermas: “everyone is endowed with intrinsic worth just by virtue of being human” (2016, p. 410). Through this move, I attempted to highlight for students the importance of language, even daily language, and how it constructs our contexts and world. I also attempted to establish the tone of our course – that we will “prioritiz[e] people over tasks, process, and objects” and “avoid[] racist, sexist, and other discriminatory comments” (two of the other bulleted points

included). Overall, this language attempted to instill a human-focused foundation that would lead to social justice directions in our class conversations and the work students produced for the course.

By contrast, the syllabus one year prior simply stated, “In order to ensure a focused and comfortable learning environment, I expect the following behavior from all students.” This statement introduced a bulleted list of 7 items, including a statement about avoiding discriminatory comments. However, the contrast between these two sections is quite striking. This 2021 version frames the list so that abiding by the actions benefits the instructor. In other words, by following the codes of conduct within the classroom, the student would be following the rules ostensibly arbitrarily established by the instructor. Second, following the actions benefits students, for they will be able to comfortably focus on the material presented. While these outcomes aren’t bad, the 2022 version explicitly addresses social justice through students’ behavior and more closely ties in with the rhetorical principles, like audience and context, talked about later. In other words, following the actions not only benefits the students and instructor in the moments of classroom interactions, but also benefits society, a message extending beyond classroom proceedings. In other words, the 2022 version links classroom interactions to the larger context of language affecting proceedings outside of the classroom and vice versa. Ultimately, the 2022 version emphasizes less of a “do this because I said so” and instead connects students’ behaviors to a larger, cultural purpose – one that prioritizes people.

The new textbook, Mussack’s *Introduction to Technical and Professional Communication: Technical Communication through a Social Justice Lens*, provided an additional mention of social justice on Day 1 in the syllabus. This supplementary textbook added a curriculum-supported way to incorporate social justice into the course. Through descriptions and examples, the textbook explained the connection between social justice and TPC. In my 2022 technical writing course, the specific passages we read from this resource included the topics displayed in Table 6. In other words, out of 28 class meetings, we read social justice-related passages on just three days. Days 2 and 3 involved foundational principles, including

Table 6. Display of the topics we read from the supplementary textbook.

| Day | Section Number from <i>ITPC</i> | Topic |
|-----|---------------------------------|---|
| 2 | Introduction; 4.1 | Language's importance of constructing the world and TPC; genres |
| 3 | 1.1; 2.3 | Rhetoric; audience |
| 8 | 2.1 | DEI and ethics |

connecting social justice to TPC, rhetoric, and genres. Making these connections early on to establish our course's framework proves necessary and certainly marks the solid start of a course centering social justice. However, while I used the concepts of rhetoric and genres in the slides to introduce all units after covering those foundational concepts, I, unfortunately, unintentionally omitted social justice from all of the units following that foundation. This misstep kept social justice out of classroom conversations and, thus, the course failed to demonstrate how professional documents, including students' work in the course, contribute to the language supporting or taking away from social justice causes and actions.

On Day 8, we revisited the supplementary textbook to discuss ethics. I also read parts of Rebecca Walton's work on human dignity (2016). Drawing upon these resources provided another door to incorporating social justice into the course. Immediately after covering this information, I then asked students to search for (via Google) and skim their field's codes of ethics. The sequence of these activities promoted making a clear connection between students' professions and the ethical stances those professions take. As I reflect upon Day 8, I envision taking this activity one step further. Rather than ending the activity with a brief discussion, I could ask students to write a 1-page document where they explicitly connect their field, ethics, and social justice. Doing so could encourage them to think about how social justice plays a role in responding to difficult ethical dilemmas, as well as less weighty activities like daily interactions with colleagues.

Another finding from the search for "social justice" in 2022 included a slide asking students to think about how IC related to their field of study. As part of the activity, students thought about how

social justice connected to their chosen profession's IC involvement. Then a couple students volunteered responses for the whole class. Notably, this conversation concluded our unit covering IC because I initially intended for students to think about the relationship between their field, IC, and social justice and to carry on these connections beyond the course. Reflecting upon this move, however, I realize that connecting these topics at the beginning of the unit could be more impactful. Throughout the unit, students could look for and continue to recognize social justice's role in IC interactions.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Along with explicit conversations about social justice, I also searched for explicit mentions/codes of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), all of which play a role in contributing to a socially just world. Even as individual principles, their involvement in a technical writing course contributes to the social justice work taking place within a course. As Table 7 displays, the incorporation of DEI principles over

Table 7. Display of how often the course materials mentioned the respective DEI principles.

| | Diversity | Equity | Inclusion |
|------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| 2013 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 2014 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 2015 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 2016 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 2017 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 2018 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 2019 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 2020 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 2021 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 2022 | 9 | 5 | 5 |

the past ten years produced similar results through 2021, that of lacking in significant incorporation of the principles.

Diversity. The term diversity came up in all courses throughout the ten years. However, it showed up sparingly and what that term referenced varied significantly. As displayed in Figure 7, it referred to culture, a general audience, nationality, roles/positions within a company, an audience's background in daily interactions, and even tastes/preferences. The term's fluctuation between references conveys its

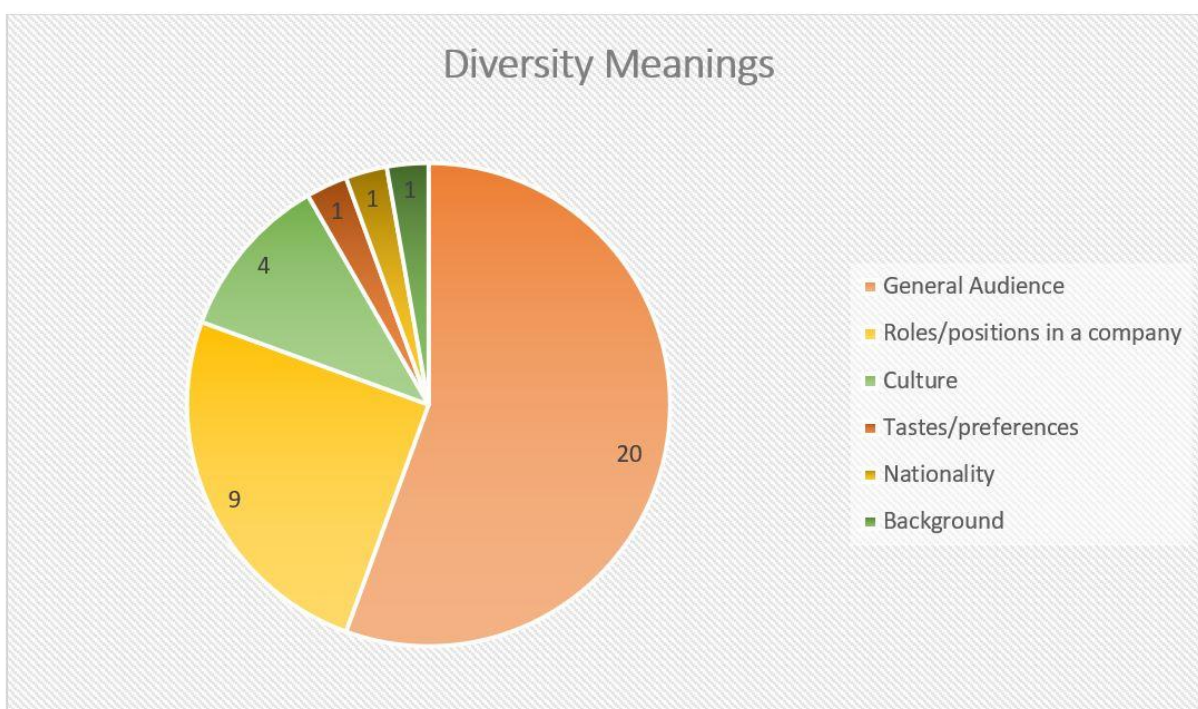


Figure 7. Display of what the term "diversity" referred to.

versatility in TPC and demonstrates the importance of considering its many meanings when directing one's messages to an audience. However, considering diversity in relation to social justice complicates the term's openness. Not all uses of the term diversity supported a social justice direction. Because of the term's multipurpose meanings, incorporating it into a TPC course for social justice purposes requires more effort and clarification to students. By not acknowledging the term's variances, instructors risk ignoring its social justice impact and thus contribute to reinscribing the established status quo.

Equity. The term equity (or equitable) showed up even less than diversity. This term's more static meaning most likely contributed to its absence, along with the overall omission of it in the course materials throughout the ten years. The one consistent incorporation of the term appeared in either the syllabus or University Resources Canvas link within the Disability Accommodations section, which expressed that "The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students." This borrowed language (which changes from time to time) from the Disability Resource Center provided the only use of the term through 2021.

In 2022, the term became more integrated into the course. For one, we read the DEI section from our textbook (described earlier in this chapter). I then showed a video entitled "[Social Inequalities Explained in a \\$100 Race](#)," a video figuratively demonstrating the race of life and how privilege impacts the outcomes of that race. We then discussed as a class how social justice and company ethics connected to one another and how they related to the video. The term also came up during our unit on intercultural communication. At one point, we discussed the difference between equity and equality, at which time I showed them a picture demonstrating this distinction. On a different day, I asked students to reflect upon how equity applies to IC and how the two topics connected to their respective fields. Overall, while the term equity came up during our class conversations about the syllabus, course schedule, ethics, and IC, more inclusion of the term seems necessary to emphasize the social justice contributions possible.

Inclusion. Similar to equity, inclusion also remained excluded from the course materials through 2021 with eventual incorporation in 2022. Once again, the main mentions of inclusion happened on the course schedule and during our class conversations on ethics and IC. An additional course material mentioned inclusion, as well: the "What Technical Communication Involves" document that I transcribed from the board. To define TPC (early in the semester), I asked students to read an article, Jo Allen's (1990) "The Case Against Defining Technical Writing" and think about what TPC means in their respective fields. We then compiled their responses on the board, and inclusion ended up being one of the contributions.

Similar to equity and diversity, however, more continual mentions of inclusion could solidify TPC's role in social justice.

Overall, despite some increase in the explicit conversations about social justice and DEI by 2022, they still tended to dissipate in comparison to the other foundational principles (like rhetoric and genre theory), rather than seamlessly become part of the course. As early as the syllabus, a noticeable omission throughout the decade is an explicit statement about DEI and the course's commitment to it in the syllabus. This addition could easily connect that commitment to TPC's overall goal of social justice. The results also show that more incorporation of social justice becomes easier when the course materials rely on supportive entities (like the Disability Resource Center) and when curriculum supports it (like the implementation of *ITPC*). Additionally, the results imply that the social justice principles pair well with IC since many of the terms showed up in cited scholars' work and in the activities implemented. A final finding involves media incorporation. Relying on multiple media sources for demonstration purposes not only adds variety to the class's structure (which perhaps both instructors and students appreciate) and demonstrates the technological center of TPC, but also provides an opportunity to bring in diverse voices.

5.2 Introductory Documents

To establish whether I role modeled social justice practices and DEI, I next describe the evolution of the introductory documents, the syllabus and course schedule, over the past decade. While many of the sections in a syllabus and course schedule remain standard of those respective genres (for instance, course description, attendance policy, and student learning outcomes), individual instructors still hold the power to include the information of their choosing, to deliver that information in their chosen way, and to design the documents as they see fit. Below, I analyze my syllabi and course schedules to assess whether I role modeled social justice and DEI in those documents.

Comparing and contrasting the syllabi and course schedules over the ten-year period revealed some similarities, but also key differences, that make a statement about the incorporation of (or lack thereof) DEI (see representative syllabi for years 2013, 2016, and 2022 in the appendix). The main similarity between the 2013 and 2022 syllabi involved the order of information. Over the ten-year period, the order of the information stayed the same. The top of the syllabus included course information, like the course's location, class number, section number, and the number of credits. The sections after the course information included the following: instructor information, required materials, course descriptions (both the catalog description and the departmental description), writing-intensive description, outcomes, student resources, honesty in academic writing, attendance, and assignments and assessments. Similarly, all of the course schedules included the typical information of the genre: dates, days of the week, in-class activities, and assignments due. The consistent use of the respective sections within the syllabi and course schedules shows these documents as demonstrating established genres.

Within each section of the syllabi, however, none of the content remained unchanged. The contents within all sections shifted in important ways. Likewise, the course schedule involved several changes worth highlighting, as well. The main differences between the earliest syllabus and course schedule in 2013 and the latest versions in 2022 related to the following areas:

- Access
- Design
- Content
- Audience

Access

The first difference between the earlier and later documents involved access. Students accessed the earlier syllabi (2013-2017) by downloading them from the LMS as a Word document. From 2018-

2022, students accessed the syllabus by viewing it within the LMS; in other words, the syllabus was embedded into the LMS with no downloading necessary. During this time, I had also added links to the university policies referenced in the syllabus to streamline access to the information cited. From an accessibility standpoint, downloading a document takes more time, and that earlier approach assumed that students have the correct program (in this case, Microsoft Word) for users (students) to be able to download and view it. These factors work against accessibility for some students.

Additionally, being able to download the document signifies the syllabus as an unchanging document that will remain the same throughout the semester. The intention behind this sentiment comes across as admirable since it implies that the syllabus is a reliable contract of sorts between the instructor and students. Both parties know what to expect for the semester. However, this approach proves unrealistic. Unforeseen circumstances, like weather, needing more time to cover a unit's materials, pandemics, and more, often require mid-semester adjustments to a syllabus and course schedule. All syllabi from 2013- 2022 included a statement saying that "the syllabus may change somewhat over the course of the semester" to account for unanticipated alterations. However, this statement contradicted the process used for accessing the early syllabi, not only making the process of revising the syllabus inconvenient for the instructor, but also creating confusion for students who might have downloaded the original syllabus and read outdated information.

While the syllabi became more accessible in 2018 due to eliminating the need to download it, another accessibility issue remained: The entire 2018 syllabus displayed "Paragraph"-style formatting, as opposed to "Pre-formatted" headings. This misstep created an accessibility issue for those relying on a screen reader. Without the pre-formatted headings, a screen reader must read through every word, rather than providing the user with an overview of the information using the scannable headings. From 2019-2022, however, I had implemented the pre-formatted headings to correct the error.

Accessing the course schedules has remained the same throughout all ten years. I presented them as a table or a series of tables (by week) created in MS Word and then added the file to the LMS (first to Moodle and then to Canvas). A notable difference, however, came between 2015 and 2016. From Fall 2013-Fall 2015, the course schedule resided at the end of the syllabus. From Spring 2016, the Course Schedule became its own, separate document. This switch occurred because the one-page course schedule provided too few details for both students and instructor. Notably, separating the Course Schedule meant the addition of a new genre. This switch brings up interesting questions: Does lengthening an existing genre or adding a new, separate genre provide more helpful details or contribute to the text-heaviness that overburdens students and increases their workloads unnecessarily? Do students appreciate the detailed versions of course schedules, or do they prefer the at-a-glance versions for convenience? These questions provide research opportunities for the future.

Regarding access to the course materials, like readings, assignment sheets, and activity descriptions, the course schedules seemed quite disconnected from the materials in earlier years. From 2013-2018, students could access the course schedule by downloading it from the LMS, but they didn't need to reference the document again. Instead, they clicked on separate links within the LMS to access each course material. This setup downplayed the course schedule's role, making it a most likely unreferenced (and thus pointless) document, despite it guiding our class's activities. Starting in 2019, I added week-by-week dated tables as links in the LMS; to do so, I simply copied and pasted the activities laid out in the course schedule. I then linked all course materials within the tables. I linked readings (to uploaded files or websites) and assignments (to assignment sheets within the LMS). At times, the links would automatically display a thumbnail image. In other words, while the Course Schedules themselves included no multimodal features, once transferred to the LMS, they did include them. This revised strategy more directly connected the course schedule with the activities students completed throughout the semester. These added multimodal features support accessibility and perhaps promote more use of

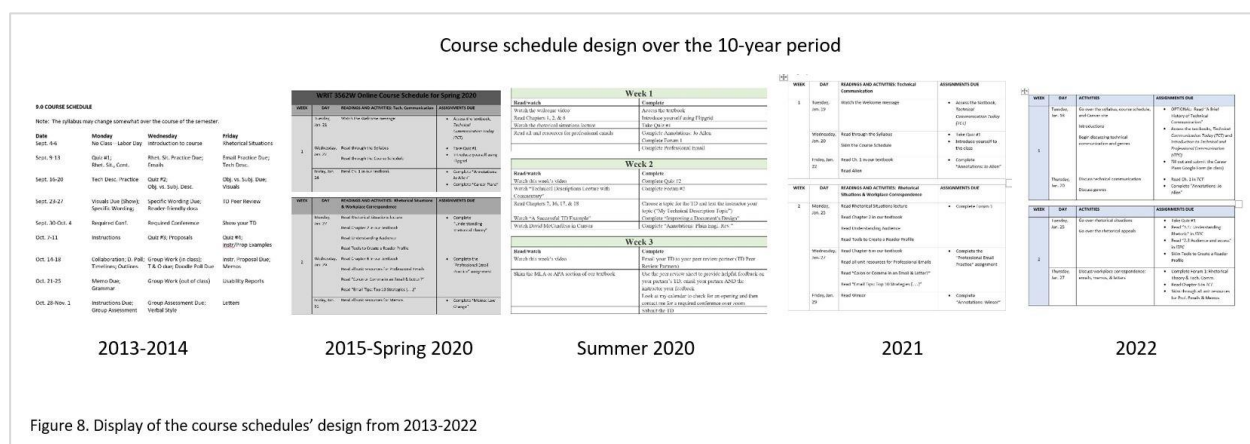
these documents guiding the course. Reflecting on this progression, I realized that a document dies, so to speak, if an instructor doesn't return to it. For documents, like a course schedule, so crucial to students' learning outcomes, embedding them into a course proves necessary.

Design

Over the ten-year period, the syllabus's design remained quite unchanged. It consistently relied on headings, tables, lists, and manageably sized paragraphs to allow for scannability. One difference, however, involved the addition of my picture (in Spring 2021) and later an embedded video of me welcoming students to the course (in Spring 2022). While these added features incorporated a visual element to break up the syllabi's text, they both left out textual descriptions to account for screen readers. In other words, both the picture and the video needed captions to explain what the visual element displayed. These visual elements, along with others, like memes, comic strips, and topic-specific pictures, seem typical of many syllabi, yet how students react to these sometimes tone-contradicting implementations remains unknown.

The course schedule's design, on the other hand, involved notable differences, mostly related to color. The 2013-2014 course schedules made up one page (a page-long table with no dividing lines) with the idea that students could print it off, display it, and reference it throughout the semester. Unfortunately, relying on a one-page course schedule meant leaving out key details for each class meeting, and students printing off the (supposedly unchanging) course schedule for reference seemed unrealistic (as mentioned previously). From 2015 to 2022, then, I lengthened the course schedule by breaking each week into its own table. This tactic provided more room for adding more details to each class meeting's plan and lengthened the course schedule into five pages by 2022. Throughout that time period, however, the color of these tables shifted (see Figure 8). The 2013-14 course schedules included no added color beyond the

white background and black text; the 2015-Spring 2020 course schedules displayed tables with different shades of gray; Summer 2020 switched the color scheme to green headings; Spring 2021 & Summer 2021 omitted color altogether and returned to the white background/black text setup seen in the earliest course schedules; and the 2022 course schedule brought back color with a light blue accent of the tables' headings. The course schedules progressed by me wanting more contrast (from 2014 to 2015); tiring of



the dark, gloomy color scheme (Spring 2020 to Summer 2020); considering the most common type of color blindness (deuteranomaly, the red/green deficiency) (Summer 2020 to Spring 2021); and again wanting more contrast to avoid the stark display (2021 to 2022). The latest version (2022) displayed the subtle addition of color with the light blue to provide contrast. Once transferred to Canvas, the individual weeks lose all color, for the small groups of information require less contrast than when all grouped together in one document. What students appreciate more regarding the course schedule's color scheme remains unknown, but most likely they reference the Canvas version of the course schedule more often than the collective document provided as an MS Word document at the beginning of the course. Still, considering the course schedule's evolution into a separate genre throughout the ten years, students' use of the document and their display preferences provide an opportunity for future research.

Content

Much of the content changed between these documents over the ten-year period, as well. For one, the catalog and departmental descriptions changed. While an individual instructor may not control those passages, their presentation of and attitude about them matters. As someone who agreed with the catalog and department descriptions of this TPC course, I relied on them to direct the courses. If an instructor wanted to clarify and/or complicate any passages they deem especially important or problematic, however, they might add a separate “Instructor Description” to this section.

Another shift in the introductory materials’ content appeared in the sections related to student resources. The 2013 version called the section “Disability Services” and focused on that resource only. Not only did this approach fail to incorporate additional resources available across the large campus network, it established Disability Services as a resource added to fulfill a legal requirement since the opening line stated, “In keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act.” Rather than opening with a genuine statement about supporting students and promoting equitable access to an education, this wording othered the resource and re-inscribed the stigmas attached to it. The later version in 2022 placed Disability Services within a larger category of Student Resources. Additional resources mentioned included Technology, Library Services, Student Writing Support, Nutritious U, and Health Services (both physical and mental). This compilation of resources conveys that all students could consider these resources as needed and, in doing so, promotes equity. The general wording for the student resources section appeals to students’ investment in their education (“the University of Minnesota has many resources available to support you in optimizing your University of Minnesota education and experience”) and potentially at-risk economic state (“Many of these Student Resources are free [or, rather, resources that you’re already paying for through your tuition]”). The Disability Services sub-section opens with “The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students.” This improved opening (from the 2013 version) conveys that UMN cares

about students. One further improvement moving forward could involve the instructor emphasizing that they, too, are committed.

The attendance policy section also changed from 2013 to 2022, the latter conveying a more DEI-centered approach. The earlier section invoked a neo-liberal tone by stating, “this course is about developing professional habits and preparing you for graduate school or for the world of work.” This approach conveys that students’ worth depends on their ability to adjust to established norms constituting professionalism. In other words, it downplays what could be students’ creative and innovative contributions to their respective fields, perhaps inspired by their individual identities and experiences. The expectations for passing the course become production-based, rather than people-based, as in making connections and collaborating. The statement that follows moves the section even further from DEI principles by explicitly saying, “I will be unsympathetic to students who do not come to class.” Realistically, students (and even the instructor at times) may need to work, attend to emergencies, deal with weather, mourn the deaths of friends or family members, travel, recover from sicknesses, and so much more. Encouraging attendance through an “unsympathetic” statement like this one only distances the instructor from their students, the exact opposite of this statement’s goal. The next semester’s attendance policy section eliminated this wording and replaced it with “Missing class will disrupt the class’s dynamic that we will have established.” This adjustment attempted to convey that students contribute to our class “dynamic,” but it guilt-tripped students into attending class. By 2022, this section began with “WRIT 3562W classes are designed to actively involve you in the learning process.” This improved statement provides an explanation for the policy, as opposed to conveying the instructor as a cold, uncaring individual and as opposed to guilt-tripping students into attending class. The section ends by adding a statement about participation: “**Your voice matters** [original bolding]. As a soon-to-be graduate from one of the best universities in the nation, you are a well-rounded, knowledgeable person. Speaking up when you have something to contribute will make each experience more valuable and make

you stand out as a reliable, collaborative professional and intellectual in this class and, more importantly, in your career.” This statement attempted to encourage students to speak up. In the spirit of inclusion, it reminds students that their voices make a difference in the conversation and that this academic course provides practice for professional interactions. Overall, the evolution of this section is quite striking. It transitioned into a more DEI-centered section that welcomes students into the course’s conversations, rather than threatening them with a poor grade if they don’t attend.

Audience

A final difference between the earlier and later introductory materials involved the treatment of audience. The 2013 version relied on a 3rd-person point of view and talked at its audience (students), not to students. The later syllabi used 1st-person point of view and talked to students with “you.” This tone switch came across as more inviting and connected the audience to the document more directly.

Additionally, the earlier syllabi (2013-2020) included no welcome statement. They simply began by providing the course information and moved directly into instructor information, course descriptions, and so on. In effect, the documents failed to center their audience, despite audience-centered communication making up TPC’s emphasis. Beginning in 2021, the syllabi began with a welcome statement expressing, “Welcome to WRIT 3562W! If you need to contact me throughout the semester, feel free to do so via these methods,” followed by a list of my contact information. Rather than making the document about the writer (the instructor) and/or the company/institution, this statement welcomes the audience to the document and course and invites them to reach out with questions. This wording conveys that the course welcomes their experiences and voices, rather than the instructor’s alone.

The course schedule adjusted its approach somewhat when reaching its audience, as well. The 2013 syllabus relied on nouns to describe course proceedings each day, like this: Quiz #1, Tech. Desc. Practice, Required Conf., Instructions, Presentations, and more. By contrast, the 2023 version used verbs: discuss technical communication, go over rhetorical situations, complete Forum 1, read Ch. 7, and more. The switch to imperative voice conveyed action, yet another key goal of TPC in general. This switch more clearly identified what the audience needed to do in order to fulfill each day's requirements.

5.3 Professional Genres

A main purpose of this particular TPC course involves exposing students to professional genres they will encounter, use, and/or create in their careers. These genres include emails, technical descriptions, instructions, proposals, research reports, and presentations. How an instructor presents these genres matters, for, as Royster and Kirsch emphasize, “[p]edagogical practice is rhetorical practice” (2012, p. 59). The materials I displayed to my students influenced their understanding of TPC – as both a stand-alone field and a practice within their own fields. Below, I analyze the course materials I incorporated to identify whether I role modeled social justice in the foundational principles used to present TPC, the genre examples displayed, and the assignments/activities required.

Foundation

Considering TPC grounds itself in rhetoric, I have always begun this technical writing course with a framework based on and named a rhetorical situation. However, rhetoric in general has a dynamic and complex history going back to the 400 B.C. era, so the rhetorical situation concept has evolved over the centuries – thanks to scholars complicating traditional rhetorical frameworks that often excluded entire groups based on gender, skin color, and socioeconomic status. When I present a rhetorical

framework to my students, then, I draw from several rhetoricians in a bricolage manner. Through this research project, I discovered that I presented the same rhetorical framework for all ten years, which includes the following parts: purpose, genre, audience, style, and context. As my students and I analyzed an example of each professional genre throughout the semesters, we relied on this framework for discussions, and they used it as a guidepost for composing their own documents. While these elements still work for introducing each genre within a professional context, two of them require further analysis when including social justice in a more embedded manner: genre and audience.

Genre. When I explained genres over the past ten years, I described them as “the way that we deliver the message,” as the physical apparatus that “assists us in conveying our message.” I also provided examples by mentioning several of the professional genres they would eventually compose in the course. As demonstrated in the previous section on introductory materials, however, viewing a genre as a one-note, simplistic document ignores its potential for audience reach and also limits how well it will convince its audience. In future courses, then, I must emphasize the intricacy a document could present by explaining multimodality, which has become a necessary element for accessibility and convenience. A brochure needs a QR code; a website needs a video and perhaps an interactive element; and a formal report needs links to outside sources and examples. Extending the conversation about what genres involve in a Web 2.0 world is necessary to ensure that students consider the available technology for diverse audiences who absorb information in different ways.

Another notable trend between all ten years involved the wording I forwarded to students of “stretching the genre,” yet the intention behind this prompting changed in a crucial way. In earlier years, I emphasized the importance of stretching the genre so that students’ documents stood out in contrast to their colleagues’. I argued that this competitive approach would position them well in their company, yet it, unfortunately, conveyed pitting colleagues against one another. In later years, my intention for emphasizing stretching the genre changed in an important way – one that drew on DEI. I described for

students that by relying on certain genres, we re-inscribe their worth and legitimacy. Thus, questioning the genres we choose to forward proves necessary. We want to ensure that the genres are supporting our work and relationships/collaborations with one another, rather than us supporting unnecessary and meaningless structures. Stretching the genre in these instances, then, refers to tailoring the genre to fit the needs of the specific situation, rather than using the genre as a template each time. This new approach for stretching the genre welcomed collaborative input, rather than encouraging a discordant professional environment.

Audience. My delivery of audience also looked similar over the decade. I described them as the listener or viewer and as “who you are trying to convince of your message.” Through 2021, I relied on an explanation of audience related to workplace hierarchy, which consisted of dividing the audience into primary, secondary, tertiary, and gatekeepers (Johnson-Sheehan, 2017). In 2022, I added to the lecture on audience by asking students to think about whom a document excludes and why. This shift brought up important conversations that encouraged students to broaden their piece’s audience for further reach (when important to do so). It also meant targeting a broader, diverse audience in the spirit of DEI.

Genre Examples

During each unit, I provided examples of the professional genres covered in class, including emails, technical descriptions, instructions, proposals, and formal reports. For the past ten years, I attempted to display examples from varying fields so that students with different majors could see how the professional genres directly related to their respective field. These examples, often written by past students (though not always), provided inspiration for students’ own topic choices. As such, presumably, examples attending to topics related to social justice could motivate students to also address social justice topics within their field. Ultimately, over the past ten years, I showed students the genres and topics

identified in Figure 9. All of these topics connect in some way to DEI (since all topics do connect to social justice), yet few of the genres explicitly used that wording to connect the chosen topic to social equity. This missing link prevented the class from relating social justice efforts to students' respective fields. In effect, it forwarded a reinscription of the existing status quo and, though unintentionally, supported a professional structure focused on normalizing the genres within vapid contexts, rather than social justice efforts.

| Emails | Technical Descriptions | Instructions | Proposals | Analytical Reports |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing magazine circulation among a specific age demographic Purchasing an office supply Modifying home remodeling plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How acid rain develops Parts of solar panel Developing a hypothesis Parts of a pet's claw clipper Parts of a stethoscope Social work process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting together a 5-shelf bookcase How to play Memory board game How to play Monopoly board game How to tie a half-Windsor knot How to cook a food item How to care for a KitchenAid stand mixer How to solve a Rubik's cube How to cook ramen noodles How to avoid any social situation (book) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversifying the music scene in a city Encouraging the use of public transportation Marketing purchase of an at-risk tree Finding out why people are scared to go to the dentist Deciding between two pet surgeries Deciding which animal for a zoo exhibit Picking a replacement for peanut butter Finding out risk factors of racehorses Understanding climate change on MN agriculture Finding out consumer perspectives on lab-grown meat Whether to switch to a cage-free system when raising hens Minimizing the risk of exposed submarine cables Finding out consumer perspectives of food labels Switching from real leather to faux leather Determining whether to certify animals for assistive therapy Determining whether a company should offer a diet version of their soda | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserving historical artifacts Deciding between two pet surgeries Deciding which animal for a zoo exhibit Determining the best flour for making bread Deciding on a building for housing cattle Choosing which marketing methods to target future professionals Whether to increase liquid manure applications on crops How to address the declining bee population Finding out consumer perspectives of food labels Whether to switch to a cage-free system when raising hens Finding out risk factors of racehorses Minimizing the risk of exposed submarine cables Finding out Essential oils' effect on salmonella |

Figure 9. Display of the topics presented to students for each genre.

Assignments/Activities

A final point of analysis for the professional genres related to the assignments and activities I required students to complete. In all ten years, I required students to compose the following main assignments: emails, technical descriptions, instructions, usability reports, proposals, analytical reports, and presentations. Throughout that time, the wording of the assignments shifted in small ways, some of which connected to social justice. For instance, in the presentation unit from 2013-2021, I expressed that students should “dress professionally.” However, what constitutes professional dress varies by culture, profession, and other factors. Conveying professionalism as a static notion reinscribes an unrealistic standard established by those in power. As part of the conversation about presentations, then, future

courses could involve a conversation that addresses the nuances professionalism requires. The TPC field has recognized the complications of viewing professionalism in a one-note way: TCQ's latest call for submissions invites scholars to contribute a submission for "(Re)Defining 'Professional' in Technical & Professional Communication." Starting in 2022, I changed the wording of the presentation assignment sheet to say, "Dress professionally based on your field of study's expectations, comfort, cultural practices, etc." This one example demonstrates the power of language and how classroom practices contribute to establishing or challenging norms.

Another example of an important shift with the assignments/activities involved how I framed the discussion of reports' document design. From 2013-22, I emphasized the importance of setting up a scannable format for busy professionals/readers. Starting in 2022, I added a social justice take on a document's format by requiring that students read Dragga & Foss's (2011) "Cruel Pies: The Inhumanity of Technical Illustrations," which emphasizes the importance of displaying the human side of visuals, rather than presenting data as removed from the human element. This addition once again placed DEI at the forefront of TPC work and emphasized how seemingly objective material involves humanity at the core.

Along with the required genres mentioned, I, at times, assigned additional assignments, including memos, letters, activity reports, and progress reports. I eventually realized that incorporating these genres not required by the department meant taking away from the required genres. In other words, I attempted to incorporate too much into the course. While trying to expose students to additional genres might sound commendable, it ultimately meant rushing and spending less time on all of the genres. It also emphasized the quantity of professional genres available, which students would eventually experience anyway, rather than promoting critical thinking about the quality, importance, and impact of professional genres.

5.4 Intercultural Communication

A central role of TPC involves targeting an audience in order to effect action. Rude (2009) pointed out that TPC pedagogy emphasizes the importance of analyzing an audience prior to responding to a rhetorical situation (p. 194). As part of the instruction on audience analysis, instructors sometimes require their students to fill out a form that guides students about how to analyze an audience. For instance, in the textbook for this particular TPC course, Johnson-Sheehan (2017) suggested identifying the audience's needs, attitudes, and values that are connected to the professional setting (for instance, *needs* in order to make a decision, *attitudes* about the company, and *values* like profit and efficiency) (p. 26-7). While these categories prove helpful, they run deeper than the ostensibly neo-liberal examples provided in the textbook due to embedded cultural differences. In recognition of this complexity, a deeper discussion and understanding of culture is necessary in TPC courses. This section, then, analyzes the moves I made over the past ten years to involve intercultural communication (IC) more directly in my courses in an effort to complicate our field's understanding of audience. The findings helped determine whether further instruction on IC is necessary and, if so, how to go about incorporating it into TPC courses, especially for the purposes of forwarding social justice. Overall, after analyzing the documents addressing IC over the past ten years, the findings from this research showed three main trends:

- An increase in the amount of instruction on culture over the ten years
- Variations in the use of the term “culture”
- A switch from “cross-cultural” to “intercultural” in reference to interactions between cultures

An increase in the amount of instruction on culture over the ten years

The most apparent trend involved recognizing a clear increase in the amount of instruction on culture over the ten years. The earlier years (from 2013-2016) consisted of few mentions of culture and no scaffolding on the topic of culture. For instance, in 2013, the term “culture” appeared just three times:

- In a sample proposal that urged an organization to preserve newly acquired collections of immigrant materials; in this document, the author emphasized its importance to rural life and the area’s “family culture”
- In a sample proposal where the authors urged readers to increase events in their city to fulfill a craving for “culture”
- In an assignment sheet that required students to note the differences between an academic article and a magazine or website article’s conversation on a shared topic; in this instance, the assignment sheet referred to “popular culture”

Here in 2013 (and in later proposal examples), the term culture most prominently showed up in proposals. Notably, many of these examples also directly attended to DEI topics, like homelessness, equal rights for same-sex relationships, immigration, and mental health. Since all topics inherently connect to culture and DEI in some way, perhaps this point is moot; however, these topics that mentioned “culture” more directly addressed righting societal inequities, unlike muted topics that ignore direct DEI issues altogether. This finding perhaps highlights the proposal genre’s impact and potential for DEI work, as well as the inherent connection between culture and DEI.

A problematic finding from this search involved the third bullet point, the reference to “popular culture.” This phrase implies a general culture shared by all and thus promotes a culture determined by those in power. It relies on a bandwagon fallacy to persuade audiences to forego individuality in the interest of partaking in popular trends and activities. For TPC specifically, assuming a popular culture

exists prevents TPC work from localization, the notion that media sources must consider “subject matter, graphics, and colors, to appeal to and avoid offending people” (Humbley, et al. 2005). While these scholars are referring to a national target market in their article and make up translation scholars, the idea still fits for a TPC context and narrows to region, city, organization, and more.

Additional examples of culture showed up after 2013. In 2014, I added a line in my description of context that we (society in general) have a “curiosity for other cultures” as a way to explain why we compose technical descriptions about people (like anthropologists describing an ancient group of people). In 2016, I displayed a basic usability survey that asked testers to identify content that could be confusing for cross-cultural audiences, and I added “cultural identity” as a factor in the rhetorical situation slides as something to consider when analyzing an audience. As a whole, however, these earlier mentions of “culture” ignored the idiosyncrasies of culture by avoiding deeper conversations. This lack of depth resulted in a disservice to students since they miss out on practicing analyzing an audience in a more meaningful way that could inform their professional TPC work.

The later years (2017-2022) consisted of more mentions of “culture,” most definitely due to the inclusion of the Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Project (TAPP) in the Instructions unit. In many of the assignment sheets for that unit, I expressed students’ chance to practice communicating cross-culturally by working with their TAPP partners. In 2018, students took part in experimenting with augmented reality. They participated in a workshop where they created a Zapcode, a QR code that directed viewers to an interactive view of different identity markers representing the creator. In 2018, I assigned a forum where students revealed one tradition that they celebrated. However, while several assignments mentioned the term “culture,” I began scaffolding the concept more thoroughly not until 2022. At that point, I added two days of discussing IC in-class to study definitions and conceptions of culture, as related to the self and to another person during interactions, and to connect culture to audience analysis.

Variations in the use of the term “culture”

Another finding from the research on culture included the variations construed. Based on the syllabus, course schedule, lecture notes, examples, and assignment descriptions throughout the ten years, the word “culture” referred to a variety of topics. As Figure 10 displays, these topics included language, types of food, religion, activities, and more. The varied uses of the term culture demonstrate its dynamic influence and warrant a more explicit and deeper conversation in the TPC classroom in connection to audience. Similar to implementing a more thorough conversation about each DEI principle, culture, too, requires further discussion due to its dynamic role in forming an audience’s sense of identity.

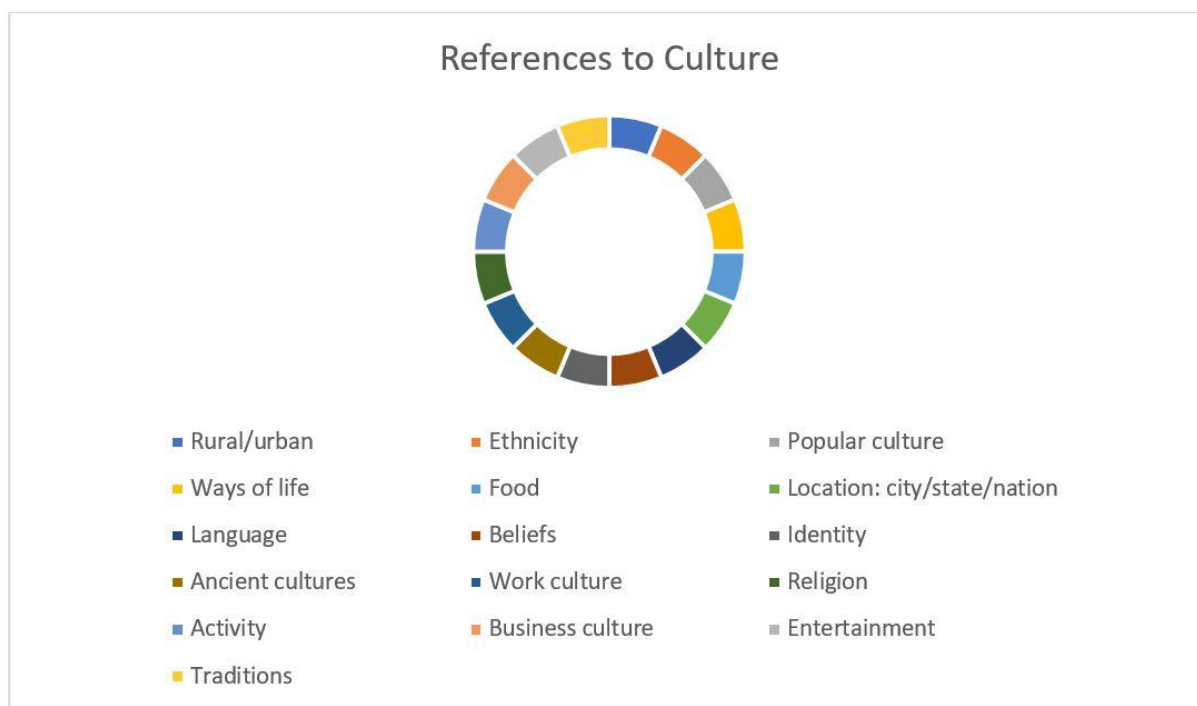


Figure 10. Display of the various references to culture throughout the TPC course.

A switch from “cross-cultural” to “intercultural” in reference to interactions between cultures

A final finding from this research involved the instructor’s switch from referring to cultural interactions as “cross-cultural” to “intercultural” in 2019. In general, interactions between cultures has acquired quite the vast terminology, including cultural competence, cultural humility, interculturality, relationality, transcultural communication, intergroup communication, intercultural connectivism, and more. Ultimately, I shifted to “intercultural communication” since it conveys a more network connotation that allows for re-connection, as opposed to “cross-cultural,” which implies a crossing to never again connect.

5.5 Summary

The overall findings suggest that earlier on, in 2013, the TPC course needed significant revisions in order to implement a social justice direction so foundational to the TPC field. From the introductory materials presented to the examples and assignment sheets, the earlier courses failed to explicitly address social justice principles and failed to role model them.

By 2022, however, I had implemented important revisions to incorporate social justice through explicit conversations, as well as role modeling. For the explicit conversations, I involved social justice principles and DEI terminology in the introductory materials, through conversations about ethics and IC, and in some of our discussions of genre examples. For role modeling social justice practices, I attempted to improve the accessibility of the course materials, assign readings from diverse authors and media, and thoughtfully group students for projects. However, the findings suggest that future TPC courses could benefit from even more social justice implementation. For instance, the examples displayed could address social justice topics more directly, thus inspiring students to attend to social justice topics, as well.

Additionally, the assignments and activities could require a social justice focus. To aid in implementing a social justice framework, I recommend incorporating a humanistic lens, like critical feminism, to the foundational portion of the course. In the next chapter, I provide a critical feminist interpretation of these findings using an autoethnographic method, and this method could guide the language instructors use to forward social justice efforts in the classroom.

Chapter 6: Reflections & Connecting TPC Pedagogy to Social Justice

To reflect upon my findings from the analysis in Chapter 5, I rely on the six principles constituting a critical feminist approach in Technical and Professional Communication (TPC): permissive listening, generative silence, welcoming difference, multivocality, collaboration, and gendered technology. These six actions guide my discussion about whether I incorporated social justice principles throughout the past ten years of teaching a TPC course. When reflecting on the process of analyzing my course materials and writing the dissertation, I experienced moments of clarity, frustration, joy, hesitation, surprise, relief, disappointment, and more. This section, then, reveals the complexity that goes with autoethnographic work – complexity not just with the project itself, but complexity with my own reactions as the project came together. This chapter ends by commenting on my experience using autoethnography as a method for TPC research and by providing ideas for future research, as inspired by this work.

6.1 Permissive listening

When reflecting upon this first critical feminist principle necessary in TPC, I consider whether I provided opportunities for my students to practice permissive listening and thus include more perspectives in their activities and written works. Some activities naturally welcomed permissive listening, like the peer review sessions. One of the peer review guideline sheets in 2017 required students to “Ask your partner what [their] major is” and to comment on whether the document’s conveyed expertise clearly connected to the writer’s/student’s major. Moments like these might necessitate listening for the purposes of completing an assignment, but not necessarily permissive listening for the purpose of co-constructing meaning. However, in this particular example, the peer reviewer might provide revision

suggestions based on the discovered major, and that added knowledge could lead to more targeted suggestions throughout the document and co-constructed information by the reviewer and writer.

Other activities, like group work, worked well for practicing permissive listening, but didn't necessarily ensure it would happen. Students must be open to suggestions from group members and be willing to collaborate with one another in order to foster permissive listening. At times, this might mean suspending judgment about their perceptions of their partner's background, major, looks, and more. Throughout the ten years, most groups produced projects that responded well to their established rhetorical situations, while some groups struggled to collaborate and produce a complete project fitting of their rhetorical situation. The difference often related to whether they genuinely listened to each other.

Finally, students demonstrated permissive listening with me during the one-on-one conferences to discuss their major assignments. Many of them appreciated my feedback during these sessions and walked away with further ideas for expanding and revising their documents. They seemed to convey an open-mindedness toward my suggestions for improving their documents. Notably, the power dynamic between myself and my students co-constructing their work differed from my students co-constructing their work in group projects. Since I graded their assignments, they most likely heeded my suggestions not simply because of agreeing with my suggestions, but because they felt they needed to. A better indication of students demonstrating permissive listening, then, perhaps remains with how they opened themselves to their peers' feedback, as opposed to the instructor's.

Notably, throughout the ten years, I never used the critical feminist language of permissive listening, or of listening in general, which perhaps lessened the principle's impact. Without the metacognitive understanding of this move of listening, this principle most likely impacted students' learning far less than intended. More broadly, without explicit acknowledgement of the phrase, students

lose an opportunity to practice opening up to an audience's feedback in preparation for the TPC they will do in their fields.

6.2 Generative Silence

Due to time constraints, providing students with an opportunity to practice generative silence proves challenging. However, reflecting upon the past ten years' course materials, I implemented this critical feminist principle in at least two meaningful ways. For one, beginning in 2018, I required students to add annotations to the assigned readings. This practice involved students underlining key phrases, circling unfamiliar words, and adding annotations/commentary throughout the document. Prior to discussing the readings in class, I gave them five minutes or so to read through their annotations. These tactics supported generative silence, for they displayed their engagement with the reading and overall connected the readings' messages to their personal experiences and professional goals. Rather than being passive readers, students reflected upon the piece's contribution to their individual learning journey.

Another example of making space for generative silence involved providing moments to reflect upon difficult topics, like social justice. In 2022, I implemented an activity that made apparent students' often unrecognized biases. I asked students to think about a time when they arrived to a class about 5 minutes early, saw some students sprinkled around the room, and needed to choose where to sit. I asked them to think about why they chose to sit where they did, and I assured them they would not be sharing their answers with anyone. This moment welcomed generative silence so students could reflect upon their motivations for choosing the seat they did, which most often determines the seat they will remain in throughout the semester. I then went a step further, displayed what I called "the hard questions" (see Figure 11), and asked them to think about whether any of those factors affected their choice of a seat. Making time for these moments opened up a safe space for students to genuinely reflect upon their

actions. We then discussed their general impressions of the activity in a debrief session. Without revealing their specific responses, students mentioned being surprised of their own, previously unrecognized personal biases (whether intentional or unintentional) and how they would reconsider their choice in a spot next time. This activity supported social justice efforts by showing students how bias affects everyone and how reflecting upon our own actions – through generative silence – can improve behavior and support change for equitable practices.

Also consider the hard questions:

- Did perceived gender of your classmate have anything to do with your decision?
- Did race have anything to do with your decision?
- Did attractiveness have anything to do with your decision?
- Did perceived ability have anything to do with your decision?
- Did a perceived similarity have anything to do with your decision?
- Did a perceived difference have anything to do with your decision?
- Did the objects students carried have anything to do with your decision?
- Did your personal learning style have anything to do with your decision?
- Did age have anything to do with your decision?
- Did clothing styles have anything to do with your decision?

Figure 11. A list of the "hard questions" for reflecting upon where students chose to sit on the first day of class.

Similar to the permissive listening principle, however, I never explicitly used the language of this critical feminist principle. Without the mention of “generative silence,” students may not recognize its value when communicating technically and may miss the support in identifying the inequities involved in the situations they encounter.

6.3 Welcoming Difference

To support this next principle, I implemented activities that encouraged students to welcome difference in an effort to open discussions on valuing diversity. In one activity, a forum discussion where

students described a tradition important to them and their family or friends, I asked students to comment on a classmate's tradition most unfamiliar to their own experiences. In this way, they learned about a new tradition and practiced respectfully discussing something important to another human being. Additionally, the activity nurtured a curiosity about other cultures and provoked interesting conversations about foods, clothing styles, activities, religious practices, and more, all in the spirit of recognizing humanity's rich diversity.

Another activity encouraging welcoming difference involved me giving students a piece of construction paper and asking them to draw a sun. They then wrote their names in the middle of the sun and added an identity marker to each ray. They compared/contrasted suns with a neighbor, at which point I pointed out that no two people's suns in the entire world match. I emphasized that while they might share similarities with someone else, no one's sun matches their own, and I connected this idea to Dr. Bryant Keith Alexander's (2014) notion that an individual represents "a complex relation between texts that make me altogether particular and plural at the same time" (p. 18). Through this activity, I intended to demonstrate that difference makes us unique individuals and that valuing those differences results in high-caliber projects created by collaborative creativity and innovation because participants feel valued and thus contribute to the project's development.

Finally, I emphasized a value of welcoming difference by switching partners throughout the semester. Rather than working with the same student each day, I randomly paired students so that they practiced adjusting to different personalities and working styles. This enactment set them up for professional work when collaborating with colleagues with different specialties, customers with different backgrounds, and decision makers with different focal points. At times, however, I allowed them to work with their neighbor, often the classmate with whom they knew. While these instances didn't support welcoming differences, they did offer students some comfort at times since switching partners most likely requires more mental energy than when working with familiar classmates.

As mentioned previously, I (unintentionally) left out the language of the first two principles when teaching the TPC courses. However, for welcoming difference, I (intentionally) emphasized that language and concept. How students applied the concept to their interactions in future classes and careers remains unknown, but it raises an idea for future research.

6.4 Multivocality

The next principle, multivocality, proved far less prominent than the other principles in my TPC courses, despite its crucial role in forwarding social justice. The few instances of multivocality involved emphasizing the importance of audience analysis (no matter that audience's constraints), rather than establishing audience according to "the average man"; assigning usability testing to gain insight from multiple perspectives; and reading through all teaching evaluations at the end of each semester to ensure I listen to my students and make adjustments to future classes based on their feedback.

For the most part, however, I, admittedly, failed to incorporate this principle in a meaningful way. The lack of multivocality is disappointing since it presents an opportunity to include diverse perspectives and demonstrate to students the value of including multiple voices. All of the articles I assigned to students in the past ten years, for instance, were written by white, presumably able-bodied people. Additionally, as a white, educated woman in a position of power in the classroom, I fail to know how my students of color respond to the course materials presented in my course, and I still seek a way to know. To remedy this principle's omission in the future, I recommend assigning TPC articles written by authors with diverse backgrounds. By not including these scholars' works in my courses, I, myself, participate in marginalizing their experiences and conveying not valuing their contributions to the field. Additionally, I plan to introduce articles that use human-centered methodologies, like Disability Studies and queer theories. The TPC research produced by scholars with diverse backgrounds is abundant, and not including

this work no longer comes across as unintentional, but intentional and/or ignorant, both being unacceptable in a field so knowledgeable about the effects of language.

6.5 Collaborative Labor

The TPC course throughout all ten years involved the critical feminist principle of collaboration in important ways, and this principle evolved to include even more scaffolding and quite dynamic collaborations. Throughout all ten years, I paired students for class activities, including discussing required readings, peer reviewing one another's major assignments, finding examples of the genres discussed, commenting on one another's discussion posts, and asking each other questions during presentations. I also grouped students with 1-3 students to complete an entire unit; together, students created a set of instructions, decided how to display the instructions (using different media like websites, brochures, posters, videos, etc.), chose a professional rhetorical situation, created a usability test, conducted the usability test, and ultimately wrote a usability report. Students completed all of these components as a group and earned the same grade on the assignments.

Starting in 2017, students also took part in the Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Project (TAPP), where each group worked with up to five transnational partners located in a European country (Italy, Spain, or Portugal). This complex collaboration provided an opportunity to navigate the logistics of a multinational project while considering a real audience outside of the classroom. Clearly, all of these activities contributed to students practicing collaboration in a pseudo-professional situation. At times, students have questioned how IC fits into a TPC course, which at first confused me. I failed to understand their confusion when IC relates so heavily to an audience's identity. I came to believe that they relied so heavily on a production-based mentality that they couldn't, at first, see the people-based connections of

collaborating with an audience. More carefully scaffolding IC in conjunction with audience, however, seemed to improve students' understanding of the connection.

For all ten years, I presented Tuckman's (1965) group work framework as scaffolding for collaboration, but I later supplemented with additional scholarship. Tuckman's framework, which the TPC textbook I used at the time referenced (Johnson-Sheehan, 2017), involves forming, getting to know one's group members; storming, experiencing frustrations with each other, like scheduling conflicts or personality differences; norming, compromising with one another and finding solutions to the group's issues; and performing, completing the project. This accessible framework shows students that conflicts are normal, for they open a space for challenging one another's ideas to make the project better.

In later years, I supplemented Tuckman's framework with additional research by providing students with warnings of what to avoid based on past student projects. Beginning in 2021, I began differentiating between cooperation and collaboration using Yancey & Spooner's (1998) definitions. This necessary addition showed students that their projects needed to come across as a cohesive project where all group members contributed to all parts of the project, rather than delegating a section and turning in that section as a seemingly separate piece of work from the whole.

Additionally, beginning in 2022, I scaffolded collaboration by presenting my students with a list of issues I had compiled over the years of how student groups had struggled and ended up earning a lower grade on the project than expected. For example, I described what I called the affables. (I will reveal the full list of these issues in an upcoming article.) This group of students approached me to explain that they understood my final comments on their project, but that they had worked well with each other and had been very "nice" to each other, so they didn't understand what went wrong. I explained to future students that this group failed to respectfully challenge each other's ideas; instead of building on one another's ideas to produce a solid project that genuinely responded to a realistic rhetorical situation, they had

simply gone with the first ideas presented so as to maintain a friendly disposition. That lack of inquiring and building led to a neglected and, quite frankly, an uninteresting project.

A final way in which I scaffolded collaboration involved relying on students themselves to lean on their experiences with past collaborations. To begin one day's discussion of collaboration, I intentionally misdirected students by pairing them with a partner with whom they had never worked before and asked them to focus on a different topic altogether. Once we reconvened as a class just ten minutes later, I explained my misdirection move: collaboration made up the day's topic, not the original one I had identified. I asked them to reflect upon how they could work with a stranger to complete the tasks at hand in just ten minutes. We then compiled on the board different tactics they used when collaborating (both from this experience and in past experiences), like introducing themselves, using technologies (Google Docs, for instance), and listening to one another. This activity proved exceptionally effective; students chuckled at the switch of topics and we collectively produced a lengthy list of how to productively work with others. Relying on students' experiences gave me a sense of their collaborative experiences in the past and how I could support and encourage them for this course's collaborative elements, and it conveyed to them that their experiences mattered – that their classmates and I valued their contributions.

Overall, I used the terminology of “collaboration,” significantly integrated collaborative activities throughout the ten years of teaching the TPC course, scaffolded the concept of collaboration, and voluntarily brought in TAPP. As both a critical feminist principle and an everyday practice in industry, collaboration proved to be heavily discussed and experienced in my TPC courses, and I felt much joy when analyzing the evolution of this collaboration principle throughout the ten years of teaching these TPC courses.

6.6 Gendered Technology

For this final principle, I struggled to identify class activities and discussions that supported instruction about the gendering of technology. This lack of information in most students' only TPC course supports a reinscription of sexism, for it fails to expose the patriarchal system as the driver of forced and oversimplified identities. Considering I address this principle quite heavily in other areas of my research, I felt surprised to realize its omission in a key course of students' undergraduate experience.

An additional challenge to mention here involves the current shift in the notion of gender, which changes feminism's umbrella and whom it represents. Feminism refers not just to a female body, but also a male body who identifies as a woman, for one example. In general, gender represents a much more complicated spectrum than the basic male/female dichotomy relied on in the past. At the same time, since past exclusions of the perceived female gender still affect today's academic, organizational, political, industry, and other systems, ignoring the lasting sexism still rampant slows societal progress and prevents social justice. To remedy this issue, I recommend implementing discussions on the gendering of technology within TPC courses, perhaps by discussing case studies of a technology's audience/user switch and by exploring how the professional genres and media came about and how they've evolved.

6.7 Key Findings and Implications for TPC

Overall, the thematic analysis method paired with critical reflexivity in this autoethnography showed how one TPC course over ten years involved (or failed to involve) the DEI and critical feminist principles through instruction and practice. It showed how the ecology of current events, research topics and methodologies, and departmental decisions, like curriculum choices, informed and affected the course over the past ten years. In general, this research identified four key findings, all of which suggest important implications for TPC. First, the earlier parts of the decade, especially 2013-16 lacked DEI quite

significantly in both explicit instruction and practice/role modeling. The latter part of the decade slowly incorporated more instances of DEI instruction and practice, perhaps with the help of an international collaboration (The Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Project), professional development sessions, national tragedies demanding change, and the supplemental textbook (Mussack, 2021). Nevertheless, even the most recent course in 2022 lacked a seamless incorporation of DEI where students fully embraced the connection between TPC and social justice. This first finding suggests that our field does not naturally embody DEI; instead, instructors must set up their courses with intentionality to incorporate DEI – through both explicit conversations and role modeling DEI practices. The hope would be that the ecology evolves to a point where, like and with technology, DEI becomes a given as part of TPC pedagogy.

Second, the findings showed that the incorporation of the six critical feminist principles varied, but by 2022, the TPC course had evolved to implement four of the six critical feminist principles, including permissive listening, generative silence, welcoming difference, and collaborative labor. Yet I had not explicitly named two of them, permissive listening and generative silence, for my students, so they may not have recognized those moves and thus applied them to future situations. Multivocality and gendered technology, the two critical feminist principles not incorporated into the course, led to an unfortunate omission in the class's analysis of technologies and audiences. This recognition provides motivation for involving them more heavily in the future so that students take away an understanding of the importance of involving multiple perspectives when composing their professional documents. Notably, relying on the critical feminist principles as a way to present DEI instruction proved helpful, though whether the connection proved necessary is inconclusive. A future research project could involve instructors intentionally incorporating the critical feminist principles named, or another human-centered methodology, and then noting students' follow-up actions, like their topic choices on assignments, discussion directions, and use of DEI language throughout the semester. In general, this connection brings up a paramount point and an idea for future research about how human-centered foundations in TPC

pedagogy, like critical feminism, lead to students' deeper understanding and valuing of DEI for social justice.

Third, the research made apparent that a field's scholarship takes years, sometimes even decades (or longer), to impact the local level of a classroom. Miller's (1979) call for a more humanistic approach to TPC, Rude's (2009) mention of social-change as a cornerstone of TPC, and Walton's (2016) emphasis on social justice in TPC all contributed to the shifting ecology, yet this TPC hallmark still takes a backseat in classrooms, as this research project identified. For this particular TPC course, the progress toward involving social justice in the TPC classroom occurred to an extent, but slowly. Additionally, it still remained secondary to the so-called practical professional genre instruction, as opposed to seamlessly being part of the course. For TPC, this finding implies that research needs a more streamlined avenue for reaching its educators. Perhaps professional development at the departmental level could bring in specific scholarship and then open discussions about how instructors have implemented that scholarship in their classrooms.

Fourth, the research indicated that institutional and departmental support are key in supporting and guiding instructional practices. For instance, once the social justice-centered textbook (Mussack, 2021) entered the curriculum, significantly more instruction on DEI took place. Without this guidance, TPC instructors could avoid centering DEI altogether and fail to connect our field with social justice efforts, despite the duo's linked role in the everyday communications we partake in and form.

Based on these findings of necessitating intentional incorporation of DEI in the classroom, I recommend experimenting with approaches that challenge existing ways of thinking, as I have attempted to do through this research. One approach could be involving a critical feminist framework, one example of a human-centered approach, as part of the foundation of a TPC course. The goal of a TPC course involves students walking away with a more well-rounded understanding of audience and how social

justice plays a role in analyzing those audiences for the communications they will produce in their respective fields. Students should not need to take a Gender Studies class to be exposed to a critical feminist approach, as if it is an exclusive and extremist methodology. Instead, it provides value inter-disciplinarily, just like TPC. Considering our field's social justice turn, incorporating language from perspectives and approaches that digress from the status quo proves key in order to ensure the inclusion and value of marginalized voices. To further social justice efforts in the TPC classroom, then, I recommend the following actions for instructors:

- Include social justice in the foundational materials at the beginning of the course, along with rhetoric and genres, rather than later in the semester
- Experiment with human-centered approaches, like critical feminism
- Use the language of DEI and social justice throughout the course
- Explicitly name the human-centered approach used to show its connection to social justice outcomes
- Spend more time on audience analysis to cover complex topics like culture and localization
- When displaying examples of each genre, use examples that incorporate DEI
- Require readings written by diverse authors to demonstrate the value of multiple perspectives

Even though research takes awhile to impact the classroom, as demonstrated through this research, the future research ideas prove limitless. One idea involves interviewing instructors to compile how they incorporate DEI. These ideas could inform future instructors about how to more seamlessly emphasize the social justice turn in TPC. Another idea involves surveying instructors to see if they incorporate non-conventional approaches, like a critical feminist approach, and what impact it has on their students' topics. Furthermore, a research project that explores the direct connection between culture and

DEI topics seems crucial since scaffolding one of those topics naturally brings up the other, and they both directly relate to the audiences – customers, colleagues, decision makers, etc. – students will attempt to reach in their professions. Finally, analyzing which topics students choose to write about throughout the semester could reveal their inclusion or exclusion of social justice principles; the findings from this study could inform instructors about students’ understanding of the connection between social justice and their respective fields and how to better scaffold those principles in the future.

6.8 Autoethnography in TPC

As this project concludes, I now provide some commentary about my experiment with autoethnography within the field of TPC in the form of two main takeaways. First, autoethnography proved effective at allowing me to reflect upon my teaching practices. I realized where I had made important changes to support my students’ understanding of TPC – as a practice of writing technically and as a field; this aspect of my study proved inspiring and showed me that my focus has always been on maintaining a student-centered course. On the other hand, this study showed that I am not incorporating DEI principles into my course as seamlessly as I need to, despite my efforts to do so. This informative realization helps me know that my class needs adjustments, starting with reorganizing when I discuss social justice and presenting more examples that display DEI. Overall, autoethnography proved informative in this context and could prove useful at department workshops in a briefer version.

A second takeaway refers to autoethnography as a reliable research methodology. On one hand, by itself it could fall short of research standards in the TPC field. It involved one individual’s self-analysis and, while individual stories often prompt necessary changes in research and society in general, the field’s foundational connection to science and, by extension, the scientific method, runs deep. That being said, the research collected in Chapter Two showed the field’s recent acceptance of newer research

methodologies, so perhaps autoethnography could find a place in TPC after all. We maintain our field's expertise in usability and audience by valuing individual voices for technological development.

Autoethnography provides one potential pathway for ascertaining an audience's needs, whether our customers', students', or our own. As such, presumably autoethnography could find a place in our research.

6.9 Conclusion

Through this research, I laid out much of the critical feminist ecology impacting TPC over the past few decades and established a specific critical feminist framework for TPC specifically. I then used thematic analysis to analyze whether I forwarded DEI through instruction and role modeling when covering the four touchstones: social justice and DEI, the introductory documents, the professional genres, and IC. Finally, I experimented with autoethnography and related each critical feminist principle to my classroom practices and social justice efforts. Overall, the findings suggest that I have forwarded DEI through my incorporation of permissive listening, generative silence, welcoming difference, and collaborative labor. However, the findings also displayed a lack of involvement of multivocality and gendered technology. Considering this Technical Writing course constitutes the only TPC course most undergraduates take at this particular university, ensuring that I implement all of the critical feminist principles to emphasize DEI proves crucial. Additionally, ensuring that I use the human-centered approach's specific language seems important so that students recognize the moves that would support their professional development and ultimately advance social justice.

As part of the overall TPC and critical feminist ecologies, which overlap in important ways as identified throughout this project, my course's materials participated in the fluxes taking place within and outside of the classroom. The resources I displayed to students, at times, forwarded social justice moves

and, at other times, reinscribed traditional, exclusive ideologies that promoted White, heterosexual, able-bodied normativity. The autoethnographic method allowed me to reflect upon my moves to avoid forwarding harmful messages in the future. Along with the impact of research in the field and outside of the field, my course's materials contributed to conversations happening (and not happening). Continuing to forward social justice and critical feminism in the TPC classroom, then, requires intentionally incorporating materials that support those efforts. Since power is a force constantly in motion, analyzing its function in rhetorical situations is a never-ending endeavor, including in research and classroom contexts.

Additionally, continuing to identify the human-centered approaches used throughout the decades, similar to the efforts of Thompson (1999), Thompson & Overman Smith (2006), White, Rumsey, & Amidon (2016), and now my project, proves necessary. Without that documentation of the ecology, the field risks ignoring its own past and reinscribing established systems that harm marginalized people. For a field dedicated to transforming the technical world in a way that works for everyone based on their own nuanced needs/wants, our field must take on human-centered approaches, like the critical feminist one forwarded here, to avoid losing sight of the end goal: that of reaching social justice.

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Appendix

A.1 Representative Syllabi (Fall 2013, Spring 2016, & Spring 2022)

Syllabus, Fall 2013

WRIT 3562W (4 credits)

University of Minnesota—Twin Cities: Fall 2013

Section 001 (16677): MW 8:30-9:20 (MagrathLib 6); F 8:30-9:20 (LES 230)

Section 002 (16678): MW 9:35-10:25 (MagrathLib 6); F 9:35-10:25 (LES 230)

1.0 INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Brandi Fuglsby

Contact Information

- Office—Ruttan 137; Nolte 337A
- Phone/Texting—(605) 695-4315
- Email—fugls005@umn.edu

Office Hours

- MW 10:30-11:30 (Ruttan)
- W 4:00-5:30 (Nolte)
- By appointment

2.0 REQUIRED MATERIALS

Text: Richard Johnson-Sheehan's *Technical Communication Today*, 4th edition.

Moodle Website: <https://ay13.moodle.umn.edu/course/view.php?id=6065>

3.0 COURSE DESCRIPTION

3.1 Catalog Description

“Written/oral communication in professional settings, gathering research, analyzing audience, assessing/practicing multiple genres. Draft, test, revise present findings in oral presentation” (“University Catalogs: Writing Studies (WRIT)”).

3.2 Departmental Description

Technical and professional writing (or workplace writing) communicates business, technical, or scientific information to readers or users who need this information to solve some problem or complete some task. Technical communication or workplace writing should be understood as

persuasive texts that influence the decisions and actions of humans inside and outside of workplace settings.

Any study of workplace writing will require not only knowledge of the types of writing that happen in the workplace, but also practice with the skills needed in order to compose such texts. This writing-intensive course will introduce students to and allow them to practice the following:

1. The genres of workplace writing—introducing the various written genres of workplace communication, such as memos, letters, proposals, instructions, and reports, as well as understanding the features that constitute these text types.
2. The skills of rhetorical and audience analysis—analyzing writing situations, multiple purposes, and potential audiences in order to create texts that solve problems.
3. The spatial design of visual and verbal information—understanding and working with the concepts of text arrangement and document design.
4. The features of "readable" written communication—practicing the skills necessary to produce writing that is as grammatically-correct and as stylistically-appropriate as possible.

3.3 Writing-Intensive Credit

Writing intensive courses share “the belief that writing, an articulation of thinking, enhances learning where it is meaningfully and intentionally embedded into a course structure” (“Writing intensive [WI] courses”). As such, the University of Minnesota requires that courses with a "WI" designator include at least one assignment for which students are required to revise a draft after receiving feedback from their instructor. In order to receive credit for this course, you **MUST** receive draft feedback from your instructor that contributes to the writing process of producing a final polished draft. So students **cannot pass this course** who do not meet minimal standards of writing competence and who do not meet this draft-revision requirement. The only option for taking 3562W is in the writing-intensive format.

4.0 OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete WRIT 3562W will be able to do the following:

- Successfully write workplace documents such as memos, letters, proposals, descriptions, instructions, and reports that meet the needs of readers and conform to conventions of format
- Analyze audience and adjust communication for varying audiences
- Conduct research and evaluate the credibility of sources
- Use word processing to create usable, ethical and attractive documents
- Use a variety of writing technologies such as word processing, presentation software, blogs, discussion forums, and Google Docs
- Constructively work with others on a collaborative assignment
- Plan, prepare, and deliver an oral presentation
- Revise and edit your work so that your writing is energetic, stylistically appropriate and grammatically correct

5.0 DISABILITY SERVICES

In keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any student with disabilities or other special needs, who needs special accommodations in this course, is invited to share these concerns with Disability Services by contacting them at 612-626-1333 as soon as possible. In fact, *“The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. Disability Services (DS) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations”* (“Disability Services Syllabus Statement”). If you already have an accommodations letter through DS, please let the instructor know right away how she can apply the accommodations to this course.

6.0 HONESTY IN ACADEMIC WRITING

Because the University of Minnesota “seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity” (“Guiding Principles”), all work in this course must be completed in a manner consistent with the University of Minnesota’s Board of Regents Policy. All written and oral presentations must “respect the intellectual rights of others. Statements lifted verbatim from publications must be cited as quotations. Ideas, summaries or paraphrased material, and other information taken from the literature must be properly referenced” (“Academic Honesty in English Courses”).

6.2 Academic Dishonesty Defined/Plagiarism

If work is not submitted according to the University of Minnesota’s Board of Regents Policy, the instructor will probably report the student to the Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (OSCAI). Plagiarism refers to the following, as well as others not listed here:

- Submitting another student’s essay or one that is essentially the same as another student’s essay as your own. Both students will fail the assignment and the course.
- Submitting an essay that you have procured online or from a commercial supplier of essays.
- Incorporating material from sources—data, analysis, organization—without providing appropriate documentation.
- Fabricating sources or information.

Please note that an essay or assignment may receive a passing grade initially, but receive a failing grade later if I discover that it contains work that is not your own.

7.0 ATTENDANCE POLICY

Because this course is about developing professional habits and preparing you for graduate school or for the world of work, you must attend class, prepared to demonstrate those skills. I will be unsympathetic to students who do not come to class. Furthermore, in-class discussions, activities, and projects are designed to actively involve you in the learning process; since your participation is a key element to class discussions and group work, attendance will be the key to your success in this course. You will be docked one letter grade for missing six classes, two letter grades for missing

nine classes, etc. If you absolutely cannot attend a class, you must inform me in advance, though informing the instructor does not excuse the absence. **The first five absences are set aside for activities/illnesses/weather/family issues/etc., so no absence is considered excused.**

8.0 ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT

Throughout the semester, you will complete the following assignments listed in Table 1. Note that successfully completing the following assignments will demonstrate your versatility in writing different genres:

Table 1. List of Required WRIT 3562W Assignments and Their Point Values.

| Completion Checklist | Assignments | Potential Points Earned | Actual Points Earned |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|----------------------|
| | Quiz #1: Syllabus | 10 | |
| | Rhetorical Situations Practice | 10 | |
| | Email Practice | 10 | |
| | Quiz #2: Chapter 6 (Technical Descriptions) | 10 | |
| | Objective vs. Subjective Wording | 10 | |
| | Specific Wording | 10 | |
| | Visuals Document | 10 | |
| | Technical Description Peer Review | 10 | |
| | Technical Description | 50 | |
| | Show your Technical Description | 5 | |
| | Quiz #3: Chapter 7 (Instructions) | 10 | |
| | Quiz #4: Chapter 8 (Proposals) | 10 | |
| | Instructions Example via Google Docs | 10 | |
| | Timeline & Outline | 20 | |
| Extra Credit | Doodle Poll | 5 | |

| | | | |
|--|---|-----|--|
| | Instructions Proposal | 25 | |
| | Memo | 10 | |
| | Instructions | 50 | |
| | Grammar: Trans/Conj. or Comma Usage | 10 | |
| | Usability Report | 30 | |
| | Group Member Assessment | 10 | |
| | Letters | 20 | |
| | Quiz #5: Ch. 10 (Analytical Reports: Rec.) | 10 | |
| | Recommendation Report Proposal | 25 | |
| | Quoting, Paraphrasing, & Summarizing Ex. | 10 | |
| | Reference Pages Exercise | 10 | |
| | Quiz #6: Ch. 9 (Activity Reports: Progress) | 10 | |
| | Grammar: Based on Need | 10 | |
| | Progress Report | 25 | |
| | Analytical Report Peer Review | 10 | |
| | Analytical Report: Recommendation | 100 | |
| | Analytical Report Presentation | 50 | |
| | Total Points | 600 | |

More in-depth assignment descriptions are available on our class's Moodle site. Submit all assignments on time in order to earn full points. Unless approved by the instructor, all late work will be docked by 1/3 of a letter grade for each class day that it is late. Note: Assignments may be used in future classes as examples. To improve your writing even more, contact the Center for Writing at 612-626-7579 or visit the Center in Nicholson Hall 10.

Final scores & explanations: A=562-600; A-=537-561; B+=519-536; B=501-518; B-=477-500; C+=459-476; C=441-458; C-=417-440; D+=399-416; D=381-398; D-=357-380; F=356 & under

| Grade | Explanation |
|--------------|---|
| A | An employer would be delighted to send this document because the writer has exceeded expectations by producing a particularly well-written, complete, creative, and audience-specific solution to a problem. Overall the document is excellent in all aspects. |
| B | An employer would be comfortable sending out this document. It meets the needs of the audience and does not contain any serious problems. Some aspects of the document are excellent but other aspects are merely good. |
| C | An employer would send this document but not necessarily with pride. This document displays an acceptable completion of the assignment with no major problems but contains much room for improvement. |
| D | An employer would be reluctant to send this document because of at least one major problem and/or several minor ones. The employer would question the writer's devotion to the project. A major aspect of the assignment was not completed and/or certain elements were completed unsatisfactorily. |
| F | An employer would not send out this document. An employer would realize that the writer missed the point of the project and that the writer doesn't understand or follow the company's standards of excellence. Ultimately, the document doesn't follow or fails to complete the assignment. |

REFERENCES

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- “Disability Services Syllabus Statement.” UMN.edu. 2013. Web. 3 Sep. 2013.
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- “University Catalogs: Writing Studies (WRIT).” UMN.edu. 14 Nov. 2012. Web. 3 Sep. 2013.
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9.0 COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: The syllabus may change somewhat over the course of the semester.

| Date | Monday | Wednesday | Friday |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sept. 4-6 | No Class—Labor Day | Introduction to course | Rhetorical Situations |
| Sept. 9-13 | Quiz #1; | Rhet. Sit. Practice Due; | Email Practice Due; |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| | Rhet. Sit., Cont. | Emails | Tech Desc. |
| Sept. 16-20 | Tech Desc. Practice | Quiz #2; Obj. vs. Subj. Desc. | Obj. vs. Subj. Due; Visuals |
| Sept. 23-27 Review | Visuals Due (Show); Specific Wording; | Specific Wording Due; Reader-friendly docs | TD Peer |
| Sept. 30-Oct. 4 | Required Conf. | Required Conference | Show your TD |
| Oct. 7-11 | Instructions | Quiz #3; Proposals | Quiz #4; Instr/Prop Examples |
| Oct. 14-18 | Collaboration; D. Poll; Timelines; Outlines | Group Work (in class); T & O due; Doodle Poll Due | Instr. Proposal Due; Memos |
| Oct. 21-25 | Memo Due; Grammar | Group Work (out of class) | Usability Reports |
| Oct. 28-Nov. 1 | Instructions Due; Group Assessment | Group Assessment Due; Verbal Style | Letters |
| Nov. 4-8 | Usability Due; Analytical Reports | Quiz #5; Formal Reports; IMRAD | Formal Reports, Cont.; Grammar |
| Nov. 11-15 | Proposal Due; Library Visit | Activity Rep.: Progress | Quiz #6; Reference Pages |
| Nov. 18-22 | Progress Report due; Rev. Research Triangle | Quot, Par, Sum Ex. | Analytical Rep. P. |
| Nov. 25-29 | Required Conferences | Required Conferences | No Class—Thanksg. |
| Dec. 2-6 | Presentations | Presentations | Presentations |
| Dec. 9-13 | Presentations | Presentations | Finals Week |
| Dec. 16-19 | Finals Week | | |

WRIT 3562W (Online): Technical & Professional Writing (4 credits)

University of Minnesota—Twin Cities: Fall 2016

Section 079 (16979): Online

Pre-requisite: Junior or Senior status

1.0 INSTRUCTOR: Brandi Jo Fuglsby

Welcome to WRIT 3562W! If you need to contact me throughout the semester, feel free to do so via these methods:

- Office Visit: Thursdays 11:30-2:00 in Nolte 304 (East Bank)
- Phone/Texting: (605)695-4315
- Google Hangout or Skype: Tuesdays 10:30-11:30 and randomly throughout each day
- Email: fugls005@umn.edu; alternate email: bjfuglsby@gmail.com

2.0 REQUIRED MATERIALS

In order to succeed in this class, you will need access to the following items:

- **Our Class's Moodle Website:** Refer to the [Moodle orientation](#) for help in configuring your browser. If you follow the advice in the orientation, you should be able to navigate the course.
- **E-Text and MyWritingLab:** Richard Johnson-Sheehan's *Technical Communication Today*, 5th edition (ebook delivered through VitalSource) and MyWritingLab are both required for this course. You have already paid for these materials through a digital materials fee included with your tuition, and you will find them integrated throughout this Moodle course site. *You do NOT need to purchase any additional materials for the course.* For those who would print the chapters, the [UMN Bookstore](#) in Coffman carries an OPTIONAL loose-leaf version.
- **Microsoft Office:** Please submit all documents as MS Word documents (unless otherwise noted), NOT AS PDF'S. As a registered UMN student, you can get Microsoft Office free of charge [through OIT](#). If you notice that Word has disrupted your document's design, then submit both versions of the document—the Word version as well as the PDF version.
- **Microphone:** For the final presentation you will need to record audio. Many computers have built in mics, or you may purchase a headset fairly inexpensively. If you are local, you may use the [Smart Learning Commons](#) in [Walter Library](#).
- **Google Hangout (Optional):** I recommend that you download the FREE version of Skype. We can use this software to connect for office hours.

3.0 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

University of Minnesota’s Catalog Description: The University of Minnesota describes WRIT 3562W as such: “Written/oral communication in professional settings, gathering research, analyzing audience, assessing/practicing multiple genres. Draft, test, revise present findings in oral presentation.” (“University Catalogs: Writing Studies [WRIT]”).

University of Minnesota Writing Studies Description: Technical and professional writing (or workplace writing) communicates business, technical, or scientific information to readers or users who need this information to solve some problem or complete some task. Technical communication or workplace writing should be understood as persuasive texts that influence the decisions and actions of humans inside and outside of workplace settings. This writing-intensive course will introduce students to and allow them to practice the following:

1. The genres of workplace writing--Introducing the various written genres of workplace communication, such as memos, letters, proposals, instructions, and reports, as well as understanding the features that constitute these texts’ types, including research.
2. The skills of rhetorical and audience analysis--Analyzing writing situations, multiple purposes, and potential audiences in order to create texts that solve problems.
3. The spatial design of visual and verbal information--Understanding and working with the concepts of text arrangement and document design.
4. The features of "readable" written communication--Practicing the skills necessary to produce writing that is as grammatically-correct and as stylistically-appropriate as possible.

Writing-Intensive Credit: The only option for taking 3562W is in the writing-intensive format. In order to receive credit for this course, students must meet the minimal standards of writing competence. According to the UMN’s Office of Undergraduate Education, Writing-intensive courses share the following requirements, among others (“Writing intensive [WI] courses”):

- “Writing is explained and practiced in the course”: Students will “learn about writing, including its disciplinary structures and functions, and should practice writing in a variety of modes and settings appropriate to the discipline.”
- “Writing is a significant part of the course work”: “Students must write at least 2,500 words or the equivalent of finished writing, in genres and modes of production appropriate for the course and discipline.”
- “Writing is learned through revision”: The instructor will “provide substantial feedback on writing assignments, and allow revision in response to that feedback.”

Note: Students cannot pass this course if they do not meet this draft-revision requirement.

4.0 OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete WRIT 3562W will be able to do the following:

- Write workplace documents and appropriately apply features and genres of workplace writing such as memos, letters, proposals, definitions, instructions, and reports

- Produce writing that is grammatically correct and stylistically appropriate
- Clearly articulate rhetorical and audience analysis of writing situations, multiple purposes, and potential audiences for written texts (including global audiences)
- Conduct interview and internet research and evaluate the credibility of sources
- Write and compile a research-based report that addresses a specific research question
- Plan, prepare, and deliver an oral presentation using PowerPoint or Prezi
- Visually design a document using principles of page design
- Create graphics such as charts and graphs that ethically display information
- Conduct user testing of instructional documents
- Understand ethics and its implications for technical and professional writing
- Revise and edit your work and that of your classmates so that your writing is energetic, stylistically appropriate, and grammatically correct
- Use a variety of writing technologies such as word processing, presentation software, blogs, discussion forums, and Google Docs
- Constructively work with others on a collaborative assignment

5.0 STUDENT RESOURCES

Below you'll find resources available to you that exist to support you in order to optimize your University of Minnesota education and experience. Many of them are free (or, rather, resources that you're already paying for through your tuition). I encourage you to reach out to the resources appropriate to your situation.

5.1 Library Services

In WRIT 3562W, you will be required to consult experts' work, much of which will be found through the UMN library system. I encourage you to become familiar with their website early on, particularly noting the location of useful databases like *Academic Search Premier*: <https://www.lib.umn.edu/>. Note: WRIT 3562W has its own librarian, Kate Peterson (katep@umn.edu), who is super helpful and willing to answer any questions you might have while working on a project.

Student Resources Quick Sheet

5.1 Library Services: <https://www.lib.umn.edu/>

5.2 Student Writing Support:
<http://writing.umn.edu/sws/>

5.3 Disability Services:
<https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/home>

5.2 Student Writing Support

If you want additional input at any time throughout the writing process, I encourage you to seek out the Center for Writing. This department “provides *free* [added italics] writing instruction for all University of Minnesota students—graduate and undergraduate—at all stages of the writing process.” To set up a consultation, call them at 612-626-7579 or visit them in Nicholson Hall 15

or here: <http://writing.umn.edu/sws/>.

Another note regarding writing support: UMN offers a WRIT 3562W section geared toward non-native speakers (NNS) that focuses more intently on areas of NNS's writing concerns (grammar, for instance). If you are interested in taking this version of WRIT 3562W, see your advisor.

5.3 Disability Accommodations

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. Disability Services (DS), the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities, can provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact DS at 612-626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations. If you are registered with DS and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, please contact your instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss how the accommodations will be applied in the course. For more information, please see the DS website, <https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>.

5.4 Health Services (Physical and Mental Health)

If you aren't feeling well (in the broadest of terms), I encourage you to visit Boynton Health Services since "good health is essential for long-term academic, occupational, and personal success." Boynton Health Services provides a range of services, including mental health services, primary care, dental care, eye care, etc. Here is their website: <http://www.bhs.umn.edu/index.htm>.

Mental Health and Stress Management: As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu>.

5.5 Expected Behavior in WRIT 3562W

In order to ensure a focused and comfortable learning environment, I expect the following behavior from all students:

- Be respectful of your classmates' ideas and feelings.
- Avoid racist, sexist, and other discriminatory comments, which could ultimately get you fired from a job.
- Engage in the material presented by asking questions and contributing ideas.
- Submit all assignments on time

- Submit assignments as attractively presented, spell-checked, grammar-checked, and proofed documents. They must also conform to the format conventions modeled in the examples.
- Avoid plagiarism (using the words or visuals of others without attribution, whether you find them in print or on the Web).
- Adhere to the Board of Regents' Student Conduct Code policies, viewable here: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf.

6.0 ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT

Throughout the semester, you will complete the assignments listed in Table 1. Note that successfully completing the following assignments will demonstrate your versatility in writing different genres within your career.

Table 1. List of Required WRIT 3562W Assignments and Their Point Values.

| Completion Checklist | Assignment | Potential Points Earned | Actual Points Earned |
|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Quiz #1: Syllabus | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Career Plans | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Forum 0: A Potential Rhetorical Situation | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Forum 1: Understanding Context | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Context in Your Field | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Professional Email | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Quiz #2: Chapter 6 (Technical Descriptions) | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Concise Writing Worksheet as a Class | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Forum 2: Technical Definition | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Improving a Document's Design | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Text-to-Visual | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Technical Description Peer Review | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Technical Description | 50 | |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---|------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Forum 3: Collaboration | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Quiz #3: Chapter 7 (Instructions) | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Group Timeline | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Group's Summary of the Winsor Essay | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Instructions | 50 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Usability Report (Memo) | 30 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Group Member Assessment | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Quiz #4: Ch. 10 (Analytical Reports) | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Research Questions | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Quiz #5: Chapter 8 (Proposals) | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Analytical Report Proposal | 25 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Empirical Source Peer Review | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Forum 4: Major-Specific Analytical Report Example | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Forum 5: Presentations | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Analytical Report Peer Review | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Making Slides Memorable | 10 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Analytical Report | 100 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Analytical Report Presentation | 50 | |
| | Total Points | 550 | |

More in-depth assignment descriptions are available on Moodle. Submit all assignments on time in order to earn full points. Unless approved by the instructor, major assignments (those worth 20 points or more) will be docked by 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late; **daily work (assignments worth 0-19 pts.) may not be made up.** Note: Assignments may be used in future classes as successful examples, unless you email me otherwise.

Final scores & explanations: Your final grade will be calculated out of 550 points. If you add up the items in Table 1, you will discover a sum of 555 because 5 extra credit points are worked

into the points. These five extra points provide **the sole extra credit opportunity** in this class. Below you will find the number of points that will earn you each respective grade, along with an explanation to each letter grade (Table 2):

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|----|---------|---|-------|
| A+ | 531-550 | C+ | 421-437 | F | 327 & |
| A | 509-530 | C | 399-420 | | under |
| A- | 493-508 | C- | 383-398 | | |
| B+ | 476-492 | D+ | 366-382 | | |
| B | 454-475 | D | 344-365 | | |
| B- | 438-453 | D- | 328-343 | | |

Table 2. Grade explanations related to a career.

| Grade | Explanation |
|--------------|---|
| A | An employer would be delighted to send this document because the writer has exceeded expectations by producing a particularly well-written, complete, creative, and audience-specific solution to a problem. Overall the document is excellent in all aspects. |
| B | An employer would be comfortable sending out this document. It meets the needs of the audience and does not contain any serious problems. Some aspects of the document are excellent but other aspects are merely good. |
| C | An employer would send this document but not necessarily with pride. This document displays an acceptable completion of the assignment/project with no major problems but contains much room for improvement. |
| D | An employer would be reluctant to send this document because of at least one major problem and/or several minor ones. The employer would question the writer's devotion to the project. A major aspect of the assignment/project was not completed and/or certain elements were completed unsatisfactorily. |
| F | An employer would not send out this document. An employer would realize that the writer missed the point of the project and that the writer doesn't understand or follow the company's standards of excellence. Ultimately, the document doesn't follow or fails to complete the assignment. |

7.0 HONESTY IN ACADEMIC WRITING

Because the University of Minnesota “seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity” (“Guiding Principles”), all work in this course must be completed in a manner consistent with the [University of Minnesota’s Board of Regents Policy](#). That is, you are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty and consists of these:

- Plagiarizing
- Incorrectly citing sources in your documents.
- Using a past student’s essay or an essay that you found online and claiming it as your own
- Cheating on assignments or examinations
- Engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work
- Taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission
- Submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement
- Acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement
- Altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record
- Fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

If plagiarism occurs and work is not submitted according to the description mentioned at the beginning of this section, the student will fail the assignment (with little chance for a redo) and the instructor will probably report the student to the Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (OSCAI). Furthermore, if it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course and may face additional sanctions from the University.

8.0 PARTICIPATION

WRIT 3562W classes are designed to actively involve you in the learning process, via class discussions, peer reviews, activities, and collaborative projects. As such, you will be placed into small groups (of 3 or 4) to complete some of the discussion forums. Your participation will be crucial to your success (and your classmates’ success) in the course. Consistent participation helps to develop strong professional habits and therefore prepares you for graduate school or the world of work. Know this: **Your voice matters.** As a soon-to-be graduate from one of the best universities in the nation, you are a well-rounded, knowledgeable person. The sooner you recognize that you should speak up when you have something to contribute, the more successful you will be in this class and, more importantly, in your career. Happy Writing!

References

- “Guiding Principles.” *University of Minnesota Board of Regents Policy*. *UMN.edu*. 26 Aug. 2014.
 “University Catalogs: Writing Studies (WRIT).” *UMN.edu*. 14 Nov. 2012. Web. 26 Aug. 2014.
 “Writing intensive (WI) courses.” *UMN.edu*. 2010. Web. 3 Sep. 2013.

Syllabus, Spring 2022

Writ 3562W: Syllabus, Spring 2022

WRIT 3562W: Technical & Professional Writing (4 credits)

University of Minnesota -- Twin Cities: Spring 2022

Section 010 (class #54964)

Tues. & Thurs. at 1:00-2:15 in Appleby 223

Pre-requisite: Junior or Senior status

1.0 INSTRUCTOR: Brandi Fuglsby

Welcome to WRIT 3562W! I look forward to hearing about your professional goals throughout this semester. To find out more about me, watch the welcome video on the right. If any questions come up over these next months, I encourage you to contact me using one of these methods:

- **Call/Text:** 605-695-4315
- **Email:** fugls005@umn.edu
- **Office Hours via [ZoomLinks to an external site.](#):** Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:15-3:45
- **Pre-arranged Meeting** via [ZoomLinks to an external site.](#)
- **After-class conversation** with masks

[Picture of Instructor]

2.0 REQUIRED MATERIALS

To fulfill the requirements of Writ 3562W's assignments, you will need access to the following resources:

- Our Class's Canvas site
- Johnson-Sheehan's *Technical Writing Today*, 6th edition, found here: [TCT](#)
- Mussack's *Introduction to Technical and Professional Communication: Technical Communication through a Social Justice Lens*, found here: [ITPC](#)
- Microsoft Office: As a registered UMN student, you can get Microsoft Office free of charge through [OIT \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#).

3.0 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

[WRIT 3562W Catalog Description \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#): This course introduces students to technical and professional writing through various readings and assignments in which students analyze and create texts that work to communicate complex information, solve problems, and complete tasks. Students gain knowledge of workplace genres as well as to develop skills in composing such genres. This course allows students to practice rhetorically analyzing writing situations and composing genres such as memos, proposals, instructions, research reports, and presentations. Students work in teams to develop collaborative content and to compose in a variety of modes including text, graphics, video, audio, and digital. Students also conduct both primary and secondary research and practice usability testing. The course emphasizes creating documents that are goal-driven and appropriate for a specific context and audience.

WRIT 3562W Course Description: Technical and professional writing is writing that communicates complex information to readers or users to solve problems or complete tasks. Any study of technical and professional writing will require not only knowledge of workplace genres, but also practice of the skills needed to compose such genres. This writing-intensive course will introduce students to and allow them to practice the following:

- Composing workplace genres such as memos, letters, proposals, instructions, and reports
- Explaining detailed and complex technical information to diverse audiences
- Rhetorically analyzing writing situations, multiple purposes, and potential audiences
- Designing visual and verbal information, and working with text arrangement and document design
- Understanding and practicing features of "readable" written communication such as grammar and style
- Conducting research and clearly conveying results of research in written and oral formats
- Considering ethical implications and the ways knowledge, power, or human activity impact writing

Note: UMN offers a WRIT 3562W section geared toward non-native speakers (NNS) that focuses more intently on areas of NNS writing concerns (grammar, for instance). If you are interested in taking this version of WRIT 3562W, see your advisor.

Writing Intensive Credit: The University of Minnesota requires that courses with a "WI" designator include at least one assignment for which students are required to revise a draft after receiving feedback from their instructor. To receive credit for this course, you **MUST** receive draft feedback from your instructor that contributes to the writing process of producing a final polished draft. **Students cannot pass this course who do not meet minimal standards of writing competence and who do not meet this draft-revision requirement.** The only option for taking 3562W is in the writing-intensive format. According to the UMN's Office of Undergraduate Education, writing-intensive courses share the following requirements, among others (Writing Intensive [WI] Courses):

- Writing is comprehensively integrated into the course: Students will learn about writing, including its disciplinary structures and functions, and should practice writing in a variety of modes and settings appropriate to the discipline.
- Writing is a significant part of the course work: Students must write at least 2,500 words or the equivalent of finished writing, in genres and modes of production appropriate for the course and discipline.
- Writing is learned through revision: The instructor will provide substantial feedback on writing assignments, and allow revision in response to that feedback.

4.0 STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who pass WRIT 3562W will have met these three [Student Learning Outcomes](#) (SLOs):

1. [Can locate and critically evaluate information.](#)
2. [Can communicate effectively.](#)
3. [Can identify, define, and solve problems.](#)

5.0 STUDENT RESOURCES

As one of the largest universities in the United States, the University of Minnesota has many resources available to support you in optimizing your University of Minnesota education and experience. Many of these [Student Resources](#) are free (or, rather, resources that you're already paying for through your tuition). I encourage you to skim the [Student Resources](#) and reach out to those appropriate to your situation.

Becoming a university-educated individual means recognizing that behind the face value of situations comes entire systems promoting or preventing various relationships and communicative practices in general. Identifying the contexts that inspire, support, hinder, sway, harm, etc. individuals will help you identify injustices that often begin in and are reinscribed through our day-to-day interactions. When contributing to our class, then, I expect the following behavior from all students to ensure a focused and productive learning environment:

- Prioritizing people over tasks, processes, and objects
- Treating all people with dignity, the principle that "everyone is endowed with intrinsic worth just by virtue of being human" (Walton paraphrasing Habermas, 2016, p. 410)
- Respecting your classmates' ideas and feelings
- Avoiding racist, sexist, and other discriminatory comments, which could ultimately get you fired from a job and are unnecessary and mean
- Engaging in the material presented by contributing ideas and asking questions
- Submitting assignments on time
- Submitting assignments that are responsive to a realistic, professional situation; visually appealing (based on the CRAP principles); composed with thoughtfulness and care; and technically detailed and thorough based on the situation
- Following the University of Minnesota's policies addressing [COVID](#)[Links to an external site.](#)
- Avoiding plagiarism (using the words or visuals of others without attribution, whether you find them in print or on the Web)
- Genuinely forgiving yourself if you make an error (you are, after all, *learning* -- just like all of us)
- Adhering to the Board of Regents' [Student Conduct Code](#) ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)

6.0 HONESTY IN ACADEMIC WRITING

Because the University of Minnesota seeks an environment that “promotes academic achievement and integrity” (“Guiding Principles”), all work in this course must be completed in a manner consistent with the [University of Minnesota's Board of Regents Policy](#) ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#). You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty and consists of these:

- Plagiarizing
- Incorrectly citing sources in your documents
- Using a past student's essay or an essay that you found online and claiming it as your own
- Cheating on assignments or examinations
- Engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work
- Taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission
- Submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement
- Acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement
- Altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record
- Fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

If plagiarism occurs and work is not submitted according to the description mentioned at the beginning of this section, the student will fail the assignment (with little chance for a redo) and the instructor will probably report the student to the Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (OSCAI). Furthermore, if it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course and may face additional sanctions from the University.

7.0 PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE

Attendance: WRIT 3562W classes are designed to actively involve you in the learning process, via class discussions, peer reviews, activities, and collaborative projects. As such, attendance is not only required, it is crucial to both your success and the success of your classmates. Consistent participation helps to develop healthy professional habits that you will need for graduate school or the workplace. Missing class will disrupt the class's dynamic that we will have established, so a student's grade will reflect that disruption in the following way: *After final grades are calculated, a student will then be docked 1 letter grade for missing 4 classes, 2 letter grades for missing 5 classes, 3 letter grades for missing 6, and so on.* If you absolutely cannot attend a class, you must inform the instructor in advance, the same courtesy afforded an employer. So that I can focus on educating you and not managing absences, I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. The first three absences are set aside for activities/illnesses/weather/family issues/etc., all of those unexpected and inevitable occurrences affecting the human experience. Should an emergency cause you to miss more than three class periods, contact me right away to determine whether you will be able to complete the minimum work required to pass the course or whether you have other options (such as a late drop). A serious, personal issue may warrant taking this class a different semester.

Tardies: Students are expected to arrive on time. Arriving to class late or leaving early will disrupt the class proceedings, whether a lecture, class discussion, or a fellow student's presentation. In these cases, 3 tardies will equal an absence. If you must arrive late or leave early to class, please let me know in advance.

Participation: Consistent participation helps to develop healthy professional habits that you will need for graduate school or the workplace. Know this: **Your voice matters.** As a soon-to-be graduate from one of the best universities in the nation, you are a well-rounded, knowledgeable person. Speaking up when you have something to contribute will make each experience more valuable and make you stand out as a reliable, collaborative professional and intellectual in this class and, more importantly, in your career.

8.0 ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENT

To get the most out of your Writ 3562W experience, complete this [List of Required Assignments](#). Lengthier, more in-depth assignment descriptions are (or will be) available in Canvas. Successfully completing these assignments will demonstrate your ability to assess a workplace rhetorical situation and your versatility in composing different genres within your chosen profession.

Submit all assignments on time in order to earn full points. Unless approved by the instructor, major assignments (those worth 20 points or more) will be docked by 1/3 of a letter grade for

each day they are late; **daily work (assignments worth 0-19 pts.) may not be made up.** Note: With your permission, the instructor may ask to display your assignment in future classes as a successful example of the genre.

Final scores & explanations: Your final grade will be calculated out of 600 points. If you add up the items in Table 1 ([List of Required Assignments](#)), you will discover a sum of 605 because 5 extra credit points are worked into the points. These five extra points provide **the sole extra credit opportunity** in this class. Tables 2 & 3 below show the number of points earned for each respective grade, along with an explanation of each letter grade:

Table 2. The letter grades that will be assigned to the number of points earned.

| | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| A+ = 579-600 | B+ = 519-536 | C+ = 459-476 | D+ = 399-416 | F = 356 & under |
| A = 555-578 | B = 495-518 | C = 435-458 | D = 375-398 | |
| A- = 537-554 | B- = 477-494 | C- = 417-434 | D- = 357-374 | |

Table 3. Grade explanations related to a career.

| Grade | Explanation |
|-------|---|
| A | An employer would be delighted to send this document because the writer has exceeded expectations by producing a particularly well-written, complete, creative, and audience-specific solution to a problem. Overall the document is excellent in all aspects. |
| B | An employer would be comfortable sending out this document. It meets the needs of the audience and does not contain any serious problems. Some aspects of the document are excellent but other aspects are merely good. |
| C | An employer would send this document but not necessarily with pride. This document displays an acceptable completion of the assignment/project with no major problems but contains much room for improvement. |
| D | An employer would be reluctant to send this document because of at least one major problem and/or several minor ones. The employer would question the writer's devotion to the project. A major aspect of the assignment/project was not completed and/or certain elements were completed unsatisfactorily. |
| F | An employer would not send out this document. An employer would realize that the writer missed the point of the project and that the writer doesn't understand or follow the company's standards of excellence. Ultimately, the document doesn't follow or fails to complete the assignment. |

References

Walton, R. (2016). Supporting Human Dignity and Human Rights. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 46(4), 402-426.

A.2 Class Discussion Takeaways Example

What Technical Communication Involves:

- Rhetoric
- Audience-oriented tone
- Context
- Goal-/purpose-oriented
- Easily digestible content
- Written/spoken by experts
- Consideration of the format (visuals, for instance)
- Intentional organization/display of the information
- Technology
- Inclusion
- Analysis of power dynamics
- Recursive process
- Collaboration
- Efficient and thoughtful writing style
- Easily distributable
- Document design
- Straightforward, clear, & concise writing style
- Intercultural communication
- Language considerations

A.3 Lecture Notes Example (2022, Day 3 of the semester)

3562W, Day 3

- I. **Take attendance**
 - II. Put the **assignment on the board** for next time
 - III. **Today:** Go over rhetorical situations
 - IV. **Announcements:**
 - a. I still need a peer note taker. Please email me if you are interested.
 - b. Notice that some assignments are due at midnight; others are due at class time. But assignments are mostly due on Tuesdays and Thursdays with a few exceptions.
 - c. I don't accept late quizzes and forums, but I will accept all other assignments within a reasonable timeline.
 - d. I believe all links to *TCT* are updated now.
-
- V. **Last time:**
 - a. **Technical Communication:** We discussed technical communication's complexity. Inspired by Jo Allen, we decided not to dictate one definition of tech comm since it requires flexibility due to its use across situations, disciplines, technologies, etc. However, we established what tech comm involves (show the document we created together).
 - b. **Genres:** We also discussed genres. We mentioned that we shouldn't view genres as simply fill-in-the-blank templates; they are much more meaningful. By using particular genres, we reinscribe those genres and their purpose/meaningfulness in our culture. For example, perhaps some professionals use texting to communicate with their bosses, while other professionals deem that medium unprofessional. That stance impacts how you communicate professionally.
 - VI. Go over **rhetorical situations**
 - a. Today we're covering more theory, this time rhetoric, that grounds our class and the field of technical communication in general. Let me just say, you attend a 4-year university, which offers you access to the theory behind the practical applications, which sets you up for different and changing situations and encourages you to think creatively about how to approach a situation.
 - b. The following information provides the foundation for all assignments in this WRIT 3562W class, as well as the foundation for writing in other classes and into/throughout your career.
 - c. We first need to define rhetoric. **Read 1.1 Understanding Rhetoric** (up to Activity Theory) in *ITPC*
 - d. Scholars highlight/emphasize/categorize a rhetorical situation's factors in different ways. We'll focus on the five you see here: Purpose, Genre, Audience, Style, & Context.
-

VII. Go over the 5 factors that make up a rhetorical situation.

| Situation | Purpose | Genre | Audience | Style | Context |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Decision maker requests an update on a project | To keep your job | Progress report via email or memo or report | Decision maker and perhaps coworkers | Midlevel or Formal | Professionalism, Ethics, Success, Job Security, \$ |
| Your instructor requests an essay | To earn an A, graduate, & prove you can write. | Proposal or Commentary or Review | Instructor and perhaps classmates | Formal | Education, Success, |
| Your friend wants to go to a movie | To let your friend know if you can go | Text Message | Best Friend | Informal | Technology, Fast-paced world, Friends |

VIII. **The Factors More In-Depth**

- a. **Purpose:** The purpose consists of the reason for communicating; it is the motivation for responding to a situation.
- b. **Genre:** The genre assists us in conveying our message; it is the way that we deliver the message, including documents, videos, websites, emails, text messages, progress reports, face-to-face communications, pamphlets, PowerPoint presentations, formal reports, poems, brochures, proposals, speeches, comics, letters, etc. The genre is often affected by your location and the means of technology available to you. Mention stretching the genre.
- c. **Audience:** The audience is the listener/viewer; the audience is who you are trying to convince of your message. You'll notice that your book divides the audience into primary, secondary, tertiary, & gatekeepers (**read p. 24**). Also **read ITPC's 2.3**.
- d. **Style:** The style consists of the way in which you present the information; it relates to the formality level, organization & layout, the use of visuals, and the use of outside sources.
 - i. **Voice:**
 1. Formal—complete sentences, broad vocabulary, no abbreviations (example—formal reports within your career)
 2. Mid-level—in between the others; probably complete sentences, but simple ones; some slang used perhaps to show familiarity, but not a lot to avoid downplaying the subject and the writer's professionalism; quite conversational (example—magazine articles).
 3. Informal—abbreviations, no sentence structure, basic words, slang (example—text messaging)
 - ii. **Organization** (with examples from different genres) & layout (borders, page length, medium, etc.)
 1. Essays: Introduction → Body → Conclusion
 2. Movie: Beginning → Conflict → Climax → Resolution
 3. Email: Purpose statement → Details → Action Needed

- iii. **Visuals:** Tables, figures, background pictures
 - iv. **Outside sources,** perhaps with a set documentation style: IEEE, MLA, APA, etc.
 - 1. Formal—PhD, Harvard Law School writer discussing his/her research
 - 2. Midlevel—Referencing a friend’s/blogger’s opinion on a movie
 - 3. Informal—Referencing what one friend told you about another friend
 - e. **Context:** The context addresses what’s going on right now in our world that’s affecting the communication process; it is thinking beyond the individual’s own realm and realizing that larger, national—and even international—happenings affect communication between individuals. Show the list in Canvas (and also **read p. 28**):
 - i. Physical Location
 - ii. Economics
 - iii. Politics
 - iv. Ethical Matters
 - v. Means of technology available to you
 - vi. Laws
 - vii. Codes of Conduct
 - viii. Weather/season
 - ix. News
 - x. Events
 - xi. Trends
 - xii. Holidays
 - xiii. Values
- IX. Overall, you’ll learn to adjust your writing based on these five factors. You will see the previous, bolded terms all semester long. Ideally, if you accurately assess these five factors before responding to the situation, you’re more likely to convince your audience of your argument. Interestingly, these factors work in both personal and professional settings. ***Our focus for this class will be becoming familiar with discipline-specific documents and resources.*** You will be presented with a fake or real scenario and be expected to respond to that scenario.

- X. **In groups of 2 or 3:**
- a. Decide on a company’s or organization’s website (a company you like/respect).
 - b. Identify how they incorporated the 5 factors.

- XI. Then click into “This Resource” from that reading and read what Purdue Owl says about negative rhetoric from *ITPC*’s 1.1.

XII. Rhetorical Appeals

- a. Another part of rhetorical theory is Aristotle’s appeals: logos, pathos, and ethos. How many of you are familiar with these terms already? The Greek philosopher Aristotle (born and died in the 300 BCEs) in *On Rhetoric* developed these three appeals and we still use them today. They include these:
 - i. Logos
 - ii. Ethos
 - iii. Pathos
 - b. Logos (logical appeal)
 - i. Facts—the information we can’t argue with
 - ii. Reason
 - iii. Empirical/firsthand evidence: observations, surveys, interviews, experiments
 - iv. Secondhand evidence: testimony of others, print and online sources
 - c. Ethos (ethical appeal)
 - i. Credibility of the writer/speaker (education, experience)
 - ii. Moral character of the writer/speaker (are they good people in their personal lives)
 - iii. How they present themselves (how dressed, how act, facial expressions, use of grammar)
 - iv. Goodwill of the writer/speaker (their intentions)
 - v. The writers/speakers you quote
 - d. Pathos (emotional appeal)
 - i. Stirs our emotions
 - ii. Reminds us of our deeply held values
 - iii. Often revealed through adverbs (-ly words)
 - e. Be sure to mention these:
 - i. There’s a fine line between the appeals.
 - ii. One phrase could demonstrate all three appeals—but they would be demonstrating an appeal for a different reason.
 - iii. As ethical people, be careful not to mislead your audience. It is easy to do so, especially with pathos (avoid coming across as manipulative).
 - iv. Depending on the situation, you will sometimes want one or two of the appeals highlighted more so than another. In advertising, pathos is strong; in formal reports for the workplace, logos and ethos are strong.
 - v. Pathos refers to the effect on the audience; ethos relates to the writer (not the audience); and logos deals with the document itself. Though this exchange seems to be changing because of co-authoring, participation among the reader, etc.
- XIII. In groups, identify how your chosen website implemented the three appeals.
- XIV. Then ask for 2 or 3 groups to describe what they discovered about their website’s rhetorical situation and use of the appeals. [Simultaneously display the website as they talk about it.]

A.4 Representative Assignment Sheets

2013's Analytical Report Presentation Assignment Sheet

Analytical Report Presentation (2013)

OVERVIEW: The presentation portion of the final unit challenges you to use a different medium than a typed document. This assignment tests your ability to transfer information from the written word to an oral presentation. Furthermore, your primary audience extends beyond the instructor, for you will inform your classmates of your project as well. Communicating effectively serves as one of the hallmarks of a university-educated person; this assignment, then, encourages you to practice stating your viewpoints to others in an engaging and professional manner.

ASSIGNMENT: This presentation should tell the class about your analytical report, including the following:

1. Your original research question and hypothesis
2. Your major and interest in the topic
3. Your rhetorical situation
4. The corners of the research triangle that you used
5. Your methods
6. The results
7. Your recommendation and/or discussion on the topic



Figure 1. How your audience should NOT look after you've presented. 😊

In order to fully engage your audience, follow the suggestions below:

Presenters

- Dress professionally so that you appear credible.
- Care about the issue so that the audience does too.
- Avoid using note cards. Rely solely on your mind and key words from the PowerPoint presentation.
- Be professional.
- Convey confidence so that the audience feels that they can trust you.
- Transition smoothly between points to convey a prepared and well thought-out project.

Presentation as a whole

- Begin the presentation by introducing yourself.
- Discuss the numbered points mentioned above in “Assignment”.
- Give credit to the outside sources where needed.
- Use PowerPoint for the whole presentation (at least five slides).
- Present for 9 minutes (talk for 7 and allow for questions for 2).
- End the presentation by asking if the audience has any questions. As audience members, you will earn points for asking another presenter a question.

PowerPoint slides

- Show at least 5 slides but don’t simply read from the slides.
- List information rather than using sentence form since viewers/readers remember information more when it is itemized.
- Incorporate at least 2 visuals (probably from the report itself).
- Organize the slides and presentation as a whole in a logical order, most likely following the analytical report’s organization.
- Use key words, not long sentences. Then expand on each idea for your audience.
- Don’t read off the slides—your audience knows how to read.
- Don’t over-do the graphics—see the following link for tips on what not to do:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BP2HINmRJ4>.

Presentation Rubric

Presenter: _____ Time: _____

Points Earned

Criteria

| | |
|----|---|
| /3 | Gave the entire audience eye contact (not just the instructor) |
| /3 | Dressed appropriately and professionally. |
| /3 | Cared about the project & passed on the enthusiasm to the aud. |
| /3 | Took on a professional role (turned your body to all audience members and avoided sarcasm, for instance). |
| /3 | Spoke loudly with a clear, unshaky voice at a natural pace. |
| /3 | Came across as confident/comfortable speaking in front of a group (avoided fidgeting/hiding; moved around comfortably). |
| /3 | Verbally gave credit to at least one outside source. |
| /3 | Directed readers to the visuals and explained them. |
| /3 | Asked the audience if they had any questions/answered questions. |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| /3 | As an audience member, asked another presenter a question. |
| /5 | Provided useful and engaging info. to a face-to-face audience |
| /5 | Prepared/didn't read from the slides, essay, note card; actually presented. |
| /5 | Incorporated some sort of audience participation/maintained the audience's attention throughout the presentation. |
| /5 | Used clear, easy-to-see, audience-friendly slides. |
| Total Points Earned: | /50 |

2022's Analytical Report Presentation Assignment Sheet

Presentation Assignment (Spring, 2022)

OVERVIEW

The presentation portion of the final unit challenges you to use a different medium than a typed document to convey your message professionally; it tests your ability to transfer information from the written word to an oral presentation. Communicating effectively serves as one of the hallmarks of a university-educated person; this assignment, then, encourages you to practice stating your viewpoints to others in an engaging and professional manner. Notice that the catalog description of WRIT 3562W emphasizes that the class's focus is "Written/oral communication in professional settings." Thus, this class isn't limited to written communication; in fact, all Writ 3562W instructors are required to add a presentation component.

SITUATION

You have two options here:

- Either you can present to your boss/the decision maker and your colleagues. This option is the challenging one as you will pretend that your instructor and classmates are the boss and colleagues.
- Or you can use an academic situation and simply present to your instructor and classmates. I offer this as an option since many of you may already be worried enough about presenting; we don't need to add an extra element of stress by forcing the pretend situation.

ASSIGNMENT

For this assignment, create a presentation that summarizes your analytical report. This presentation serves as a final way for you to practice the idea of reader/viewer-centered communication when within that professional realm (bosses want to know how the information benefits them or the company, not the writer/speaker). This 5-minute presentation should tell the decision maker about your analytical report, including the following:

1. Your research question and hypothesis
2. The corners of the research triangle that you used
3. Your methods
4. The results
5. Your interpretation of the results (discussion), related to the rhetorical situation
6. Your recommendation/next steps

To fully engage your audience and successfully create a viewer-centered presentation (talked about in Ch. 20), follow the suggestions below. Successfully convey your message as the *presenter*, throughout the *presentation* and through the *slides* using the tips and requirements below:

Presenters

- Dress professionally based on your field of study's expectations, comfort, cultural practices, etc. so that you appear credible. Dressing with intention will increase your confidence.
- Care about the issue so that the audience does, too.
- Avoid using note cards. Rely on your mind and key words from the PowerPoint presentation.
- Convey professionalism by coming across as prepared and not reading from the report itself.
- Exude confidence so that viewers feel they can trust you: Carry yourself proudly (with good posture), avoid hiding behind the podium, etc.
- Transition smoothly between points to convey a prepared and well thought-out project.
- Remember that YOU are the focus of the presentation, not the slides, so don't let the slides run the show.
- Keep the audience engaged.
- **Submission:** Probably email me your PP slides the morning of your presentation. We can simply use my computer (unless you prefer otherwise) to smoothly transition between presenters.

Presentation

- Begin the presentation with a brief introduction of yourself
- Discuss the numbered points mentioned above in "Assignment".
- Give credit to outside sources where needed.

- Use PowerPoint, Google Slides, Canva, or some other reputable source to design appealing and professional slides.
- Include at least five slides.
- Present for about 5 minutes.
- Be prepared to answer questions (on a shared Google doc).

PowerPoint slides (or Prezi)

- Show at least 5 slides but don't simply read from the slides.
- Design more visual slides, rather than listing all information on every slide.
- Save information for yourself to present; don't put all information on the slides; expand on each displayed point.
- Use the IMRAD structure as the slides' contents and organization.
- Design your slides in a professional and scannable way by relying on the CRAP principles.
- Avoid adding slides that anyone could use (for instance, an empirical—print—online slide with no specifics).
- Don't over-do the graphics—see this somewhat entertaining video for tips on what not to do when presenting: [Don McMillan: Life After Death by PowerPoint](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

| Presentation Rubric -- Varied Formality Levels | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| Criteria | Ratings | | Pts |
| Professionalism Dressed appropriately, showed up on time, took your time (not rushed), used a consistent formality level | 10 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 10 pts |
| Demeanor Displayed confidence, conveyed good energy, spoke with an appropriate volume, cared about the topic | 10 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 10 pts |
| Audience Engagement Acknowledged all with eye contact, related the information to this audience, used personal pronouns (our, we, us), kept the audience interested, polled the audience (an option), asked for/answered questions | 10 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 10 pts |

| Presentation Rubric -- Varied Formality Levels | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| Criteria | Ratings | | Pts |
| IMRAD Provided examples, relied on transitions between points/sections, made clear and concise points, organized the information in a suitable manner, displayed/conveyed information (perhaps with slides that include visuals and CRAP principles), gave credit to outside sources | 10 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 10 pts |
| | | | |
| Recommendation Told the audience what the next steps are (based on the results) | 5 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 5 pts |
| | | | |
| Audience Member Asked a classmate a question during their presentation | 5 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 5 pts |
| | | | |
| Total Points: 50 | | | |

Instructions Assignment Sheet with TAPP Incorporation

OVERVIEW

Throughout your career you will take on varying positions, some that require you to *instruct* an audience. You may need to tell a patient how to follow a certain diet, a colleague how to deal with a difficult client, a subordinate how to complete a certain task, a high school student how to apply for college, an investor how to choose a stock, etc. To instruct that audience, you will need to "describe how to perform a specific task" (205), as noted by our textbook's author, Richard Johnson-Sheehan. This assignment, then, asks you to practice writing instructions, as well as practice working in a group. These pages/sections from Chapter 8 of our textbook will help you create a successful set of instructions:

- Page 207 (section 8.2) lists the basic features, or the general patterns, of instructions. You should include all sections in some way that fit your chosen rhetorical situation.
- Pages 219-234 (section 8.3) note strategies for writing effective procedural steps. Most notably, you should use the imperative (command) voice; for example, say, "Attach the two red pieces" instead of "The red pieces should be attached." Each step should describe one task only, unless the tasks must happen simultaneously. Once completed, your instructions should display about **20 steps**, and similar elements of your instructional document should be formatted using parallel structures.
- Pages 234-237 (section 8.4) provide examples of how visual layout aids in usability. Think of layout in terms of **chunking**, or using subheadings to allow your users to obtain a quick overview of the process. For example, rather than listing 20 consecutive steps, you might break the information into 4 main sections with 5 steps each.

You will work with 1 of your classmates from Writ 3562W; you will also have the unique experience of working with five students from [Nova University](#)[Links to an external site.](#) (NOVA) in [Lisbon, Portugal](#)[Links to an external site.](#). Your NOVA partners will eventually translate your set of instructions and offer feedback about how transferable your instructions were to a transnational audience.

After you have created the instructions, you will need to conduct a *usability test* to check the accuracy and reliability of your instructions. You and your UMN partners will create the test (a worksheet of sorts); then you will send the test to your NOVA partners, who will conduct the usability test. Your NOVA partners will send the results to you to incorporate into your usability report. Each group member will ask 2 friends or family members to test the instructions. You will, as a pair, compile the results of the usability tests into a usability report. See the separate usability test assignment sheet (called "Usability Report") for a more in-depth description of this part of the assignment.

SITUATION

You and your partner will decide the situation that you will use for this assignment -- based on your chosen topic. But you must take on a professional role. In other words, you must pretend

like you work for a specific, real company and that your boss has asked you to write the instructions because of customer/client confusion. The solution to your boss's problem is a set of instructions displayed on a website for the company's customers/clients.

ASSIGNMENT

This *instructions* unit requires that you collaborate with 1 UMN classmate (Canvas has randomly assigned all students to a group) to create a set of instructions that teaches how to complete a process. You and your partner will earn the same grade initially; however, sometimes (rarely, actually) a student's grade must be decreased if one partner hasn't contributed much to the project (with proof).

Throughout this process, I encourage you to get to know your NOVA partners, as few other UMN students have this opportunity to participate in a TAPP project. Exchanges with your NOVA partners will help you to develop your intercultural communication skills, which will serve you well in future careers. To do well on this assignment, you and your UMN partner will want to follow these steps:

Step 1: Decide on a topic

Create a Google Doc with your UMN and NOVA partners to brainstorm topic ideas. Discuss your majors, hobbies, and general lifestyles in order to come up with topic ideas. The one topic you may not use is a recipe, due to problems that have arisen in the past with plagiarism. Here are some helpful considerations when choosing a topic:

- Be sure to choose a topic that you and your partners are familiar with/experts on (you may not use outside sources at all for this assignment).
- Keep in mind the usability component where your NOVA partners will test your instructions (again, described in "Usability Report").
- Remember that you must create your own visuals (not use outside source visuals), so you must have access to the tools that help you through the process.

Step 2: Decide on a website generator

Rather than submitting an essay, you will display your instructions set using a website. The website you create must be complete and professional-looking. In other words, you are being graded on the overall completion of your website, not just on the instructions set. **See Canvas for tips on creating websites.**

Step 3: Get to know your NOVA partners

While creating your instructions, you will want to take advantage of the unique opportunity of having a connection to fellow college students who are halfway across the world! To get to know your NOVA partners, complete the "[Introducing Your TAPP Partner](#)" assignment in Canvas. Remember that the whole purpose for our Writ 3562W class is to provide you with a space to practice skills for the workplace. Here's your opportunity to practice collaborating cross-culturally, a situation that you may very well encounter in your career.

Step 4: Create the instructions

Write a set of instructions that will enable your readers to perform some task or operate some device that you select. Your instructions must include **at least 20 steps** (chunked/grouped into sections, not simply 1-20) and should guide your readers through some specific task that they could actually perform using your instructions. Because reader usability and document design are very important when writing instructions, **you must include at least four visuals** that you've created (you may not use visuals from an outside source). The final instructions set must be complete and look professional.

Step 5: Submit the instructions

You and your partners should submit the instructions not as an essay, but as a url to Canvas as the instructions submission.

| Instructions Rubric | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| Criteria | Ratings | | Pts |
| Title The title blatantly mentions what the instructions are for, and the company invested in these instructions is obvious (perhaps through design). | 5 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 5 pts |
| Introduction The instructions begin with fitting information based on the chosen situation/topic--materials/tools needed, benefits, mention of the intended audience, prior knowledge needed, skills needed, a visual. | 5 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 5 pts |

| Instructions Rubric | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| Criteria | Ratings | | Pts |
| <p>Procedural Steps The instructions successfully guide the user through the process.</p> | 10 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 10 pts |
| <p>Audience Analysis The content, design, medium, and rhetorical approach of the instructions were appropriate for the chosen rhetorical situation.</p> | 5 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 5 pts |
| <p>Conclusion The instructions provide closure and/or further information in some form--a visual, troubleshooting, emphasis, helpful hints, hazard notices for use, notes.</p> | 5 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 5 pts |
| <p>Document Design The instructions display a reader-friendly format/layout based on the situation; they also incorporate the idea of chunking for ease of use.</p> | 10 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 10 pts |
| <p>Visuals The chosen visuals are effective, clear, and well placed; they were also created by the group (not accessed online).</p> | 5 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 5 pts |
| <p>Grammar The instructions rely on a style appropriate for the genre by using clear, concise, and specific imperatives (commands), as well as proper grammar.</p> | 5 pts Full Marks | 0 pts No Marks | 5 pts |
| Total Points: 50 | | | |

Augmented Reality Workshop

To prepare for Friday's in-class activity, follow these steps:

1. **Remind yourself of the definition of culture.** Think back to Forum 1's definition of culture (I've copied it here for convenience):
"Culture" is a complicated concept involving complex relations between culture, cultural heritage and the distinct individual. Understanding your identity includes an awareness of your own cultural roots and the role of culture in your life. The United States is an ethnically diverse country--by definition, a country composed of immigrants (unless you are a member of the First Nations). Many of you may define your culture as "American"; others as a mixture of cultural influences. These influences may include nationality, ethnicity, religion, locality (did you grow up in a rural or urban setting), among others. Aspects of nationality, ethnicity, and religion may include language, food, beliefs, entertainment (games, songs, stories), and more. Think of yourself at the intersection of these cultural influences.
2. **Compile Materials.** Have online access to materials (perhaps bring about 10) that convey who you are/your culture. These materials could include photos, videos, songs, something textual, symbols, or anything else. I suggest placing these materials in a folder on your desktop and then simply bringing your computer to class on Friday. In class, you will create a Zapcode (don't worry, you don't need to know this term yet) to augment your viewers' reality so that they get to know you. Like I mentioned in class, **you will need both a computer and a smartphone** for the activity. Here are some topics you may want to cover, but you're not limited to these by any means:
 - Hometown
 - University
 - Family & Friends
 - Food
 - Hobbies
 - Sports
 - Favorite tv shows/films

A.5 Memo Example

To: All interested parties

Written by: Autoethnographic researcher Brandi Fuglsby

Date: Feb. 24, 2023

Subject/Focal Point:

I have a lot of hesitation about my project at this point. I am second-guessing my methodological choice of autoethnography. How can I be sure that my findings will impact TPC as a field and not just my own course? However, this project has been approved, so I need to trust myself that it will work.

Today I am analyzing my course materials for intercultural communication. I noticed my use of the phrase “popular culture” and am unimpressed. Many cultures make up our world, and determining and naming one as popular is quite close-minded and alludes to a white patriarchal world.

While I’m seeing some students choosing topics on culture and IDEA, they aren’t that prevalent. What will I find in the later years? Perhaps students’ topics reveal how much they’ve absorbed culture/IDEA instruction. If their topics haven’t evolved to include conversations about culture/IDEA, then that is possibly a goal for the future.

Now having looked at 2013, 2014, and 2015 materials for IC, I am very inspired. I have found interesting connections between students’ mention of culture and IDEA-focused topics! This could be a key finding from my research that I pass on to my field.

Notably, if a student cited a source who used the word “culture,” but didn’t use it themselves in their own discussion, then I didn’t count that as the student addressing culture.

As I compile students’ uses of culture, I am noticing helpful trends in how to categorize different types of cultures and categories of culture – like popular culture, culture as ancient peoples, etc.