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## **Social Justice in Technical and Professional Communication Annotated Bibliography**

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**Title:** “Social Justice in Technical and Professional Communication Annotated Bibliography”

**Curatorial Contributors:** Daphne Daugherty, Wendy Pawlyshyn Fitch, Gitte Frandsen, Sheila Kilb, Danielle Koepke, Joni Hayward Marcum, Maria Novotny, Kristiana Perleberg, Mohammad Anis Rahman, Amanda Reavey, Juan Rodriguez, Gurkirat Singh Sekhon, Chloe Smith, Angelyn Sommers, Madison Williams, and Emily Zorea

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**Background:** The purpose of this annotated bibliography is to capture the various and multiple intersections signifying why the social justice turn in technical and professional communication matters. This annotated bibliography is the culmination of a semester-long University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee graduate course titled “The Social Justice Turn in Technical and Professional Communication.” Curated by graduate students with a range of pedagogical experiences and research interests, this annotated bibliography aims to expand academic knowledge-making related to TPC beyond classroom and university walls.

# Social Justice in Technical and Professional Communication

## Annotated Bibliography

The purpose of this annotated bibliography is to capture the various and multiple intersections signifying why the social justice turn in technical and professional communication matters. This annotated bibliography is the culmination of a semester-long University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee graduate course titled “The Social Justice Turn in Technical and Professional Communication.” Curated by graduate students with a range of pedagogical experiences and research interests, this annotated bibliography aims to expand academic knowledge-making related to TPC beyond classroom and university walls. Specifically, while there are two other notable and useful TPC bibliographies — [MMU](#) and [BIPOC](#) — created for TPC scholars, this bibliography includes annotations so as to make the knowledge produced by scholars included in this document more accessible to those either impacted by the represented research and/or working within the TPC profession. That said, as a semester-long project, we acknowledge that there will be omissions to the works cited below and we see this as a project that another class could build upon to address additional sub-sections and tags needed to document the field’s ever-evolving integration of social justice.

As emergent learners in TPC, we intended to create this annotation project to connect our individual research to the social justice turn. This annotated bibliography is presented as a series of thematic clusters:

- [Foundational Texts Bridging TPC with Social Justice](#)
- [Diversity in TPC Programs and Curriculums](#)
- [Pedagogical Approaches to Social Justice](#)
- [Linguistic Justice and Cross-Cultural Communication in TPC](#)
- [Usability, Accessibility, and Design in TPC](#)
- [Critical Digital Technologies in TPC](#)
- [Theoretical Approaches to TPC](#)
- [Workplace Studies in TPC](#)
- [Environment and Participation in TPC](#)
- [Health and Scientific Communication in TPC](#)

While some will note that not all of the works annotated here are rooted in TPC, the purpose of the annotation invites readers to evoke what Jones and Williams call the [“just use of imagination.”](#) As such, we invite you to think inter- and intra- disciplinarily about the resources annotated below (*influenced by College English’s special issue on [‘Transdisciplinary](#)*

*Connections in Composition Studies and Technical and Professional Communication*’ which we read during our first week of the semester). How may drawing upon broader inter- and intra-sectional frameworks inform and support the doing of social justice in TPC? By posing such a question, we hope that readers will find not just use but inspiration in the ideas and knowledge across their research areas with what is annotated below.

*Curatorial Contributors to the Annotated Bibliography (in alpha order): Daphne Daugherty, Wendy Pawlyshyn Fitch, Gitte Frandsen, Sheila Kilb, Danielle Koepke, Joni Hayward Marcum, Maria Novotny, Kristiana Perleberg, Mohammad Anis Rahman, Amanda Reavey, Juan Rodriguez, Gurkirat Singh Sekhon, Chloe Smith, Angelyn Sommers, Madison Williams, and Emily Zorea.*

*You can learn more about each contributor by reading their bios at the end of this bibliography.*

*\*Special thanks to Angelyn Sommers and Kristiana Perleberg for copyediting this work.*

## FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS BRIDGING TPC WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE

This sub-section identifies some of the core texts that influenced the social justice turn in TPC. It also marks significant moments in contemporary history (i.e., the murder of George Floyd) and ATTW leadership's response to those injustices.

**Agboka, G. Y., & Matveeva, N. (Eds.). (2018). *Citizenship and advocacy in technical communication: Scholarly and pedagogical perspectives*. Routledge.**

Agboka and Matveeva's collection continues the conversation about bringing advocacy and civic engagement to the field of technical communication. Their collection is separated into three parts: Part One is Defining Core Competencies for Local and Global Advocacy and Citizenship, which provides definitions and frameworks; Part Two is Choosing the Right Approaches to Advocacy and Community Engagement: Working with a Real Client, which describes case studies for practically starting community advocacy projects; and Part Three is Introducing Advocacy Techniques in a Classroom, which offers strategies for implementing these ideas into the classroom setting. Each chapter is complete with a set of discussion questions to further invoke thought, conversation, and action about each particular topic, as well as advocacy as a whole. Agboka and Matveeva offer this collection as a way to importantly bridge the gap between academia and the community, and they also recognize the longevity of such undertakings. These are not meant to be quick fixes, but rather shape a deeper understanding and commitment to social justice work in TPC.

In Part One, Peterson, Durá, Palmer, and Wang provide real life examples of advocacy in action. Whether that advocacy looks like women addressing workplace injustices, allowing for local knowledge to work in conversation with more traditional expertise in classrooms and communities, prioritizing global citizenship and breaking down traditionally constructed borders and identities, or incorporating a transnational rhetorical approach to your teaching, there are myriad approaches to challenge conventionally accepted ways of actively practicing TPC in the classroom or the workplace. In Part Two, Kramer-Simpson and Simpson; Ewing and McIntyre; Gallagher; Rea, Cannon, Sawchyn, and Walkup; and Ross provide frameworks for determining how best to work with specific communities. The messiness of community engagement is described at great length – Kramer-Simpson and Simpson urge us to “embrace the chaos” (p. 106) in order to create deeper meaning. Ewing and McIntyre provide a framework for understanding how social media can be used to create community during disaster responses, but also lay out the shortcomings of their limited scope. Gallagher lays out strategies for managing and monitoring online comment sections in order to showcase how technical communicators can be an active part of building online communities – which can be done through sometimes engaging in productive conversation and others while ignoring nonproductive comments. The final two chapters in this section describe the ways in which writing (journaling and resume writing) can be used as a way to develop a community of writers, which has been shown to boost confidence along with skill. Finally, in Part Three, multiple techniques and exercises are presented for how to bring inclusion and advocacy into the TPC classroom. While this feels like a large task due to the bureaucracy of academia, there are important ways educators can and are joining the conversation. The remaining chapters of this book provide activities for cultivating community and promoting advocacy, both online and through service learning. This book aims to show the complexity of community engagement and works to provide heuristics for tackling these large issues in TPC. The field is continuing to evolve, and so too must our understanding and practice of communication.

*Tags: localization, advocacy, citizenship, community engagement, pedagogy*

**CCCC Black Technical and Professional Writing Task Force (2020). Black technical and professional communication position statement with resource guide. NCTE, retrieved from: <https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/Black-technical-professional-communication>**

This statement was written in order to take a more official step in defining Black technical and professional communication practices and in order to advocate for these practices to be included into the mainstream of the field. It was written in response to national protests of police brutality and continued violence against Black people across America. The goal is that by clearly describing a space for methods, methodologies, theories and practices that center Black scholars, Black Language, and Black ways of knowing, this area of the field will be recognized for its legitimacy and importance. The authors claim that true inclusion requires effort *and* actions towards a "more equitable, socially just, and race-conscious" field. They include education on the following themes: Black User Experience Design, In the Community, Black Rhetorics of Health Communication, Social Movements, Black Cultural Rhetorics as Technical and Professional Communication, Black Digital Methods and Methodologies, and Narrative and Black Experiences in TPC and the Academy. Through each, the authors offer not only a helpful explanation but also resources for readers to further educate themselves. By composing this document in an online space, more people can have access to these resources that are vital to doing social justice work in TPC.

*Tags: Black TPC, language, anti-racism, disciplinary formation, methodology, epistemology*

**Haas, A. (2020, June 2). President's call to action to redress anti-Blackness and white supremacy. ATTW. <https://attw.org/blog/attw-presidents-call-to-action/>**

On June 2, 2020, President of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW) Angela Haas put out a call to action directed to non-Black membership of the organization. This came one week after the public murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police Department officer Derek Chauvin. It came alongside countless performative affirmations of Black lives mattering offered by so many organizations, but Haas' call specifically outlines three tangible actions that she wanted every non-Black ally to commit to the following:

- First, educate yourself on performative allyship and make a plan for how you will decenter yourself in your efforts to support Black communities.
- Secure anti-racist partners who will hold you accountable to: doing the research on how Black communities are asking to be supported before doing the work; doing the work itself; and ensuring the work is intersectional and doesn't re-center whiteness.
- Prioritize Black voices on how to do this coalitional work and center and amplify their work when doing yours. But please do your homework before asking your Black relatives and friends for their assistance. (n.p.)

By providing specific action items for non-Black folks to participate in, Haas is actively engaging in bringing social justice to the field of TPC. Accountability and action are two major tenets of anti-racist work, and both are highlighted in this call to action. Haas insists that everyone in the field of TPC has a responsibility to continue prioritizing social justice and anti-racism in a field that is often still thought of as neutral.

*Tags: Black TPC, social justice, technical communication, coalition building, anti-racism*

**Haas, A. M., & Eble, M. F. (Eds.). (2018). *Key theoretical frameworks: Teaching technical communication in the twenty-first century*. University Press of Colorado.**

Haas and Eble assembled a collection of theoretical and pedagogical research that builds upon both the cultural studies and social justice turns in technical communication. The authors acknowledge how technical communication as a discipline has come to encounter globalization with the understanding that both globalization itself and technical communication practices are double-edged swords. For example, they assert that while globalization affords access to a wealth of diverse material goods and technical and scientific information from diverse places across the globe, a sense of connectedness in terms of networks and networked people, communities, economies, etc., it also comes with issues of access to global networks, questions about what counts as global, and the fact that movement within and across global places and spaces has always already been facilitated and impeded by actors and rhetorics that legitimize inequitable rules and conditions informed by an array of ideological assumptions. Such assumptions include the ownership of land, technological and scientific resources, material goods, and information; what is understood to be technical and scientific and for what reasons; what can be bought, sold, and traded and by whom and for what reasons; who can travel and for what reasons; who is seen, unseen, and re-seen as part of local and global networks, how so, by whom, and for what reasons (p. 17). Haas and Eble further offer that technical communication practices themselves can both attend to these issues to achieve socially just ends while also, at times, be complicit with oppressive structures.

The authors acknowledge that though technical communication as a discipline has begun to engage with the ideologies embedded in technical communication practices through cultural studies methodologies, at their moment of writing, there are few texts that bridge these methodologies with technical communication pedagogy. They thus assemble recent works that explore pedagogic approaches informed by cultural studies and social justice-informed practices. The works in the book at large are organized by theme, covering issues of embodied knowledge and risk, space, (em)place, and dis(place)ment, interfacing public and community rhetorics with technical communication discourses, and accommodating discourses of diversity.

*Tags: pedagogy, coalitional building, technical communication, diversity*

**Jones, N. (2016). The technical communicator as advocate: Integrating a social justice approach in technical communication. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 46(3), 342–361.**

In this seminal piece, Jones provides the most succinct and effective ways to contextualize the need and ways in which social justice approach can be better incorporated in the field of TPC. In addition to social justice approaches, she calls on the field to adopt a humanistic perspective. She follows by defining social justice for the field. She argues that identifying oppression and including human experience are two major ways in which social justice can be better adopted in the field. She adds that understanding oppression is key since it devalues and delegitimizes experiences and connives at the worries that a particular group of people may have—thus marginalizing people. Jones believes that decolonial approaches, narratives, and historical and archival research should be incorporated in the field. She also vouches for the need for critical race theories in technical communication, citing Angela Haas's work, along with advocating for feminist and participatory action approaches, citing notable scholars in each related scholarship. She notes that for the two concepts—social justice and

humanistic perspectives—her suggestions may yield “a more just and equitable human experience” (p. 356). Finally, Jones points to potential ways for the field of TPC to take the social justice turn by detailing what it *is* and what it may *look like*.

*Tags: community-based research, social justice, humanistic perspective, advocacy, oppression*

**Jones, N., Moore, K., & Walton, R. (2016). Disrupting the past to disrupt the future: An antenarrative of technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 25(4), 211–229.**

Jones et al. provide this antenarrative to technical communication as a way to resee the past in order to reimagine the future of the field. Rather than rewriting the history of the field, they attempt to reinterpret the work that’s been done. By doing this, they aim to show that inclusivity is not an emerging trend in the field, but rather is part of its core. As such, continuing the work of social justice in technical communication needn’t feel like an immense new undertaking, but rather a continuation and improvement of previous practices. Including their own work, the authors show how scholars across the field have already been engaging in this type of work, though it was not previously named as such. They take issue with the dominant narrative being shown as only working towards efficiency and problem-solving, as those practices are not neat boxes that technical communication as an entire field can fit into. By drawing numerous examples of technical communication taking up feminism and gender studies, race and ethnicity, international and intercultural communication, community and public engagement, user advocacy, and disability and accessibility, they can allow for these otherwise historically marginalized voices to be visibly at the center of the technical communication conversation. This visibility will allow for further social justice work to be done in the field.

*Tags: inclusion, methodology, coalition building, non-neutrality*

**Jones, N., & Williams, M. (2020). The just use of imagination: A call to action. *ATTW*. <https://attw.org/blog/the-just-use-of-imagination-a-call-to-action/>**

Jones and Williams’ call to action situates imagination within a long tradition of Black intellectual, artistic, and activist practice that has imagined a better America. Meanwhile, white America has ignored the Black imaginations and continued to enact exploitation, colonization, disenfranchisement, and marginalization, and still called the trajectory of the nation progress. However, in this historic moment with protests against police brutality, a pandemic, increasing unemployment and food insecurity, and attacks on our elections, time is ripe “to employ a just use of imagination” (n.p.). This current moment presents an exigence to abolish oppressive practices, systems, and institutions and replace them with ones based on inclusion and equity. However, Jones and Williams clarify that imagining a better and more just America is not merely conceptual work; action must ensue: “the just use of imagination is a tool, rather than an ideological stance because it requires active engagement” (n.p.). Jones and Williams address the reader and insist they deploy just imagination towards social transformation. While the blog does not specifically address TPC, it is published in one of the field’s major organizations and addresses all systems of oppression which TPC are part of and complicit with. TPC scholars and practitioners, thus, are challenged to identify areas where their just imagination can reshape and transform the field.

*Tags: marginalization, inclusion, imagination, action, Black TPC, anti-racism*

**Walton, R., Moore, K., & Jones, N. (2019). *Technical communication after the social justice turn: Building coalitions for action*. Routledge.**

Walton et al. assert that technical communication as a discipline is still deeply complicit with social injustice. They make a critical intervention in TPC scholarship after the social justice turn by attending to three significant problems in the field: 1) that TPC remains white and patriarchal, or that there is an inclusion and representation problem in TPC; 2) social justice has been taken up by some scholars in technical communication as a “sexy” topic without a full commitment to redressing inequities and inclusivity; and 3) that once scholars understand the gravity of oppression in an intersectional way, they are often paralyzed at the thought of getting it wrong. This work is organized to move readers from conceptual explorations of oppression and justice, to a theoretical framework of social justice, which then allows for the concepts to be applied and implemented in a variety of contexts, including academic programs, community organizations, and industry. The authors effectively illustrate what social justice praxis in TPC can look like, affording readers language to describe socially just TPC methods and methodology while also providing portable theoretical frameworks to name systems of power in a variety of TPC contexts.

*Tags: methods and methodologies, intersectionality, disciplinary formation, coalition building*

**Williams, M. F., & Pimentel, O. (2012). Introduction: Race, ethnicity, and technical communication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 26(3), 271–276.**

Williams and Pimentel touch on the state of TPC, commenting on both the direction it is heading in and the past it is still lingering in. The authors look at the field of TPC and how it sees the United States; with an ever-growing Hispanic population, a population that is now the biggest minority in the country, and after the election of this country's first Black president, some scholars within the TPC community now believe that the field and country is in a post-racial society. They maintain a colorblindness, saying that the country has moved past the views of awarding status based off race but rather off of natural gifts and talent. That fallacy continues to perpetrate the false belief in the merit-based system, a system which undermines and underrepresents minority groups. However, Williams and Pimentel are quick to point out that to dedicate a portion of any study to this continual falsehood does nothing to further the conversation but rather keeps it stuck in the past. They invite the reader to move past this conversation and instead enter into a discussion that highlights the ways minorities within the United States use and invent ways to use technical communication. Technical communicators are being asked to embrace different ways and avenues of doing research. This pushes forward their earlier point that, for evolution of the field, old conversation must subside to allow others to flourish. This sets the groundwork for technical communicators to push past historical narratives and instead embrace antenarratives from those that have been less represented, which is a social justice action of allowing space for narratives not properly highlighted and/or acknowledged within the field.

*Tags: TPC, Critical Race Theory, marginalization, antenarrative*

## DIVERSITY IN TPC PROGRAMS & CURRICULUMS

This sub-section features scholarship that examines how TPC programs and curriculums are addressing diversity: of students and of experiences. Strategic and purposeful inclusion of diverse attitudes, ideas, and experiences are necessary to create a TPC field embodying its social justice aims.

**Baniya, S., Hutchinson, L., Kumari, A., Larson, K., & Lindgren, C. (2018). Representing diversity in digital research: Digital feminist ethics and resisting dominant normatives. *Proceedings of the Annual Computers & Writing Conference*.**

In this collaborative article, the authors seek to demonstrate how their practices of feminist ethics have helped each of them to navigate the dominant norms of digital research. Baniya analyzes how disaster events offer opportunities for rhetorical agency and representation of those affected, and how her own work as a communication practitioner actively works for or against responsibly representing these groups of people. Hutchinson calls on the integration of Indigenous land-based epistemologies into feminist and embodied research practices. These epistemologies reveal the importance of place, land, and relationality between all living bodies, and offer valuable ways to honor everyone and everything involved in research. Kumari shows the importance of working towards co-ownership of the research process with participants, and how to negotiate those participants being well-known colleagues or friends. Larson considers the complexities, risks, and potential violence involved in researching parasitic publics such as far right-wing extremist groups. Lindgren writes about the biases against non-white people in the field of technology and calls on tenured faculty members to utilize their privileges to benefit others. Because a feminist research ethic is committed to social justice, the authors suggest that researchers must grapple with how to approach research through a feminist lens. Together, these scholars reflect on the ways in which bodies are involved in research, and how to continue moving towards more socially just practices for all involved in the research process.

*Tags: diversity, feminist theory, digital feminist ethics, methodology, positionality*

**Dayley, C. (2020). Student perceptions of diversity in technical and professional communication academic programs. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 29(1), 49–69.**

Situating his study directly within the social justice turn in TPC, Dayley focuses on human-centered, action-oriented approach to TPC students' perceptions on diversity and inclusivity in the field. Though Dayley acknowledges the focus on diversifying the field in the current scholarship, he identifies a gap in addressing student experiences and the action that can be taken based on student perceptions "to move forward in creating a hospitable environment for students of color giving our programs the benefit of diverse voices which will infuse new ideas and perspectives into our scholarship and curriculum" (p. 51–52). Dayley reports on the results of a study that surveyed undergraduate and graduate TPC students regarding their perceptions on diversity and compares the overall responses to the responses by students of color. He concludes that both groups see their TPC programs as both diverse and supportive of diversity. Further, respondents identifying as a person of color did not indicate concerns, but they do observe fewer peers and faculty of color in TPC academic programs and departments. While the results appear positive at first glance, Dayley complicates the perceptions of diversity through the lens of Critical Race Theory, which emphasizes the pervasiveness of racism and the tacit norms of whiteness across all areas of society, including

higher education. As such, the responses may be interpreted within this framework. He states, “These possibilities include the embedded nature of racism in society, the rejection of counternarratives in favor of an idealized version of society, and the comfort level of students enrolled in TPC programs who self-selected to take the survey” (p. 66). He calls for more research that extends the scope to students of color who opted out or dropped out of TPC programs and research incorporating narrative methodologies to draw a fuller picture of student experiences.

*Tags: TPC programs, inclusivity, social justice, critical race theory*

**Jones, N. (2020). Coalitional learning in the contact zones: Inclusion and narrative inquiry in technical communication and composition studies. *National Council of Teachers of English*, 82(5), 515–526.**

Jones uses this article as a call to action to make writing-related fields more just and inclusive. Noting the massive shifts toward social justice in both the fields of technical and professional communication and composition studies, Jones calls for coalitional learning between both fields. Jones sees this coalitional learning as an opportunity for scholars from both TPC and CS to “re-frame and re-story the work of writing studies as a broader discipline, particularly scholars who are committed to more equitable, more accessible, more inclusive, and more social just classrooms, academic organizations, and institutional programs” (p. 516). Drawing on scholarship related to contact zones (Selfe and Selfe, Pratt) and boundaries (Anzaldúa, Collins), Jones argues that boundary areas and contact zones between disciplines can be “places of possibilities if we can begin to learn to appreciate dwelling in the spaces in between” (p. 518). Thus, coalitional learning is the perfect method for dwelling in the in-between, as it “requires a focus on the across (rather than inside/outside) and a focus on the between and in-between of our academic disciplines” (p. 519). This focus can help both TPC and CS to reframe dominant disciplinary narratives and move the fields toward more equitable, active, and just practices in research, instruction, and praxis.

*Tags: accessibility, coalition building, transdisciplinarity, composition studies*

**Jones, N., Savage, G., & Yu, H. (2014). Tracking our progress: Diversity in technical and professional communication programs. *Programmatic Perspectives*, 6(1), 132–152.**

Jones et al. primarily discuss the issues of social justice and diversity in the field of technical professional communication in terms of providing clarification regarding what these terms mean directly in line with the social justice approach. For example, Jones et al. here clarify that diversity does not only mean visibly welcoming underrepresented groups of people in the field; rather it means that the field itself moving—at times transforming—with the advent of new people and new cultures. In doing so, the authors point to the dynamic nature of social justice approach here. In terms of social justice approach, they argue that social justice includes multicultural and intercultural ways of thinking which expand the traditional framework of the field of TPC (p.134). Jones et al. highlight that social justice cannot be contained in a singular frame of reference since it is rooted in plurality. They also note that, like diversity, social justice is also dynamic, reminding the readers of its “provisional and situated” status (p. 135). Jones et al. then detail the progress that has been made under the Council of Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication. Their article works to highlight pivotal points in the concepts of diversity and social justice in order to make a clear connection for this piece to be used in the social justice approach in technical professional communication.

*Tags: social justice, diversity, provisional, situated, underrepresented, intercultural, multicultural*

**McKoy, T. T. (2019).** *Y'all call it technical and professional communication, we call it #ForTheCulture: The use of amplification rhetorics in Black communities and their implications for technical and professional communication studies.* [Doctoral dissertation, East Carolina University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Situating her work within the recent social justice turn in TPC, McKoy argues that the scholarship has not yet led to the change towards inclusivity that the exigence demands. McKoy's writing itself challenges conventional academic writing and "uses the genre conventions of the classical dissertation blended with what I'm calling a dissertation that is #ForTheCulture where I bring to the forefront some key components of Black culture" (p. 1). To learn how Black communities are already enacting TPC practices, McKoy has developed the framework of Amplification Rhetorics (AR) to identify community-based written and performative rhetorical practices that highlight the TPC knowledge of Black and other historically marginalized people. "AR are characterized by three tenets: 1) the reclamation of agency and ownership of embodied rhetorical practices, 2) the accentuation, acknowledgement, and validation of narratives and lived experiences, and 3) the privileging and inclusion of marginalized epistemologies" (p. 38). The framework of AR is both theoretical and a rhetorical formation to analyze Black communities. McKoy's analysis focuses on TRAP Karaoke which showcases AR through the attendance at TRAP Karaoke events by participants, performers, and people who wear t-shirts and participate in #Tees4TheTrap, and the mission statements and curricula of HBUCs. Thus, TRAP Karaoke and HBUCs are "Black spaces where community members enact and perform the work of technical and professional communication" (p. 13). The work functions both to center Black rhetors and the experiences, needs, rhetorical action, and usage of technology and media of Black communities. This, in turn and only of secondary importance, provides opportunities for the field of TPC to transform, to become transformative. "In moving towards the amplification and centering of Black communities, alongside historically underrepresented and marginalized individuals, we move to a more inclusive and socially just mode of scholarship production" (p. 141).

*Tags: Black TPC, amplification, social justice, HBUC, TRAP Karaoke*

**Shivers-McNair, A., & San Diego, C. (2017).** *Localizing communities, goals, communication, and inclusion: A collaborative approach.* *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 64(2), 97–112.

Shivers-McNair presents a collaborative effort between her and San Diego, a community strategist, to provide a framework for technical communicators to consider for more appropriate localization practices. They simplify community strategy as "bringing people together in ways that center shared goals through localization" (p. 99) and work to show how the characteristics of community strategy can be studied and used in both technical communication and user experience (UX) design. They highlight the importance of diversity in the field, as well as remind us that "definitions of *diversity*, *inclusivity*, and *community* in our practice should be products of meaningful, localized engagement, not assumptions we start with" (p. 97). By providing an in-depth look at San Diego's practices, which include actively connecting developers and users early on in the development process, Shivers-McNair argues that true collaboration should be the backbone of any localization or glocalization practices. They give us their understanding of the researcher-participant collaboration as important to decentralizing researcher authority, providing a richer analysis of data through the use of insider and outsider perspectives, and embracing the messiness of this type of collaboration to show the necessity of teamwork (p. 104). They advocate that "these four dimensions—localizing

community, localizing goals, localizing communication, and localizing inclusion—are overlapping and intersecting dimensions, not only within the work of an international community strategist but also across the work of community strategy, global UX, and cross-cultural technical communication” (p. 108). As they worked to further break down the implicit barriers present in technical communication and in research, Shivers-McNair and San Diego encourage others to continue this type of collaborative and inclusive work.

*Tags: community engagement, user localization, user experience, ethnography*

**Walton, R., & Jones, N. N. (2013). Navigating increasingly cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary, and cross-organizational contexts to support social justice. *Communication Design Quarterly*, 1(4), 31–35.**

Walton and Jones present what they see as one of the major driving research questions in the field of technical and professional communication: “How can technical communication scholars navigate increasingly cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary, and cross-organizational contexts to support social justice through better communication?” (abstract). To situate this question within the field, they define and contextualize several broad terms (social justice, complex contexts, and communication) and provide thoughts about the future research that can and should be conducted within TPC to begin answering that research question. They argue that going forward, “technical communicators must be focused on and dedicated to promoting social justice in our communities, both local and at large” (p. 33–34). This article can be used as a springboard for researchers to begin thinking about how they can design research that will address the current direction of the field.

*Tags: methodology, positionality, cross-cultural contexts, cross-disciplinary contexts, cross-organizational contexts*

**Wourman, J., & Mavima, S. (2020). Our story had to be told! A look at the intersection of the Black campus movement and Black digital media. *Spark: A 4C4 Equality Journal*, 2. Retrieved from: <https://sparkactivism.com/volume-2-call/vol-2-intro/our-story-had-to-be-told/>**

Wourman and Mavima describe how activism at San Francisco State College led to the establishment of the country's first Black Studies department in 1969, followed by similar moves at colleges including University of Chicago, Harvard University, and Howard University. They revisit this historical time in order to show the interdisciplinary character of Black Studies, its symbiosis with the community, and its struggle within literary media space. They point out that though Rhetoric and Composition adopted multimodal composition and design as a lens to view writing and other composing practices, that lens is mainly Eurocentric. African American rhetorical tradition has its own design principles that are steeped in cultural, historical, and political contexts. Media, such as literary journals, protests rhetoric, Black art, remix and invention, and other African American rhetorical artifacts assisted the Black Campus Movement (BCM) toward gaining Black Studies programs. Wourman and Mavima connect past rhetorical strategies of BCM to more contemporary digital media, showing the ways in which digital spaces have both promise and hesitation. They parallel their current moment, in the wake of George Floyd's death and the responsive protests, with the activism of BCM in the 60's. Through technologies, literacies today are remixed, such as taking the words "I Can't Breathe" and remixing them into a hashtag, a t-shirt, and protest art. These rhetorical strategies are essential to the effectiveness of social media and popular culture media. This text supports current social justice actions by giving a short history of the organizing work of Black folks in America and the results, and by calling for a continued use of the available technologies in order to persuade while also calling for careful consideration of access to digital medias.

*Tags: Black TPC, anti-racism, digital literacies, multimodalities, epistemology*

**Zdenek, S. (2019). Guest editor's introduction: Reimagining disability and accessibility in technical and professional communication. *Communication Design Quarterly*, 6(4), 4–11.**

Zdenek's introduction to a special issue of *Communication Design Quarterly* seeks to reposition accessibility as upfront and center to our pedagogical practices, rather than something only done when receiving a letter of accommodation or to satisfy a legal mandate. By challenging the default user in technical and professional communication, accessibility becomes more than just a checklist or afterthought. Following universal design practices, Zdenek pushes for websites and social media content that are usable for anyone, regardless of ability and outlines the ways in which people with disabilities are marked through language (people-first vs. identity-first language). This article urges technical communicators to consider "reading, timing, placement, and design in multimodal composition" (p. 7). Zdenek offers solutions for both and asks readers to imagine "different disability and accessibility futures" (p. 7).

*Tags: accessibility, design, Disability studies, TPC curriculum*

## PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

This sub-section focuses on the pedagogical applications and discussions occurring around social justice and TPC. These annotations contain breadth with citations ranging from STEM education in the English education classroom to Black feminist approaches to a business writing course.

**Alexander, P., Chabot, K., Cox, M., DeVoss, D. N., Greiber, B., Perryman-Clark, S., Platt, J., Johnson Sackey, D., & Wendt, M. (2012). Teaching with technology: Remediating the teaching philosophy statement. *Computers and Composition*, 29(1), 13–38.**

Alexander et al. analyze the ubiquity of teaching philosophy statements and how these documents are evolving over time. The authors suggest that these statements be remediated and used as more of a reflective practice for teachers. In the study, they created technological philosophical statements and then remediated them into various digital formats, such as slideshows, websites, and digital collages. The participants found that, through this remediation, they were able to think critically and reflectively about their teaching practices. Thus, the authors claim that using technology in creating teaching statements allows deeper reflection. Through the process, the teaching statements became much more nuanced and complex. All in all, teaching philosophy statements should be seen as living documents that allow for reflection and growth. This is a pertinent example of how technical documents in the education field continue to adapt to an everchanging technological world.

*Tags: teaching philosophy, technology, technical writing pedagogy, remediation, multimedia*

**Andrews, D. H., Hull, T. D., & Donahue, J. A. (2009). Storytelling as an instructional method: Definitions and research questions. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning*, 3(2) 6–23.**

Andrews et al. examine four instructional methods of storytelling: case-based, narrative-based, scenario-based, and problem-solving based. Their discussion of the theoretical and empirical basis of storytelling focuses on the characteristics of each type of storytelling and the qualities that make it an effective instructional technique. The authors research was sponsored in part by the U.S. Air Force Office, so most of the examples center on the experiences of military soldiers and their instruction before, during, and after active duty. As the long-standing tradition of storytelling attests, learning is often facilitated by contextualized experiences that allow learners to position themselves in meaningful, relevant experiences. The authors contend that the experience itself varies depending on the technique and desired outcome. For example, case-study storytelling offers opportunities to examine past occurrences to then determine best practices; as such, the listener is largely positioned outside of the story. Contrastingly, narrative-based storytelling often fosters emotional engagement that centers the listener in the experiences of another and can offer therapeutic benefits. Scenario-based storytelling provides a more interactive experience that allows listeners and instructors to determine performance metrics based on fixed choices, and problem-solving based storytelling offers an open-ended experience that allows the learner to direct the process itself. The authors advance a series of questions for each method as a way of extracting what principles are important for each type. For example, for narrative-based instruction, one should consider how “culture, gender, interest, prior knowledge, language ability, and motivation affect the interpretation of the narrative” whereas scenario-based instruction may consider how observation and assessment

can improve (p. 16). With all types, they conclude that the potential for effective learning is considerable when utilizing storytelling as a means of contextualizing, authentic experiences for learners.

Social justice advocates have long recognized the power of story and its potentiality. Andrews et al. show the myriad of forms storytelling can take and how its application is useful in caring for and preparing men and women of the armed forces. Through a series of theoretical questions and considerations, they also offer some groundwork for creating and enacting stories.

*Tags: qualitative research, storytelling, armed forces*

**Bivens, K. M., Cole, K., & Heilig, L. (2019). The activist syllabus as technical communication and the technical communicator as curator of public intellectualism. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, (29)1, 1-29.**

Bivens et al. detail the appearance of the “activist syllabus” and advocate for technical communicators to act as curators of this genre. An activist syllabus is a “digitally enabled, open source syllabi shared via social media” in reaction to a social movement or event (p. 1). The authors argue that such syllabi have the potential to build a bridge between the often-separated realms of academia and the public. To further illustrate the genre of activist syllabus, the authors detail the design, content, and dissemination of four activist syllabi: the #PulseOrlandoSyllabus, the #StandingRockSyllabus, the #BlackLivesMatterSyllabus, and the #ImmigrationSyllabus. Bivens et al. argue that these syllabi have great potential for social change—and that technical communicators have the potential to be a major asset to said change. Because of how far these syllabi can potentially circulate, their audiences “likely have different abilities and languages, comprise the gamut of ages, and require inclusion. As experts in agile communication, user-centered research, and delivering content to wider, often ambiguous audiences, technical communicators are well suited for attending to accessibility and usability in these activist syllabi” (p. 16).

*Tags: accessibility, syllabi, usability, TPC pedagogy, curation*

**Bridgeford, T. (2004). Story time: Teaching technical communication as a narrative way of knowing. In T. Bridgeford, K. S. Kitalong, & D. Selfe (Eds.), *Innovative approaches to teaching technical communication* (pp. 111–134). Utah State University Press.**

In this chapter from *Innovative Approaches to Teaching Technical Communication*, Bridgeford makes an argument for instructors to adopt a narrative way of knowing as a pedagogical approach to teaching technical communication. She describes the value of storytelling in the technical communication classroom as a means of contextualizing “the constructs and implementation of knowledge demonstrated in technical documentation—audience analysis, invention, information design, and documentation” (p. 111). According to Bridgeford, this pedagogical approach is based on de Certeau’s theory of stories as the articulation of everyday practice and Bruner’s concept of *hermeneutic composability* (or, how stories are made), both of which provide the foundation for teaching technical communication as a narrative way of knowing. She goes on to explain the value of storytelling as twofold. First, telling stories “involves a meshing of what one knows (theory), how one knows what one knows (practice), and how one applies that knowledge to situations (metis)” (p. 111). Second, telling stories “is a process of knowledge construction that all humans share and in

which all humans have some measure of competency because... we process and categorize knowledge in narrative form” (p. 112). After defending her argument for teaching technical communication as a narrative way of knowing, Bridgeford demonstrates how she has implemented this pedagogical approach in her own classroom by utilizing literature (specifically, novels) as a means of providing a context for technical communication. By sharing specific examples of her own experience with this approach, including the literature, procedures, assignments, and assessments she’s used, she reveals how this pedagogical approach “not only provides opportunities for helping students develop an understanding of technical information as constructed from a context but also encourages reflective and critical perspectives about that information” (p. 129). Ultimately, she maintains that the true merit of storytelling in the technical communication classroom lies in the function of narrative to construct knowledge, meaning, and reality.

*Tags: pedagogy, professional writing pedagogy, English education, narrative, storytelling, literature*

**Brizee, A., Pascual-Ferra, P., & Caranante, G. (2020). High-impact civic engagement: outcomes of community-based research in technical writing courses. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 50(3), 224–251.**

Brizee et al. summarize the initial findings of a mixed-methods study of a community-engaged TPC course at Loyola University Maryland. The course called for collaboration between students and community members to complete work that “included direct service, such as neighborhood cleanups, but also included developing resources used on workshops focused on addressing the digital divide and unemployment in Baltimore City” (p. 225). Both the course and the study were designed with two disciplinary issues in mind: first, the field of TPC “still struggles with effective approaches to preparing students for active citizenship in local communities,” and second, “our field still struggles to measure the outcomes of work with local communities” (p. 225). To measure the outcomes of the course, the authors gathered feedback from students and community members through surveys, interviews, and written reflections. Because “Loyola allows instructors to choose a service-learning mandatory or a service-learning optional approach to better ensure student commitment to community work” (p. 235), not every student in the course participated in service-learning. This allowed the authors to compare the outcomes of students who participated in service-learning to the students who did not. The authors organized outcomes into two categories: transformational experiences and educational experiences. While there did not seem to be much difference between the two groups as far as educational experiences, “for the outcome of students’ transformational experiences...preliminary findings indicate that service-learning students’ experiences were more impactful than their non service-learning peers” (p. 243). While the authors admit that their sample size was too small to make any vast conclusions, this work demonstrates to other TPC scholars and educators that community-engaged instruction is worth exploring.

*Tags: community engagement, service-learning, professional writing research, qualitative research*

**Browning, E. R., & Cagle, L. E. (2017). Teaching a “critical accessibility case study”: Developing disability studies curricula for the technical communication classroom. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 47(4), 440–463.**

Browning and Cagle make the case for integrating disability studies into technical communication classrooms and suggest doing so through Critical Accessibility Case Studies (CACS). Browning and

Cagle argue that since technical communication is more or less what constructs reality, all users of technical communication (TC) need to be considered in the composition process—which means instructors must emphasize this consideration in their students: “equipping students with workplace skills is not enough. They must also learn to be critical creators and users of TC” (p. 443). The authors employ this kind of instruction in their own classes through a CACS related to a lawsuit filed against the city of New York due to the city’s failure to account for people who have disabilities in its emergency planning. Students worked with both disability studies and TC scholarship and actual documents related to New York City’s emergency planning (specifically that used during Hurricane Irene) and the subsequent lawsuit. Browning and Cagle focused the CACS around four particular concepts: “(a) the social model of disability, (b) distribution channels for technical information, (c) multimodal design, and (d) user-based composition and design” (p. 442). Asking students to assess TC texts through the critical lens of disability studies helps them “understand how TC is not simply a matter of transferring neutral information from experts to its users; it is a powerful discourse that shapes users’ experiences, identities, and potential for acting in the world” (p. 455). This notion furthers the social justice move of TPC by disrupting both the assumption that TPC documents are neutral and that users of said documents all have the same needs and abilities.

*Tags: accessibility, Disability Studies, pedagogy, case study*

**Herndl, C. G. (1993). Teaching discourse and reproducing culture: A critique of research and pedagogy in professional and non-academic writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 44(3), 349–363.**

Herndl addresses the gaps in research and pedagogy of professional writing, mainly Lester Faigley’s theory and framework, which uses a social view of writing. Faigley’s work also includes radical pedagogy, which seeks to resist the dominant discourse. Herndl claims that radical pedagogy has not been used enough with the study of professional writing. This is one of his main criticisms of current research and pedagogy—that it fails to describe the “social, political, and economic sources of power” which produce meaning (p. 351). In other words, researchers may be simply reproducing the social structures and ideologies of the community. Herndl argues that instead, we must abandon the current view of discourse as neutral and recognize that it is inseparable from institutional power. We must teach our students to recognize the social and institutional practices that inform discourse. Herndl goes on to provide an illustration of how research in professional writing may adapt these practices. To do so, he analyzes Lucille McCarthy’s rhetorical analysis of the third edition of the Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III.) This work is important because McCarthy addresses the relationship between psychiatric discourse and institutional medicine, and even goes on to offer resistant positions. Herndl claims that this is an example of what radical pedagogy could look like. To achieve this in the field of professional writing, we need to include political and ideological research in our work, as well as research that provides dissenting opinions. Overall, Herndl advocates a radical pedagogy in professional writing as an essential step in pursuing cultural criticism.

*Tags: radical pedagogy, professional writing pedagogy, professional writing research, cultural criticism, pedagogy, qualitative research*

**Hudley, A.H. C., & Mallinson, C. (2017). “It’s worth our time”: A model of culturally and linguistically supportive professional development for K-12 STEM educators. *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, 12(3), 637–660.**

Hudley and Mallinson’s study seeks to address the lack of culturally responsive approaches in K-12 STEM classrooms. They suggest that practices such as multicultural education are more emphasized in the humanity fields but have not been implemented enough in STEM education. Thus, Hudley and Mallinson examine professional development programs designed to better prepare K-12 STEM educators for culturally and linguistic diverse classrooms. The workshops in the study were meant to teach educators to better understand best practices for linguistic diversity. Specifically, they addressed six main topics: conflict between schools and student culture; biases against non-standard varieties of English; linguistic/cultural mismatches and student achievement; confronting standard-English texts; and structural linguistic issues (p. 644). The authors used pre- and post-workshop surveys and interviews to gather information about the participants’ experiences. In the results, they found that participants felt strongly about the importance of language and culture in their classrooms, but there were some common achievements in implementing these strategies. For example, teachers are usually limited in what training is provided to them. Additionally, many teachers felt that their workload and time constraints make learning these strategies difficult. Still, despite these challenges, Hudley and Mallinson’s study emphasizes the critical need for culturally supportive professional development for K-12 STEM educators. Though not explicitly addressing the TPC field, this text is an important example of ways to implement culturally responsive teaching in K-12 education, thus teaching students the importance of social justice before they enter their professional careers.

*Tags: culturally responsive education, languages, professional development, pedagogy, anti-racism*

**Medina, C., & Walker, K. (2018). Validating the consequences of social justice pedagogy: Explicit values in course-based grading contracts. In A. M. Haas & M. F. Eble (Eds.), *Key theoretical frameworks: Teaching technical communication in the twenty-first century* (pp. 46–67). University Press of Chicago.**

In this chapter, Medina and Walker use the framework of consequential validity (paying attention to the social after-effects of research) to explore how grading contracts can facilitate a more socially-just technical communication classroom. Although grading contracts are gaining traction in other writing courses such as composition, they are not yet widely used by technical communication instructors, despite the TPC field’s recent social justice turn and increased calls for de-centering whiteness, maleness, and high socio-economic status (SES) in both TPC classrooms and in the practice of TPC outside academia. Medina and Walker point out that while it is indeed important to turn a critical eye to the types of assignments we give and to how we conduct our classroom spaces, traditional grading is often overlooked in these conversations, and that regardless of how socially-just the rest of the class is, traditional grading still imposes a problematic power dynamic that unjustly privileges some students and marginalizes others.

Medina and Walker then provide two models for determining and specifying the core values that appear in our courses. They specify that exploring our values is important so that we can explicitly see what we are privileging in our classrooms and change those values accordingly if they do not promote a socially-just classroom experience. They also caution against using these models as a way to mainstream or justify existing values that privilege white, male, high-SES students over others.

The models that they provide help de-center these privileged categories by increasing grading transparency and affording students more agency as collaborators of their grades rather than just recipients of them.

*Tags: pedagogy, anti-racism, English education, contract grading, consequential validity*

**Quick, C. (2012). From the workplace to academia: Nontraditional students and the relevance of workplace experience in technical writing pedagogy. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 21(3), 230–250.**

Quick's study compares job application cover letters between nontraditional and traditional TPC students, in order to explore the need for pedagogical changes in the field. She defines nontraditional students as those returning to college after "significant full-time experience in the workforce" (p. 230). Through the study, Quick hoped to find if a difference exists in the rhetoric used by nontraditional versus traditional students facing a TPC task. To do so, she analyzed and compared job application cover letters written by both types of students. She sought to find if these students had developed rhetorical adaptability—the ability for students to transfer writing skills to workplace contexts (and vice versa.) Quick points out that the college student demographic is everchanging as nontraditional students become more prevalent. Thus, TPC instructors must question if these students' previous experiences impact their abilities. In the study, Quick analyzed five elements that indicate rhetorical adaptability. In the results, there were surprisingly no major differences between the traditional students and the nontraditional students. These results suggest that though some students come into technical writing classes with prior experience, this experience does not "automatically translate into rhetorical awareness and adaptability" (p. 243). Quick concludes that TPC instructors must adjust their pedagogical approaches in order to make explicit the connections between workplace experience and academic writing. Additionally, teachers must change perceptions of TPC students to reflect the wide range of experiences in the classroom. Overall, these changes in technical communication pedagogy could make a big difference in the students' ability to transfer writing skills.

*Tags: nontraditional students, professional writing pedagogy, rhetorical adaptability, pedagogy*

**Sealey-Ruiz, Y. (2016). Why Black girls' literacies matter: New literacies for a new era. *English Education*, 290–298.**

In this editorial, Sealey-Ruiz introduces the issue of Black girls' literacy in today's educational system. She begins by describing the history of violence against the bodies of Black girls, especially in schools. Namely through suspensions and police presence in classrooms, Black girls are much more likely to be disciplined in a school setting. Further, she argues that our schools offer limited opportunities for Black girls to achieve academic and social success. Sealey-Ruiz stresses the need of informed policymakers and researchers and educators to address these issues. Specifically, she says English/Literature teachers can disrupt this pattern by using tools like reading and writing to critique & dismantle the violence and injustices done to Black girls. In a way, this piece is a call to action. She urges teachers to use the power they must change the conversation about Black girls and break stereotypes. She even lists specific actions English teachers can take to change the way they talk about Black girls in the classroom, including employing a Black Girls' Literacies Framework approach which would allow students to read and write about their experiences of being a Black girl

today. To further provide concrete examples of change, Sealey-Ruiz also introduces the Black Girls' Literacies Collective, a group of five scholars who seek to advance the literacy Black girls. Overall, this piece calls out an unjust society and school system for Black girls and introduces several action steps to advocate for their emotional and academic well-being. Sealey-Ruiz's ideas are crucial in changing the way we teach language to foster a more socially just education system.

*Tags: languages, English education, pedagogy, anti-racism, language pedagogy*

**Scott, J. B. (2004). Rearticulating civic engagement through cultural studies and service-learning. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 13(3), 289–306.**

Scott discusses the technical communication field's tendency toward hyperpragmatist pedagogy that prioritizes only those activities and writing styles that traditionally lead to career (read: economic) success and dismisses any activities that do not directly relate to "getting a good job" as irrelevant to student learning. He argues that hyperpragmatism is also evident in the TPC field's historical insistence that technical communication is apolitical and utterly objective, despite increasing evidence and argument to the contrary. Scott explains that hyperpragmatist pedagogy fails students by making them see their audiences as simply recipients of information rather than complex individuals who should be engaged with during the design and writing process and by discouraging ethical critique of the work and rhetorical responsibilities of technical communicators. In particular, he looks at the value of service-learning projects in the classroom, which have been embraced by many fields but, as of the writing of the article in 2004, were still uncommon in the field of technical communication. Service learning in many ways owes its existence to pragmatism—the very concept of service-learning projects, after all, relies on the need for students to get real-world experience in the types of jobs and communities they will work with as professionals. However, as Scott points out, such pragmatism can go too far if it begins to see the service learning as a means to an end rather than as an opportunity to explore the complexities of community and civic engagement and when it limits the responsibility of the student to engage in critical reflection of the practices they are learning. Scott argues for the use of cultural studies heuristics to encourage the kinds of ethical and critical questioning that will lead students toward more socially-just modes of thinking as a result of their service-learning projects.

*Tags: pedagogy, non-neutrality, professional writing pedagogy, service learning*

**Shelton, C. (2020). Shifting out of neutral: Centering difference, bias, and social justice on a business writing course. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 29(1), 18–32.**

Shelton uses an autoethnographic approach to detail her experience in employing a Black Feminist Pedagogy in an undergraduate business writing course. She lays out the theoretical and embodied underpinnings of her pedagogy, noting that she makes a point to center difference in her class due to the fact that students of technical and professional writing "are enabled and in fact encouraged to skirt a critical engagement with the implications of difference among bodies" (p. 21). Shelton tries to get her students to see that business and technical writing is never neutral—it plays a crucial role in either dismantling or perpetuating harmful and even violent status quos. While advocating for the necessity of this pedagogy, however, Shelton also acknowledges the risks that come with this teaching style. In one of her business writing classes, Shelton held a "midterm chat," which allowed students to give anonymous feedback on the course. During the chat, one student mentioned the name

of an alt-right white supremacist—a mention that Shelton refuses to interpret as “accidental or even facetious” (p. 27). This experience, and further reflection on her Black Feminist Pedagogy, leads Shelton to decide that we cannot let negative students or experiences disrupt vital work: “the kind of people [the students] become is up to them and the work to get there is theirs to do. I will help those who want it” (p. 28). If instructors want to make the world a better place for marginalized populations, then they must “decenter the emotions and the progress” of students who are unwilling to challenge and dismantle oppressive systems.

*Tags: Black Feminism, Black TPC, anti-racism, non-neutrality, business writing, pedagogy*

**Vlach, S. K., Taylor, L., & Mosley Wetzel, M. (2019). "Exploring this whole thing of social justice" Narrative as a tool for critical sociocultural knowledge development in teacher education. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 14(1), 62–77.**

Vlach et al. argue that engaging in narrative construction and reflective thinking allows teachers to explore critical connections between theory and practice. They performed an ethnographic case study with Gabriella, a bilingual third grade teacher who was also a participant in a graduate level teacher education course focused on “talk and interaction within literacy teaching” (p. 65). In addition to observing the ways theories can become tangible practices, Vlach et al. were interested in seeing how different identities are constructed in class through narrative. They coded 15 of Gabriella’s narratives and looked at her positionality as a bilingual teacher and as a social justice teacher. The results suggested that Gabriella was able to better “consider issues of race, gender, and class in her teaching” when engaging in and reflecting upon narrative talk story (p. 72). The practice also exposed binaries in Gabriella’s thinking when considering discipline and school policies, thus enabling her to then interrogate and address her own biases as a social justice teacher. The researchers’ findings suggest that self-examination through narrative strategies can “construct literacy education as a space of liberation rather than one of oppression” (p. 75). Too often, education and educational spaces function as sources of subjugation. However, narrative offers educators an opportunity to question their personal beliefs and their institution’s. This exploration, particularly for teachers just entering the field of education, can expose biases and harmful assumptions that promote inequality in the classroom and in educational policy. As a precursor to change, narrative can act as an important tool in advocating for social justice.

*Tags: methodology, positionality, anti-racism, English education, narrative, sociocultural knowledge*

**Zhou, Q. (2014). “That usability course”: What technical communication programs get wrong about usability and how to fix it. *Communication Design Quarterly Review*, 2(3), 25–27.**

Zhou interrogates the typical usability training experience students receive in writing programs. Often, when a university turns its attention on adding usability to the curriculum, they hire a usability person and create a usability course. The problematic nature of these events is that usability is separated in the curriculum to a course, chapter, or class session. For students, usability training often is practiced solely as testing to be done at the end of the project. Framing usability in curriculum this way presents multiple problems for students, including not engaging in the critical work of designing testing in the formative phase of the project, missing the opportunity to observe how a product is designed with the user in mind, missing the connections between how user experience fits in an organization setting, and training students to think of usability only when their project is almost

completed as a project “add-on” (p. 26). All these issues speak to the current attitudes in universities that celebrates usability but failed to infuse it as a core concept in writing curriculum. Social justice pedagogy seeks to center marginalized perspectives. For students who are beginning the process of identifying how marginalized audiences use documents, curriculum infused with usability training can provide valuable opportunities to assess their biases in documentation design. Zhou presents multiple suggestions for doing the work towards infusing usability into technical communication curriculum. These suggestions include introducing usability in the first course students take, requiring a course in user experience for all students, building usability into product-creation courses to allow students to engage with user-centered design, and to use an engineering problem-solving approach through “innovative thinking, creativity and broad contextual awareness” (p. 26).

*Tags: pedagogy, English education, user experience, curriculum*

## LINGUISTIC JUSTICE & CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN TPC

Linguistic justice is not always at the center of TPC conversations, even those focused on critical and socially just transformation of the field. However, attending to language difference is key to cultivating spaces for multilingual and linguistically diverse technical and professional communicators, as well as audiences. This subsection focuses on language and cross-cultural communication both in educational and professional settings.

**Agboka, G. Y. (2012). Liberating intercultural technical communication from “large culture” ideologies: Constructing culture discursively. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 42(2), 159–181.**

Godwin illustrates the limitations of confining to the “large culture” *labels* pointing at the pitfalls of ignoring culture in its *individual* level for the field of technical communications. He argues that in this day and age and with the mobility that technology affords, people do not and cannot subscribe to just one particular culture—thus he underlines the invalidity of monolithic view of the notion of culture. Godwin points how “big culture” labels create problems instead of solving them, and give rise to “big culture” notions which often ignore people in the culture. Thus, the cultures in general that reside in the margins and replicate marginalization and, in consequence, pushes the smaller cultures further to the margins. He notes that the way culture is framed and defined within the confines of intercultural TPC contributes to the problem (of dealing with the subject of culture) since the framing and defining exhibits a limited and also limiting perspective on the notion of culture. Godwin shares his worry that cultural labeling from such a perspective could be used to put people from other cultures “boxed into containers” (p. 164) which is done at the expense of neglecting “the individual” (p. 165). Therefore, big culture labels such as “German,” “Western,” “Eastern,” and “South American” to name specific groups of people based on their geographical location and origin of nationality, as Godwin holds, not only manifests a monolithic of the notion of culture but also a rather obsolete one, as evident in his rhetoric. He also reminds the field the simple truth which seems to be ignored often, “...cultural identity—either group or individual—is unstable as well.” (p. 171). Thus, by pointing out the individual nature of cultures, underlining the individual emphasis in “large cultures” tags, and calling for greater inclusivity, we can orient it to the social justice focus on technical professional communication.

*Tags: intercultural, inclusivity,, large culture, individual*

**Agboka, G. Y. (2013). Thinking about social justice: Interrogating the international in international technical communication discourse. *Connexions: International Professional Communication Journal*, 1(1), 29–38.**

In this article, Godwin urges technical communicators to make a paradigm shift especially in terms of expanding the sites of research. He calls the “first” and “second” worlds, referring to the industrialized nations mostly, to expand its research endeavors to sites that have remained underrepresented and thus, unexplored. Especially in terms of international technical communications, Godwin argues sites popularly known as third worlds should be explored and urges the field to extend research to possible “fourth” worlds such as indigenous people, Native Americans, and other people and nations since they also deserve attention (31). He argues that, while singling out cultures and languages and amplifying the stories of the heroes and success stories in intercultural

technical communication, other important considerations like ideological, political, and social justice issues fall to the wayside. Godwin points at the deeper connections between ideological, political, and economic connection and issues of power, struggle, and identity, and reiterates that one cannot be looked at and comprehended deeply without considering the other issues. The way forward as he professes is considering things at their local level—local contexts and histories being added to the mix to get a comprehensive understanding of things that would only serve the technical communicators more effectively and in broader scheme. With its call to broaden the periphery of TPC and casting a wider net that includes un/underrepresented sites and urging to value local experiences, this article exhibits its social justice attributes.

*Tags: third worlds, international TPC, ideology, oppression, identity*

**Baker-Bell, A. (2017). “I can switch my language, but I can’t switch my skin”: What teachers must understand about linguistic racism. *The guide for white women who teach Black boys*, 97–107.**

Baker-Bell critiques the standardization of white mainstream English and offers recommendations for classroom teachers to stop perpetuating linguistic racism. First, she stresses the damage that is being done by teaching students that to succeed, they must use Standard English. She illustrates how devalued Black language is in academic settings, despite its rich rhetorical style and unique features. She also emphasizes that communicating in white mainstream English does not protect Black students from being discriminated against. Instead, she says educators must recognize their part in enforcing linguistic injustice and question what deems a language “standard.” The only reason white mainstream English is considered standard is because it comes from a group privileged in society. This hierarchy causes white students to have an upper hand in academic settings, as they are automatically considered more academically prepared to succeed. Although she does not directly address TPC, her analysis of linguistic injustice is prevalent to any form of communication. It is especially important for educators who teach language and have the power to teach in a socially just manner. Throughout the article, she offers recommendations and activities for teachers to use in the classroom. For example, she provides lesson plans that foster discussion with students about formal versus informal language, and that examine the complexity of Black language. Overall, Baker-Bell calls readers to question linguistic hierarchy and to do their part in dismantling it.

*Tags: language pedagogy, English Education, anti-racism, Black language, anti-racism*

**Baker-Bell, A. (2020). *Linguistic justice: Black language, literacy, identity, and pedagogy*. Routledge.**

Baker-Bell's *Linguistic Justice* is a critical analysis of the relationship between race and language, and our school system's devaluation of Black language. Throughout the book, she offers a framework for implementing Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy in language curriculum. This pedagogy is one that centers Blackness, confronts white linguistic and cultural hegemony, and contests anti-Blackness (p. 32). Additionally, curriculum must include critically conscious talk, in which students question and dismantle “dominate narratives that contribute to Black people's suffering” (p. 81). To demonstrate this type of pedagogy, Baker-Bell uses counternarratives from her research study with Black students in Detroit. By recounting her interactions with these students, she paints a picture for the reader of what Black youth are being taught about their language and their value in society, and

what it may look like to challenge these beliefs in the classroom. The reader meets various students who view Black language as bad and wrong—even though they themselves use it. Throughout the book, we watch these same students become more critically conscious of their language and learn about the history and culture of Black language. They even learn that Black language has its own form and rules, thus realizing it is indeed as valid of a language as any other. Along the way, Baker-Bell also offers detailed activities and lesson plans for language educators, as well as other practical tips.

*Linguistic Justice* questions and criticizes certain practices such as code-switching, labeling it a color-evasiveness approach, and asserting that this practice is harmful to Black youth. Baker-Bell makes clear that current language education perpetuates violence against the Black community, and she will not settle for anything less than complete linguistic justice. This idea of linguistic justice is a crucial step in the fight for social justice. Her emphasis on a socially just language education can be applied beyond education, and to all applications of language. By changing the ways that we teach language, we are setting a precedent for social justice in fields such as professional and technical writing. Overall, Baker-Bell's intersection of theory, research, and narrative gives a detailed depiction of the possibilities of a more socially just language pedagogy.

*Tags: language pedagogy, English Education, anti-racism, Black language, anti-racism*

**Danuz, K. (2014). Spanglish: A new communication tool. In M. Williams, & O. Pimentel (Eds.), *Communicating race, ethnicity, and identity in technical communication* (pp. 121–132). Routledge.**

The rising population of Spanish-speakers in the United States provides the exigence for Danuz's investigation of "what more the study of technical communication can do to advocate for our multicultural audience and how we can incorporate the use of the Spanish language in our English written technical documents" (p. 121). In focusing on Spanish-speaking audiences, Danuz further emphasizes that the technical writer needs an understanding of the linguistic and cultural diversity within this population. With this richness in mind, the technical writer can add a linguistic component to their multimodal communication repertoire and thereby be better positioned to advocate for their bilingual audiences. Though Danuz is aware that Spanglish—which denotes the blending of Spanish and English—is contested, she maintains that incorporating Spanglish in technical documents supports the communication with bilingual audiences. The incorporation of Spanglish is part of a wider cultural analysis of audiences the technical writer engages in to "persuade the user that material is useful, accurate, and meaningful" (p. 126). Simultaneously, the technical writer builds a relationship with the user by meeting the user's needs in their own lived experience rather than isolating them by using a non-familiar language. Further, to ensure central meaning is not obscured or rendered confusing, the technical writer can provide translations of key terms into local or regional dialect as well as incorporate other meaningful, user-friendly visuals and cultural commonalities. She provides examples of the use of Spanglish in technical documents from two Puerto Rican contexts—a medical document and a bank statement—to demonstrate the enactment of linguistic advocacy. Danuz argues Hispanic people value trust (*la confianza*) which the technical writer may gain by demonstrating cultural competence and goodwill. The culturally adapted focus on the user has a social justice element because it centers users who are often neglected and marginalized by technical

communicators which may result in missing vital information that empowers them to make important medical or financial decisions about their lives.

*Tags: multilingual, linguistic justice, Spanglish, user advocacy*

**Faison, W. (2014, October 14). *Reclaiming my language: The (mis)education of Wonderful*. Digital Rhetoric Collaborative.**

<https://www.digitalrhetoriccollaborative.org/2014/10/16/reclaiming-my-language-the-miseducation-of-wonderful/>

Faison describes her past struggle with language identity and growing up looking down at students who used Black language in school and other professional settings. She admits that she grew up thinking this language made people sound less intelligent, which worried her because she didn't want to reinforce negative views of Black people. However, she then describes her revelation that she had been oppressing her own language, and thus, a big part of her identity. Faison writes about the intricacies and traditions of Black language and how language cannot be separated from identity. Throughout the text, she gradually transitions from writing in what's deemed as Standard Mainstream English to Black language. By the end of the article, she is using her native language again and is proud of it—she ends powerfully by saying, “And I ain't stuck no mo'” (n.p.). Although Faison does not address technical or professional communication, her ideas on valuing Black language are crucial for all forms of writing or communication. This perspective should be integrated into all fields of communication looking for ways to be more socially just.

*Tags: language identity, pedagogy, Black TPC, anti-racism, languages, Standard English*

**Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2015). *Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education*. *Harvard Educational Review*, 85(2), 149–171.**

Flores and Rosa use raciolinguistic ideologies as a framework to study the impact of appropriateness-based language. They argue that current approaches to language education are harmful and suggest that the use of a raciolinguistic ideology acknowledges the listening subject and a speaking subject. By conceptualizing Standardized English in terms of the listening subject, the authors argue we can focus on how language is perceived. Flores and Rosa then examine additive approaches in language education, which advocate for multilingualism instead of replacing one language with another. They use the raciolinguistic ideology to critique the implementation of these additive approaches in schools by examining three different types of students: long-term English learners, heritage language learners, and Standard English learner. In all three cases, the authors criticize recommendations for these students as valuing standardized English as appropriate, rather than these students' dominant language. Long-term learners are often seen as deficient in the standardized language, heritage language learners are taught to shift away from native's language, and Standard English learners are taught the “appropriate” language, thus still enforcing linguistic hierarchy. The authors argue that appropriateness-based models place the burden on these students to acquire the “standardized” language, while ignoring “the raciolinguistic ideologies that the white listening subject uses to position them as racial Others” (p. 155). Flores and Rosa conclude by calling for a shift in language education that highlights the listener's position of language, and thus confronting the racialized hierarchy of society. This perspective is important for any professional communication field in achieving social justice.

*Tags: raciolinguistic ideology, language pedagogy, languages, anti-racism, English education*

**Gonzales, L. (2020). Building transdisciplinary connections between composition studies and technical communication to understand writing processes. *National Council of Teachers of English*, 82(5), 460–471.**

Gonzales argues that scholars in both Composition Studies and Technical and Professional Communication would benefit from a transdisciplinary approach to the study of language diversity across contexts. According to Gonzales, transdisciplinarity provides both fields with “an opportunity to recognize and expand methodologies and methods that allow researchers and teachers of writing to better understand and sustain multilingual experiences (including writing) both within and beyond individual classrooms, programs, and university spaces” (p. 461). Gonzales explains, “researchers work to understand the existence, importance, and value of language diversity, while not always being pushed to intricately examine what this diversity entails in practice,” leading to a “scarcity of empirically grounded research on multilingualism” (p. 463). As a response to this shortage, Gonzales describes her own transdisciplinary approach to research on multilingual writing practices focused on translation activities in a small language services office with the goal of “bringing attention to the intricacies of language fluidity as they are experienced and sustained by linguistically diverse communicators” (464). To make a case for building transdisciplinary connections between Composition Studies and Technical and Professional Communication, Gonzales offers two examples—focusing on writing processes and expanding research methods—of strategies that scholars, teachers, and researchers alike could utilize as a means of creating connections and facilitating conversations about language fluidity and multilingual communication practices across disciplines. Ultimately, Gonzales presents transdisciplinarity as a “method for increasing rigor, broadening perspective, and working to enact justice and inclusion where exclusionary boundaries have been historically established and maintained” (p. 469) in the study of language diversity.

*Tags: translation, multilingual practices, language pedagogy, transdisciplinarity, language diversity*

**Gonzales, L. (2018). *Sites of translation: What multilinguals can teach us about digital writing and rhetoric*. University of Michigan Press.**

Departing from the notion that the work of translation is a linear, disembodied, and acultural process, Gonzales presents her “Revised Rhetoric of Translation” to establish the rhetorical practice of translation that unfolds in cultural contexts and the lived, material experiences of the translator and audience. Her framework similarly acknowledges that language itself is enacted in broader systems of power, privilege, and oppression, thus arguing that words are imbued with shifting meanings beyond dictionary definitions. During translation moments, the translator must negotiate the fluidity, accessibility, and situatedness of language and other tools and modalities to determine the most effective communication. Gonzales demonstrates the ethical and rhetorical work the translator performs when deciding how, when, and why to make specific choices in specific moments in time. Additionally, in professional and technical translation situations, the stakes are high because the client needs information to be accessible for emerging exigencies that impact their lives, livelihood, or, in some cases, access to justice. Thus, the process attends to culture, social environments, and usability. Because communication is increasingly, if not inherently, intercultural, the creative and multimodal strategies multilinguals deploy to transform information and meaning across languages

can inform work in TPC. Translators and multilinguals in general employ strategies to create meaning, which include using digital tools, reading aloud, repeating, deconstructing words, storytelling, sketching, making sounds, gesturing, using bodies, asking questions, and other modes of communication. The practices highlight the dynamic, embodied, and contextualized nature of communication which can inform TPC, especially in high-stakes contexts where multilinguals or disenfranchised communicators need to access or communicate information. Gonzales' "Revised Rhetoric of Translation", which extends beyond translation between named languages, can inform culturally attuned communication. In social spaces like workplaces, educational contexts, health care, records, civil and criminal justice, law enforcement, and similar spaces, the stakes are potentially very high if communication fails. If rhetors rely on standardized modes of communication and ignore the social environment and linguistic diversity, communication is jeopardized which, in turn, puts justice at risk.

*Tags: language pedagogy, multilingual, multimodal, translation, digital literacy*

**Gonzales, L., & Baca, I. (2017). Developing culturally and linguistically diverse online technical communication programs: Emerging frameworks at University of Texas at El Paso. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 26(3), 273–286.**

Gonzales and Baca address current calls for culturally and linguistically situated TPC training. They report on the redesign of two online TPC courses at University of Texas at El Paso—a hybrid undergraduate bilingual professional writing certificate and an online graduate technical and professional writing certificate—and propose a framework that can inspire other online programs. Gonzales and Baca outline two pedagogical initiatives and two professional development initiatives that support this framework. First, based on a program assessment procedure that involved local business and organization leaders, the data suggested that, rather than offering a single TPC course on culture, difference and inclusivity should be embedded into the entire curriculum. This places students' own cross-cultural experiences at the center and prepares the for user-centered intercultural communication. The other guideline involves positioning linguistic difference as an asset rather than a deficit. All the organizations involved in the assessment process, for example, highlighted the benefit of multilingual competences and translation strategies in future employees. Together the pedagogical guidelines dispel the notion that language and communication are neutral and should be culturally and linguistically standardized. However, to sustain the students' cultural and linguistic resources, instructors need professional development in translation and bilingual education, and in community partnership development. Instead of the onus falling on individual instructors to prepare themselves for courses that center diversity and inclusivity, the program should support this training. Gonzales' and Baca's article has an implicit social justice orientation in the insistence of TPC programs being centered on—not merely gesturing towards—cultural and linguistic inclusivity for TPC students and for the audiences and users they will work with upon entering the field as practitioners.

*Tags: languages, multilingual, inclusivity, pedagogy, online learning*

**Gonzales, L., & Turner, H. N. (2017). Converging fields, expanding outcomes: Technical communication, translation, and design at a non-profit organization. *Technical Communication*, 64(2), 126–140.**

Gonzales and Turner illustrate the intersections of technical communication, design, and translation through detailing the work of translators in the Language Services Department of The Hispanic Center of Western Michigan. The organization is a non-profit and helps multilingual community members with the process of translating important documents—birth certificates, marriage licenses, court documents, etc. Because so many of these documents need to be accepted by various government agencies, translators must create “‘mirror translations,’ which consist of translated documents that identically match the design, layout, and formatting of the original text” (p. 131). Thus, the work done in the Language Services Department goes beyond swapping words in one language for words in another. Translators “are not only translating or designing, they are always doing these things all at once, in addition to designing for an experience that is ‘authentic’” (p. 133). Due to the material realities of the non-profit and lack of extensive professional training, the Language Services Department relies on lived experience, collaboration, and rhetorical dexterity to accomplish their goals. Gonzales and Turner argue that the field of technical communication needs to acknowledge the expertise of individuals like those working in the Language Services Department. Further, they conclude that “as the field of technical communication continues to push for globalization and for the creation of cross-cultural, multilingual content, we suggest that researchers, practitioners, and teachers both acknowledge and compensate the intellectual contributions of multilingual communicators” (p. 138). This will ensure that globalized, multilingual content is accessible to users across languages and cultures.

*Tags: non-profit collaboration, cross-cultural communication, design, languages, translation*

**Jarvis Kwadzo Bokor, M. (2011). Connecting with the "Other" in technical communication: World Englishes and ethos transformation of U.S. native English-speaking students. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 20(2), 208–237.**

Bokor discusses a qualitative research study he conducted when teaching an introductory-level technical communication course which centered on the role of World Englishes to transform native speaker students' language attitudes to non-native audiences. Bokor situates his study and his discussion in the scholarship on communication failures in international audience adaptation and highlights cultural differences, rhetorical practices, and the role of the English language as major causes for communication failure. While traditionally the failure is blamed on non-native audiences, or the “Other”, Bokor argues that a reorientation towards the training of technical writers can prepare students better for careers in global settings, and, more importantly, can foster a critical consciousness towards language practices and norms and their entanglements with global power dynamics; also, training embedded in a World Englishes paradigm can foster a disposition of openness towards audiences from Kachru’s “outer” (e.g. Ghana, Nigeria, India, and Jamaica) and “expanding” (e.g. China, Egypt, Indonesia, and Korea) circles of English. Bokor describes this process as “ethos transformation which is “the critical self-consciousness that individuals achieve through sustained psychosocial, cultural, and linguistic processes of rearranging the relationship with others in the particular discourse community in which interactions occur during the discursive events” (p. 226). Bokor does not explicitly situate his argument in a call for social justice. However, while his purpose is partially to enable future technical writers to develop successful cross-cultural interactions, his argument also interrogates the privileging of certain Englishes over others as iterations of asymmetrical power relationships that privilege rhetorical practices and knowledge productions of dominant cultures such as the U.S. A disruption of these relationships will generate cultural justice.

*Tags: World Englishes, international technical communication, audience adaptation, pedagogy*

**Medina, C. (2014). Tweeting collaborative identity: Race, ICTs, and Performing Latinidad. In M. Williams, & O. Pimentel (Eds.), *Communicating race, ethnicity, and identity in technical communication* (pp.63–86). Routledge.**

Medina reports on a curriculum that incorporates Twitter as a supplementary information literacy tool and gives students the opportunity to network with each other while creating a public voice that prepares them to meet the needs of a multilingual audience. He explores how an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) such as Twitter can support the performance of *latinidad* identity. His rationale builds on critical pedagogy that resists language norms in TPC that privilege white, male languaging while constructing language difference as deficit. This language ideology marginalizes and excludes Latin@ and other racialized students and requires assimilation. Empowering students to construct an academic identity that performs *latinidad* operates to resist oppressive structures in higher education. Also, while positioning racialized students as inferior is highly problematic in itself, Medina also argues that exclusionary language practices will make it harder for future TPC practitioners to connect with a growing Latin@ market. Medina argues that, “by code-switching (alternating between English and Spanish), Latin@ students perform an ethnically marked linguistic variance that challenges the instrumental model of technical communication and reflects the experience of a racialized audience that has been traditionally marginalized” (p.64). By creating a classroom where students’ bilingual language practices are legitimized, they are better positioned to take those attitudes with them into the workplace where they, in turn, will write for linguistically diverse users. In highlighting the inclusivity of voices and language practices in the constructing and circulation of knowledge in the field of TPC, Medina’s piece reinforces the social justice orientation of the field.

*Tags: multilingual, language ideology, linguistic justice, Latinidad identity, technology*

**Sarangi, S. (1994). Intercultural or not? Beyond celebration of cultural differences in miscommunication analysis. *Pragmatics*, 4(3), 409–427.**

Sarangi grapples with the purpose of intercultural analysis in TPC. Even though he does not explicitly mention social justice in this article, he points out the ways in which cultural miscommunications are analyzed often from stereotypical perspective. In essence, this devalues human experience and cultural knowledge which clearly connects with the motto of valuing human experience as part of social justice approach. For example, he points at what he calls “analytic stereotyping” that happens in the name of intercultural analysis. To dive deeper into the problem, he brings under his analytical lens what happens within the scope of these analyses questioning; specifically, what cultures *do* rather than trying to define *what* it is. Citing particular references of misanalysis of intercultural communications, he evidences how those miss the point since they are done from an essentialist view of culture, which he condemns. Further, he references scholarship in his piece that demonstrates what people do in the name of culture and how people put the term in different uses (p. 415). As much as Sarangi shows how and why a culture-specific approach in analysis of miscommunication is misleading, he argues the way to better problematize such miscommunication is to adopt a “discourse-analytic approach” since that shifts the focus to “specific discursive practices of individual interactants” (p. 424). This shift, in effect, displays their individual

and particular attributes in context of their social and institutional positions (p. 424). Sarangi's article extends the TPC's understanding of cultural miscommunication. With its critical analysis on miscommunication that denounces cultural stereotyping and arguing for the individual attention that sees every cultural interaction on its own merit, he underscores the value of differences of human interactions in different cultural settings—thus, his piece shows implicit attributes of social justice.

*Tags: analytic stereotyping, intercultural analysis, miscommunication*

**St. Amant, K. (2015). Introduction to the special issue: Cultural considerations for communication design: Integrating ideas of culture, communication, and context into user experience design. *Communication Design Quarterly*, 4(1), 6–22.**

By highlighting the channels of accessing cultures via different methods, St. Amant underlines the social justice theme here even though he does not explicitly spell out the term. Rather, he brings in that motif through his points on experiencing cultures by collaboration and also from individual understanding. For example, he notes the importance of taking different cultural factors that need to be taken into consideration for a particular cultural audience. He emphasizes on meta-categories to be included to examine settings and contexts of information for different groups of people. He writes about the complexities of international and global communications and the need for understanding such constraints when designing cultural products. Most importantly, he focuses on the individual natures of these global and international cultural exchanges where what matters most is what one knows about a particular culture from his/her own experience with that given culture (p. 15). He also reminds us of the rapid and unexpected changing natures of cultural behaviors. St. Amant also notes that creating contents for one culture is different from collaboratively co-creating a cultural product since that takes efforts in identifying areas of potential cultural miscommunications. Factors like politics, economics, legalities, and linguistics can problematize partnerships between communicators. Therefore, St. Amant's article educates us about the factors needed for cultural collaboration and individual understanding of cultures manifests the individual and communal aspect of culture, and thus asserts social justice itself is for the individual and the greater society.

*Tags: communication design, cross-cultural, international, global communications, user experience*

**St. Amant, K. (2002). When computers and cultures collide: Rethinking computer mediated communication according to international and intercultural communication expectations. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 16(2), 196–214.**

St. Amant highlights the agency in the identity creation in online in this piece as well as how knowledge of identity is considered in different cultures and thus, adds to our understanding of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in the techno-centric society we live in. He does not explicitly use the term social justice, but St. Amant does highlight a factor which is part and parcel of today's society—CMC, which can put one culture in advantageous position over the other. For example, he discusses high context and low context cultures in this article. Citing Hall, St. Amant states that some cultures like Japan, Russia, and Latin America prefer contextual information more than cultures from Germany and the United States, which are known to be low context, meaning contextual information is not of prime importance. However, CMC does not reveal the individual identity, which puts people from high context culture in a precarious situation since they become confused about how to interact with people not knowing the cultural identity of the people. St. Amant

also describes how certain cultures have different social networks. For example, in some cultures having a proper introduction to an outsider matters a lot (p. 202), but it may not have the same importance in other cultures. However, these factors get convoluted when CMC comes into play since identity is not easily identifiable here. Therefore, St. Amant discusses how digital platforms complicate how social problems transpire and, more importantly, get even more complicated since injustices happen in online platforms.

*Tags: communication, cross-cultural, social networks, computer-mediated communication*

**Walwema, J. (2018). Transliterations in intercultural professional communication. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 61(3), 330–345.**

Walwema argues that courses and scholarship in professional communication too often study cultures “in contrast to Western rhetoric” (p. 332). This contrastive framework leads to a far too reductive view of cultures. To combat this issue, she argues for using transliterations in professional communication classrooms. Essentially, transliterations involve learning about a culture and its varied rhetorical values and practices through a wide variety of texts from that culture—not just scholarly and formally published texts. This can include podcasts, blogs, social media posts, art, and more. Drawing on her own experiences as the instructor of an intercultural professional communication course, Walwema argues that this will allow students to see a more authentic version of a culture, as the publication process that academic sources go through “may strip them of the more nuanced, unprovable insights that scholars may have gleaned from a given culture. The result is an objectified, imagined, stereotyped, or even generalized culture rather than its natural self” (p. 335). This more organic understanding of cultures not only allows professional communicators to more easily represent and/or interact with a culture, but also fosters a more multidimensional view of culture—particularly non-Western cultures—and can prevent the “othering” that so often occurs in the process of intercultural studies and communication. This othering is problematic in a social justice framework because it often leads to a privileging of Western culture rather than a well-rounded, equitable understanding of various cultures and their users.

*Tags: globalization, transliterations, intercultural communication, pedagogy*

**Wilson, N., & Crow A. (2014). A response to “students’ rights to their own language.” In M. Williams, & O. Pimentel (Eds.), *Communicating race, ethnicity, and identity in technical communication* (pp. 113–119). Routledge.**

Wilson and Crow highlight the competing attitudes towards language difference in technical communication. On the one hand, scholars continue to adhere to the notion that technical communication should be written in standard English because it is clear and direct and serves the purposes of technical communication. However, other scholars, following the Students’ Rights to Their Own Language (SRTOL) from 1974, assert no language or language variation is inherently better at conveying information clearly. Far from being universal, acultural, or neutral, standard language forms reproduce language ideologies that harm students when their home languages are not validated. Further, teaching multilingualism and multidialectism prepares students for communication contexts where their audiences have diverse language backgrounds. As such, “SRTOL’s metacognitive and linguistically inclusive goals do indeed have relevance for technical communicators” (p.113). Wilson and Crow do not advocate that students should not also learn the

language of wider communication, i.e. Standard American English, because in some contexts being able to communicate in this variation will be most effective. They stress that, in other contexts and with other audiences, a different language variation or language-mixing may be the more effective rhetorical choice. Citing James Paul Gee, the field of technical communication should view literacy ““in its full range of cognitive, social, interactional, cultural, political, institutional, economic, moral, and historical contexts” (2011, p. 2)” (p.118). Wilson and Crow indirectly argue for a social justice orientation to technical communication in their critique of dominant language norms as a tool of oppression and marginalization, and in their promotion of linguistic justice for students of TPC and users of technical documents.

*Tags: language ideology, linguistic justice, multilingualism, pedagogy, SRTOL*

## USABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND DESIGN IN TPC

Identifying practices that welcome all audiences is a subject of growing scholarship in TPC. With insight from neighboring fields, including Culture Studies and Disability Studies, TPC usability, accessibility, and technology research analyzes how communication can be designed in more inclusive ways. The content ranges from community-building to technology design, assessing user experience, embodiment, and accessibility and is applied to issues in communities, academia, and workplaces.

**Acharya, K. R. (2017). User value and usability in technical communication: A value proposition design model. *Communication Design Quarterly Review*, 4(3), 26–34.**

Acharya explores value from users' perspectives and calls for TPC to consider user value as an important commitment for enhancing product usability in technical communication. User value is presented as the perspective of the individual's experience using the product (p. 21). Noting that this orientation towards user value is still largely unexplored in TPC, the author proposes a design model based on value proposition, where practitioners consider users' knowledge, experience, skills, and motives, along with the product designers' objectives. Exploring the concept of value, Acharya notes that in TPC, the current perspective of value refers to financial impact associated with an end product, for example, profitability or cost savings (p. 22). Shifting this perspective, the author calls practitioners to view value as the embodied user "experience gained via interacting with the interface of the product" (p. 22). Viewing value as the users' embodied satisfaction after engaging with products can help TPC identify usability issues and solve them from the standpoint of users' values and assumptions (p. 32). The author concludes by acknowledging that this shift requires TPC to move from object-orientated design to experience design. A key benefit of this shift is that by using an experience-based design framework, designers can center the concept of value from the users' perspective as "an ultimate goal of design" (p. 32).

*Tags: user experience, useability, experience design, value*

**Acharya, K. R. (2017). Usability for social justice: Exploring the implementation of localization usability in global north technology in the context of a global south's country. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 49(1), 6–32.**

Acharya calls for the Global North (GN) to act in ensuring usability in the Global South (GS) of their technologies, beyond day-to-day functional use. Acharya brings up that most of the GS buys technologies and medical equipment from the GN based off the assumption that it is inherently better simply because it was made in the GN. Archarya not only calls for the GN to act so that their equipment isn't just bought in droves just because it's from the GN, but also to recognize that handing over agency to the GS leads to more just practices and a possible future of equal footing between the two. Technical communicators can get a footing within all this in a variety of ways; taking manuals written in the GN and incorporating those from the GS in their construction, understanding that the professionals using their equipment may also be the ones repairing them so looking at that jargon and simplifying it when it comes to repairs is another area, and last but not least, constructing an active dialogue between the GN and GS in terms of functionality of equipment, ensuring that all knobs and their placement, though reasonable in the GN, may not be as useful in the GS. Social justice becomes involved when looking at these countries with limited resources to be spent on medical equipment, it is up to the GN to make it clear and concise between themselves and

the GS on which technologies the GS should spend their time and resources on. Ensuring that technologies are going towards communities that need them won't only save resources, but also time, and most importantly the lives of those that live in those communities.

*Tags: user experience, Global South, localization*

**Ballentine, B. D. (2010). Requirements specifications and anticipating user needs: Methods and warnings on writing development narratives for new software. *Technical Communication*, 57(1), 26–43.**

Ballentine posits that employing narrative while composing and editing software requirement specifications improves user experiences and offers spaces for complex problems solving that might otherwise not exist. Ballentine relies upon H. Porter Abbott's definition of narrative: "narrative is the representation of an event or a series of events" or essentially "an event-driven scenario" (p. 28); therefore, even a simple directive instructing a user in how to use a software program functions as a narrative and carries coding implications for developers. Using Marconi Medical Systems' software IVW, a program designed for remote radiology opportunities, Ballentine illustrates how user feedback, in this case that of radiologists, can help developers create more flexible problem-solving opportunities that accommodate users' needs. The accompanying narration then allows for users to better understand the software's capabilities. Ballentine also shows how an incomplete narrative can be reductive and even dangerous. In this instance, he referenced IVW's online menu, which proved distracting for radiologists who could only familiarize themselves with the menu content once they entered each designated section. With a more robust understanding of its use, software developers could then change the menu design to enhance its effectiveness. Overall, Ballentine's research reveals how writing and narration are most powerful when they are embedded in the software design process instead of treated as an afterthought once engineering is considered complete. Considering the extent to which our lives are shaped by existing and emerging technology, Ballentine's argument for integrating narration throughout the design process is essential. In some instances, it may simply result in better astaticism or a better user experience overall, but in other instances it may result in consequences of greater import—such as in the use of medical technology to save lives. Employing narration puts the user at the center of the experience, instead of the engineer, and creates a functionality that increases the software's potentiality.

*Tags: user experience, methodology, non-neutrality, narrative, software development*

**Colton, J., & Walton, R. (2015). Disability as insight into social justice pedagogy in technical communication. *The Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy*, 8.**

Colton and Walton propose a curricular revision through the lens of disability studies in order to bring social justice into the technical communication classroom. Aligned with humanism and the critical-cultural turn, they outline a course on rhetoric, digital media, and disability studies piloted in the 2014-2015 academic year to show why social justice is relevant to the field. Students were involved in service learning and action research in hopes of developing a sense of "neo-Aristotelian virtue" and ethics predicated on the question, "Is a good document designer also an ethical and just document designer?" (n.p.). Through reading required texts and completing a service-learning project in collaboration with the local Center for Persons with Disabilities, student investigated interdependency, language use, and accessibility. An analysis of the course focused on two broader research questions: 1) What are students' perspectives on the relevance of social justice in their professional field? To their own professional goals? 2) What factors were useful for fostering in

students a critical reflection on social justice? Colton and Walton then outline the findings, which include reasons and ability to engage in inclusive, accessible communication design, and awareness of connections between social justice and technical communication.

*Tags: accessibility, Disability Studies, pedagogy*

**DeTora, L., & Klein, M. J. (2020). Invention questions for intercultural understanding: Situating regulatory medical narratives as narrative forms. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 50(2), 167–86.**

Building on the work of Carolyn Miller, who characterized technical writing as a humanistic discipline, DeTora and Klein critique the automated, depersonalized patient safety narratives used to document clinical trials (p. 172). They argue that the formulaic uniformity of documentation strips participants of their cultural contexts and nuances, which has implications for the health and safety of future patients. In adapting Bowden and Scott's Invention Questions for Technical Communication, the authors provide a framework for technical writers to address intercultural and healthcare questions, which in turn helps bridge the gap between regulatory writing and "true narrative" (p. 180). By better approximating the true patient experience, technical writers can help provide doctors, researchers, and technicians with the understanding necessary to deliver better care to the patients they serve. By looking at patient safety narratives in an intercultural context, DeTora and Klein expose the limitations and even potential harm of regulatory writing. Although regulatory writing may enhance the efficiency of communication in providing a uniformity of expression, it can also erase or gloss over cultural distinctions and audience need. Their adaptation of Invention Questions for Technical Communication help resurrect those cultural distinctions in ways that may have life or death consequences.

*Tags: medical narrative, regulatory writing, user experience, healthcare, professional writing research*

**Dombrowski, L., Harmon, E., & Fox, S. (2016, June). Social justice-oriented interaction design: Outlining key design strategies and commitments. In *Proceedings of the 2016 ACM Conference on Designing Interactive Systems* (pp. 656–671).**

Dombrowski et al. offer theoretical design strategies that orient designers towards social justice. In their view, social justice is not a single—nor stable—concept, but rather a continuously evolving vision, situated in and contextualized by social, historical, and cultural factors. Dombrowski et al. see this vision as collective and believe it should be viewed as a horizon to actively work towards—a process rather than a product. Designers, they say, must take a fluid approach that transforms alongside the ever-changing concept of justice. They outline six dimensions of justice in design—transformation, recognition, reciprocity, enablement, distribution, and accountability. In addition, designers must also commit to working amidst conflict, reflectively examining their positionality, and forming a personal stance on ethical and political issues. The framework provided in Dombrowski et al.'s article is meant as a starting point for designers who wish to incorporate social justice into their practice. While written for the field of human-computer interaction design, the just and equitable conceptualization and implementation of design is important for invoking change in the field of technical communication as well. This article can help technical communicators formulate their view of social justice and consider how an orientation towards justice might serve them in their research and practice. The socially just approaches to communication design outlined in the article seek to include diverse voices and perspectives, while acknowledging

the potential for conflict that arises when negotiating multiple voices with varying experiences, perspectives, and values. Because design can never be completely objective, just design practices require reflexivity on the part of the designer. When designing communication, technical communicators need to ask who their design serves and who it fails.

*Tags: information design, communication design, non-neutrality, technology*

**Durá, L., Perez, L., & Chaparro, M. (2019). Positive deviance as design thinking: Challenging notions of stasis in technical and professional communication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 33(4), 376–399.**

Durá et al. interrogate the Western presumption that any situation evaluated negatively demands reform by applying a design thinking approach towards focusing on extreme users (p. 377). By their definition, extreme users have identified a “solution or employed a successful work-around” (378). However, because they are outliers, they are often overlooked. Presenting a case study, the authors examine recidivism on the U.S.-Mexican border using a four-step inquiry process: 1) Identifying Odds and Positive Deviance (PD) Individuals; 2) Learning About PD Practices Through In-Depth Interviews; 3) Shifting and Vetting Results; and 4) Amplifying Practice-based Evidence. Utilizing these steps revealed nine behaviors and practices that were already accessible to the study’s peer group and could be implemented immediately. Due to their nature of being centered at the human-level, these nine behaviors were more likely to be sustained at the intervention level. This has social justice implications for TPC by showing how small actions at a local level can make a big difference in addressing system problems, as opposed to large and sweeping actions towards addressing change that may not be effective in the long-term. Practitioners can use this case study to help orientate their work to the local context of their project. The authors caution that results from one study or project, including their own, are not generalizable to another community. Rather, it is the design process that builds coalitions with local stakeholders to arrive at locally relevant and community-vetted results which is replicable. The authors advocate for TPC to utilize design thinking to consider wider audience bases. Extreme users can be an exciting source of surprising, innovative, and transformative grassroots ideas (p. 395).

*Tags: design thinking, stasis, border rhetorics*

**Edenfield, A. C., & Ledbetter, L. (2019, October). Tactical technical communication in communities: Legitimizing community-created user-generated instructions. In *Proceedings of the 37th ACM International Conference on the Design of Communication* (pp. 1–9).**

Edenfield and Ledbetter’s article explains how users can subvert traditional gatekeepers through the creation of their own do-it-yourself (DIY) documentation. Throughout the article, the authors work to 1) question assumptions about successful discourse, 2) prevent the appropriation of these user-generated discourse strategies for corporate gain, and 3) identify and protect marginalized communities. The article overviews two case studies done by the authors, both of which investigated how individuals, motivated by personal empowerment, use tactics to gain access or “hack” systems from which they have been excluded. Users, they found, employ de Certeau’s idea of tactical resistance, both in “making do” and subverting official tools to exert agency and create their own DIY instructional material. The creation of this user-generated documentation calls into question who gets considered an expert and what factors constitute successful instructional materials. They suggest that postcolonial participatory design should be implemented into technical communication, as it would allow marginalized voices to be heard. While Edenfield and Ledbetter take a decolonial

approach to their scholarship, their examination of injustices occurring within specific communities speaks to the larger injustices occurring at the societal level. Though decolonial approaches, they say, look inward (at individuals) rather than outward (at society), these approaches can remind technical communicators of the need to account for individual tactics that help marginalized individuals to enact justice in their own communities. Despite the differences between decoloniality and social justice, there are perhaps enough overlapping ideological principles to allow for compatible scholarship and coalition between the two fields. For instance, both social justice work and decolonial methods seek to center marginalized voices and speak out against injustice. Therefore, Edenfield and Ledbetter's approach complements social justice work by helping technical communicators recognize how individual injustices often stem from systemic disparities.

*Tags: decolonization, DIY instructions, user-generated documentation, tactical communication, participatory design*

**Hitt, A. (2018). Foregrounding accessibility through (inclusive) universal design in professional communication curricula. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 81(1), 52–65.**

Hitt presents Universal Design (UD) as a way to think about accessibility and usability, and shares strategies to incorporate these practices in the classroom. Accessibility is not just presented as a requirement, but should be regarded as something both students with and without disabilities can benefit from. Hitt purports it should be foregrounded, rather than an afterthought, and is “an opportunity to create a rich rhetorical user experience for diverse populations” (p. 53). First, Hitt describes how UD can inform TPC pedagogy, then outlines how she scaffolded UD principles into a course titled “WRTG 3306 Writing as Information Design II: Usability and Accessibility.” The first project was to develop a persona for a student with a disability in order to get students to think critically about the users for whom we design. The second project involved students thinking critically about usability and accessibility principles by creating protocols. The third project involved usability testing to ensure accessibility. The final project involved creating accessible digital texts. Taken together, Hitt's examples for UD can help TPC scholars and teachers continue to examine their practices in order to continue working towards a more just field.

*Tags: accessibility, design, disability, usability, user experience*

**Hutter, L., & Lawrence, H. M. (2018). Promoting inclusive and accessible design in usability testing: A teaching case with users who are deaf. *Communication Design Quarterly*, 6(2), 21–30.**

Hutter and Lawrence point to a growing population of persons with deafness or hearing impairments to argue there is an exigency for usability practitioners, developers, and students training to enter industries to demonstrate a “rhetorical sensitivity for the cultural contexts” for which their projects are being developed (p. 21). Although designers, coders, and builders may be committed to creating accessible products and services, they must be aware how their practices may unintentionally produce systems rooted in audism, cultural appropriation, and technological paternalism. A common threat connecting these three oppressive systems is a need for “inclusive practices at every stage in the development of a product or application” (p. 25). TPC is particularly poised, with their rhetorical sensitivity to users' social, cultural, and historical contexts to reimagine usability testing, recruitment, writing user test protocols, and setting up test sessions with users who are deaf in mind. From a social justice lens, careful consideration for the needs of users who are deaf or have hearing impairments is one way to understand the oppression these users face when engaging with systems

designed with a bias towards hearing, and how these users can be often excluded in the design and user testing process. The authors conclude with guidelines for promoting an inclusive and accessible user test design structure, focusing on user testing with participants who are deaf and communicate in American Sign Language.

*Tags: user experience, disability, design, usability testing, accessibility*

**Jones, N. N. (2016). Narrative inquiry in human-centered design. *Journal of Technical Writing & Communication*, 46(4), 471–492.**

Jones offers a new feminist lens through which to consider human-centered design (HCD) with the ultimate goal of using HCD as a vehicle to advance social justice. She establishes the definition of HCD as more than just a design that is ultimately user-friendly, but as an approach to the entire design process in which end users and stakeholders are actually involved at each stage of the design process rather than simply being seen as abstract future consumers. Because HCD can allow voices that are not normally heard during the design process to guide the development of the final product, Jones argues that the approach is extremely well-suited to producing socially just results (however, she cautions that HCD is not *inherently* socially just, and therefore we can't assume that HCD automatically results in justice). To enhance the ability of HCD to advance social justice, Jones suggests incorporating feminist methodologies into the practice, specifically by using narrative inquiry to solicit stories of lived experience from users during the design process. By using narrative inquiry, especially when combined with an intentional effort to include marginalized users in the design process, designers can give voice to traditionally silenced user experiences, which ultimately improves the design. In addition, framing HCD as narrative inquiry can force the designer to confront their own biases and assumptions about end users, who they often (usually unconsciously, or at least non-maliciously) see as inferior in terms of knowledge and experience. Jones specifically suggests allowing users themselves to create the scenarios that the designers use during testing and the solicitation of narratives, to further avoid designer bias and to more accurately reflect the experience of the user.

*Tags: positionality, user experience, usability, design, human-centered design, narrative*

**Kim, L., & Lane, L. (2019). Dynamic design for technical communication. *Proceedings of SIGDOC 2019: "Broadening the Boundaries of Communication Design"* October 4-6, 2019, Portland, OR.**

Kim and Lane argue that TPC design practices should “always be orientated towards the people with disabilities—a consider-the-margins before considering the center approach” (p. 2). They also call their colleagues to utilize evidence-based-practices (EPB) as a framework for dynamic design practices. Properly incorporated, these practices can move beyond the boundaries for “routine end-user audience analysis to include a more diverse range of users with disability needs as part of a new user-centered standard” (p. 2). Currently, 2.4 percent of the U.S. population between 16-75 years old lives with a visual disability. Globally, the World Health Organization estimates that 20 percent of the world's population live with a visual impairment. As a social justice concern, people with disabilities are disproportionately affected by undereducation and unemployment, numbers that similarly correlate with economic insecurity and poverty (p. 3). Long-term commitments from the TPC community in research and design practices would offer people with low vision improved user experiences and access to training and education. Today's information world often relies of visual acuity. Addressing diverse modes of information dissemination is a crucial place for TPC to center

their practices and research to increase information access. In a call to shift boundaries in the TPC field, the authors present their engagement with accessibility experts at the Veterans Affairs Vision Rehabilitation Clinic, practitioners from local large and small corporations, and the growing body of scholarship literature on accessibility and usability. Using this background, they call for “extending current or traditional boundary lines for visual design,” accounting for how the population with visual impairments will continue to grow as the Baby Boomer generation continues to age. Looking towards the future, research will continue in medical, health, and psychology spaces to inform our understanding of how the eye and brain process visual stimuli. For TPC, this information is coming from many different sources. To use this information towards informing text design practices, the authors propose using EPB at the intersection of TPC practices, research evidence, and user input (p. 3) to continually push boundaries and design to benefit all users.

*Tags: universal design, document design, accessibility*

**Oswal, S. K. (2018). Can workplaces, classrooms, and pedagogies be disabling? *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 81(1), 3–19.**

Oswal first gives an overview of the context of the special issue, stating that with the digital turn in professional communication, one needs to consider the digitized workplace and accessibility issues. Oswal then divides the rest of the article into four sections that traces the models of disability, moving from the medical to social to critical social definitions. The first section gives an overview of how people with disabilities have been historically perceived by society as well as the current critical social model and how that affects current disability studies. Next, he explains the Cartesian positivism roots and failures of the medical model of disability and how it reduces the individual's humanity by marking the body as “normal” or “abnormal.” He then outlines the social model of disability as a view in which society excludes those with disabilities through design practices. It is then critiqued for not considering intersectionality. Finally, the critical social model makes a distinction between impairment and disability that the original social model doesn't. The second section provides an overview of the articles presented in this issue of *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*. Each contributor addresses questions of accessibility in the context of disability, and share ideas about how they practice inclusion, equity, and access, including notions of universal design, which in a social justice framework enhances notions of equity. The third section discusses what's needed for future research in business and professional communication in regard to disability and accessibility. The final section provides a note on the disability terminology used throughout the special issue including the differences between impaired/impairment, disability/handicapped, and blind/visual impairment.

*Tags: accessibility, digital communication, disability, anti-racism*

**Oswal, S. K., & Palmer, Z. B. (2020). Culturally situated do-it-yourself instructions for making protective masks: Teaching the genre of instructional design in the age of COVID-19. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 1–7.**

Osawal and Palmer center their article around examining and juxtaposing cross-cultural communication approaches from the United States, France, India, and Spain. This article interrogates the construction of these communications channels; asking who has access, the type of information being conveyed, tone taken within these communication channels, and the visual and physical presentations of these channels. By juxtaposing cross-culturally, the authors are able to point out the faults and deficiencies within certain communication practices. For instance, the United States

pamphlet contained an authoritative tone which assumed those reading knew about Covid-19, why masks are needed, and the ways to protect themselves. Versus the Indian pamphlet, which was more informal in tone, taking the time to address the virus, explain the situation, and even color coordinate the pamphlet to readily keep people and different subgroups engaged. Osawal and Palmer imprint on their readers how communicators from different cultures determine content shared and touched upon depending on their audience and the rhetoric of their given culture. Osawal and Palmer also touch on the ways in which authors may take for granted information known and information readily available to their audiences and how that may be detrimental to their general audience. Technical communicators can take away from this article the need to create pamphlets and materials that can be universally used- taking into consideration different cultures, knowledges basis, and tone needed to convey their message- so that their information can reach a much wider audience. Not taking these steps into consideration creates a wider space for misinformation campaigns and needless deaths. Social justice calls for equitable treatment for all people, meaning not only accessible information for all but also conveying that information in a way for all to understand.

*Tags: information design, DIY, COVID-19, pedagogy*

**Palmeri, J. (2006). Disability studies, cultural analysis, and the critical practice of technical communication pedagogy. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 15(1), 49–65.**

Palmeri offers a critical-social look at how technical communication practices can further marginalize the lived experiences, knowledges and material needs of people with disabilities. He observes how disability studies can intervene “the pedagogy of usability, communication technology, linguistic bias, narrative, and discourse communities.” Furthering Wilson’s work in her essay, “Making Disability Visible” (2000), which discussed how disability studies can contribute to the pedagogy and theory of medical and scientific writing, Palmeri interrogates how technical communication normalizes and affects the social construction of disability. Because technical communication redefines the ableist notion of normalcy and eugenic discourses, Palmeri suggests appealing to audience’s emotions to advocate for worker and consumer safety; discussing and interrogating technical communication’s discourse around access and usability; rethinking participatory design and assistive technology; and critiquing linguistic ableism. Echoing feminist scholars, he suggests incorporating autobiographical disability narratives, though they must also be interrogated to ensure they are not reinforcing the medical model of disability. By centering these narratives, scholars center marginalized audience perspectives, which allows people who are oppressed to self-advocate and feel empowered.

*Tags: disability, feminism, pedagogy, usability, technology*

**Pflugfelder, E. H. (2017). Reddit’s “Explain Like I’m Five”: Technical descriptions in the wild. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 26(1), 25–41.**

Pflugfelder’s article identifies an exigency in the field—the need to broaden our views of TPC and consider how technical communication happens outside of academic or professional settings. He begins by contrasting how the genre of technical descriptions is taught versus how these descriptions function in real life. He then outlines past scholarship that focuses on user-generated technical communication and notes that often these documents tactically break from industry best practices. Through a case study of Reddit’s Explain Like I’m Five (ELI5)—a subreddit thread that seeks simplified explanations to complex questions—Pflugfelder shows how redditors, within an actor network made up of users and user-generated texts, are performing symbolic-analytic work by

collaboratively forming meaning, compiling responses, clarifying ideas, and bringing up new questions. Drawing from the multiple voices present on the thread, redditors work to curate and refine their individual answers in an attempt to satisfactorily answer the question posed. Successful explanations, Pflugfelder found, were more likely to 1) be revised based on other interactions within the thread, 2) translate ideas into simple language, 3) acknowledge or thank other users who contributed to understanding, and 4) offer a summary using the TL;DR technique. The process of negotiating meaning from multiple sources is essential to work towards social justice, for as Pflugfelder notes, when we listen only to the loudest voices, our perspective is skewed. Similarly, technical communicators must be open to less traditional methods of delivering information, such as the use of metaphors and analogies, to make descriptions more accessible to a lay audience. Those with an interest in social justice may see the potential for additional research examining this type of user-generated symbolic-analytical work in relation to Walton et al.'s 3Ps—positionality, privilege, and power.

*Tags: counternarrative, usability, user-generated documentation, tactical communication*

**Rose, E. J. (2017). Design as advocacy: Using a human-centered approach to investigate the needs of vulnerable populations. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 46(4), 427–445.**

Rose poses human-centered design as a strategy for understanding the needs of users and advocating for vulnerable populations in an increasingly digitalized world. Rose begins by outlining current social justice concerns in the field of technical communication and design. To gain a complete understanding of users, Rose believes technical communicators must look past the ideal user and consider whose voices are missing in design decisions and the potential ways these absences can replicate existing inequities and cause disenfranchisement to already marginalized groups. Human-centered design, she poses, works towards equity by centering the diverse and complex knowledge of users. Rose shows the exigency for this method by highlighting findings from her ethnographic study of the public transportation practices of homeless riders. She discusses how policy and design decisions made by transit authorities can either benefit from the inclusion of this group or neglect and potentially harm this population. The article ends with a reflection on how human-centered approaches to design can be used to advocate for vulnerable populations. Rose sees the concept of social justice as of utmost importance to the methodology of human-centered design. By seeking out the voices of vulnerable populations, technical communicators can help create more equitable documentation. First, technical communicators must identify vulnerable populations and commit to representing their interests. Next, they must question traditional notions of expertise and work to privilege the knowledge of these marginalized groups. Then, rather than focusing merely on solving technology interface problems for users, technical communicators should shift their ethical priorities to understanding users as real people with real problems that technology can either solve or unintentionally deepen. By including vulnerable populations in the design process, technical communicators can build coalitions with users that benefit not only the most marginalized users, but the system as a whole.

*Tags: design, advocacy, human-centered, vulnerable demographics*

**Sánchez, F. (2017). The roles of technical communication researchers in design scholarship. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 47(3), 359–391.**

Sánchez analyzes the evolution in TPC over the past few decades towards inclusion of visual design in professional writing, which is further pushed by the developments in UX, or user experience design. Currently, the line between writer and designer is becoming blurred, with numerous academic programs providing courses and training in both writing and design theory and practice. With any evolution, design is gaining in complexity due to the use of multiple, and at times contradictory terms which TPC has originated, or borrowed from other fields. These terms may include, “document design,” “visual design,” or “participatory design” (p. 360). While the field has extensive research investigating design, Sánchez calls for research that specifically addresses how researchers position themselves “in relation to the articulates of design that they study” (p. 360). For example, articles that focus on Web 2.0 artifacts rarely discuss any cognitive design principles that guide the researcher in the critique of these platforms. Instead, they center on discussing interfaces, networks, and other structures. To aid the conversation around what TPC does when it engages with design research, Sánchez provides a model that communicates the field’s current research while mapping how researchers discuss their “roles in studying design through these artifacts” (p. 370). In this model, design researchers accomplish the work of observers, critics, testers, creators, and consultants of design (p. 365). This model is especially valuable in social justice coalition building as it provides a shared understanding of the current design research for TPC to both understand the work that has been done, and how to explain this work to neighbors in practice who may be interested in working together to address sites of oppression.

*Tags: visual design, user experience, document design, participatory design*

**Shivers-McNair, A., Gonzales, L., & Zhyvotovska, T. (2019). An intersectional technofeminist framework for community-driven technology innovation. *Computers and Composition*, 51, 43–54.**

In this article, Shivers-McNair et al. describe the creation of the Multilingual User Experience (Multilingual UX) as a community-driven tool for providing apps, websites, and other technical documents in multiple languages so that they can be accessed and understood by users of multiple linguistic backgrounds. Unlike other initiatives that seek to translate technologies for capitalistic gain (i.e., to gain more customers, or to promote the company as being more globally-minded for profit), Multilingual UX was created and is run with the user experience in mind, entirely separate from considerations about revenue. It seeks to bring in and blend community users from diverse backgrounds and to eliminate (or at least significantly weaken) the distinctions between the roles of “researcher” and “user.” Shivers-McNair et al. use a technofeminist framework—the idea that the experience of technology is shaped by the bodies and cultures that use it—to situate the goals of Multilingual UX within the areas of technical communication, social justice, and cultural studies. Shivers-McNair et al. go on to describe the Multilingual UX Research Symposium, in which they gathered 100 stakeholders, many of whom were researchers with backgrounds in user experience studies, and presented workshops and roundtables centered around Multilingual UX and its implications in technical communication and user experience spaces. In the article, the authors present examples of the feedback they received on Multilingual UX from the symposium participants. Most of the feedback, both about Multilingual UX in general and about the symposium specifically, was positive, but the authors also acknowledge the constructive criticism they received and how they took such criticism seriously when planning future iterations of Multilingual UX. Ultimately, they make three recommendations for future researchers: 1) “Use storytelling as a starting point for technology innovation,” (2) “Trace and document labor in feminist technology design,” and 3) “Work between and through disciplinary boundaries to enact socially responsible human-centered design” (p. 51- 52).

*Tags: user experience, usability, design, technofeminism, multilingual user experience*

**Sun, H. (2012). *Cross-cultural technology design: Creating culture-sensitive technology for local users*. Oxford University Press.**

Sun examines the benefits and liabilities of approaching consumer-orientated technology product design from a user-experience perspective. Using the example of mobile text messaging, she focuses on how users in diverse cultural settings use, reuse, appropriate, and reject technology tools to meet their own needs. This creativity on the part of users, which Sun describes as user localization, speaks to the reality that developers are falling short of embracing local needs in their technology designs (p. 40). She explains that technology products are often designed with one cultural context in mind, but sold to multiple audiences who represent other cultural contexts, and who may not share the same needs or even the same view of the world as the original intended audience (p.29-30). Addressing questions of how and why a particular technology is used within a specific culture can give designers information about what products are needed, and how to involve local users in the participatory product design. Sun writes, “instead of treating user involvement as a means to an end, participatory design considers user involvement as the end itself” (p. 36). One solution she offers to address how to utilize a participatory design is to expand the standard usability metrics from learnability, efficiency, memorability, low error rate, and satisfaction to also include evaluating the socio-cultural contexts surrounding the digital artifact (p. 29-30). By bringing our attention back to the action and meaning of the technology use, practitioners can begin projects by making the rhetorical decisions necessary to fit local culture needs.

Sun divides her book into three sections: theoretical grounding, case histories, and scholarly implications (p. xvii). In the first section, Sun explains basic concepts for cross cultural technology design, and also explains her design framework, called CLUE, or “culturally localized user experience” (p. xvii). This framework answers the challenge practitioners face when designing a useable and meaningful technology tool for culturally diverse audiences. The second section addresses case studies of Chinese and American participants who use text-messaging practices diversely, depending on their needs. These case studies support Sun’s premise that people use and adapt the tools they are given to serve their needs in school, work, relationships, and socially. Technology is not culturally interchangeable, and practitioners should realize how greatly cultural and situational contexts determine how audiences use the technology in their lives. The final section provides an examination of the CLUE framework and how it can be accomplished in user localization sites. Additionally, Sun provides directions for future research and practice using the CLUE framework in globalization settings. For social justice advocates in technology design and research, Sun’s CLUE framework provides a way of understanding how diverse users creatively reappropriate technology (which was not designed with them in mind) to fit their needs, and how paying attention to our positionality as designers can aid us in creating technologies that are appropriate for diverse audiences.

*Tags: design, user experience, technology, design, cultural communication*

**Sun, H. (2019, July). From user experience to engagement: A new direction in professional communication and HCI. In *2019 IEEE Professional Communication Conference (ProComm)* (pp. 237–238). IEEE.**

Sun presents a rising international research sentiment that pushes back against the traditional Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) perspective. Traditionally, HCI utilizes usage metrics which capture user engagement using numerical values. These numerical values may capture the number of clicks, the amount of time a user spends with a product, or even the affective user state (p. 237). Sun argues that an orientation with privileges click-through rates ignores the embodied user experience. To overcome this historical perspective, Sun presents a re-imagining of the “relationship between humans and computing devices” by conceptualizing engagement through a relational view of design (p. 237). To support the need for reconceptualizing engagement and exploring what this turn can mean for professional communication and UX, she presents recent research activities in Japan and Montreal, focusing on the engagement concept through a practice-theoretical approach. This approach utilizes an understanding of user as an 1) embodied activity, 2) mediated by artifacts, and 3) based on shared understandings (p. 237). This relational view of design centers everyday practice to transform equalities of power, and views engagement through both macro and microstructures of lived experiences. Throughout the presentation, recent case studies of global social media development are provided to illustrate how this reimagining of user engagement can be used for global cultural diversity, inclusion, and engagement.

*Tags: embodiment, user experience, power inequities, cultural communication*

**Van Ittersum, D. (2014). Craft and narrative in DIY instructions. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 23(3), 227–246.**

Van Ittersum looks at the tactical narrative strategies used to disseminate knowledge through user-generated instructional material, claiming that the authors of DIY instructions engage in the art of techne by bringing creativity and resourcefulness into technical materials. He examines techne in action by looking at how user-generated documentation on the website Instructables.com presents conventional elements of technical documentation in an unconventional manner. In this participatory online space, users mix personal narrative with procedural discourse. This platform lends itself to a collaborative environment where even the comments section can be seen to function as instructions as users collaborate and build new meaning around the original post. The instructions posted on this site often break many of the “rules” of technical communication. Rather than remaining clear and concise, users elaborate to meet the rhetorical goal of building the confidence of readers. Through the examination of specific instruction sets, Van Ittersum aims to show how narrative can be used as an effective device for disseminating craft knowledge. DIYers show their resourcefulness by describing how they overcome struggle and use narratives to help make craft knowledge explicit. Finally, Van Ittersum presents pedagogical takeaways for instructors of technical communication. DIY instructions, he says, shows students that choices are purposeful, not arbitrary, and conventions can be broken to meet rhetorical goals. Technical communicators should seriously examine the tactics used by DIYers who have figured out how to successfully incorporate narrative into instructional documentation. Van Ittersum’s study show that there is value in alternative methods, and that practitioners should consider what they privilege in technical instructions. By including more narrative forms of knowing, technical communicators can show that experience has value. Additionally, this approach has the potential to showcase diverse experiences that inspire readers.

*Tags: usability, pedagogy, information design, user-generated documentation, DIY instructions, tactical communication*

**Walters, S. (2010). Toward an accessible pedagogy: Dis/ability, multimodality, and universal design in the technical communication classroom. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 19(4), 427–454.**

With the rising number of students with disabilities in the classroom, Walters outlines how technical communication has treated disability and challenges educators to reframe the teaching of disability studies and accommodations. Involving those in the design process is instrumental in creating an accessible classroom as it considers a wider range of students in need of accommodations rather than disability-specific, which tends to focus on visible disabilities. “Similar to the social turn in technical communication, theorists in disability studies have created a social model of disability to enlarge perspectives on science, medicine, and technology” (p 430). Walters challenges the medical model of disability by outlining the differences between impairment and disability, and critiquing ableism. Stating that the technical communication classroom is ideal for revising notions of disability, Walters promotes Universal Design for Learning, a pedagogical design concept. She then outlines her positionality as a teacher-researcher and a disability studies methodology. She argues that a multimodal approach “offer students and users with a wide range of dis/abilities multiple means and methods for expressing information” (p. 437).

*Tags: disability, design, multimodality, pedagogy*

**Walton, R. (2016). Supporting human dignity and human rights: A call to adopt the first principle of human-centered design. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 46(4), 402–426.**

Walton makes connections between the social justice turn in TPC and earlier arguments for human-centered design. Specifically, she shows how Richard Buchanan's call for human dignity and human rights to be the focal point can and should be applied to not only human-centered design but all of TPC. In this view, technical communicators would prioritize people instead of communication. If humans are truly at the center of design, then more varied human experience should be considered when designing in TPC. Walton claims that people are the real end-goal of technical and professional communication, not the tools or interfaces or the communication itself. Therefore, technical communicators must consider how their actions and creations impact the dignity and the rights of the humans that they are writing and designing for. She uses her own research in Rwanda as an example of the importance of keeping human dignity and human rights at the center of all technical and professional communication work. This shift in orientation allows for a social justice view of usability. If every person has intrinsic worth, then usability is no longer about what is fastest, easiest, and most efficient in a capitalistic sense; it is about recognizing technology as non-neutral and making decisions for all individual and diverse users.

*Tags: human-centered design, human rights, user experience, epistemology*

**Zdenek, S. (2020). Transforming access and inclusion in composition studies and technical communication. *College English*, 82(5), 536–44.**

Zdenek describes Disability Studies as the bridge between composition studies and technical communication. When thinking of access and inclusion needs, these disciplines assume the default user is nondisabled. By reading across disability studies, we find transformative access in “CS in terms of TPC’s expertise in workplace practices and interface design” (p. 536), expansive notions of audience and purpose, and challenges to communication sites, modes, and contexts. When disability

is treated as an afterthought or add-on to curriculum design and workplace practices, it reinforces the status quo that positions disability as an exception to the norm. This article considers how we might center and address issues of disability and access. Zdenek advocates for assigning more than just a single essay on disability studies and thinking beyond accessibility checklists. He highlights work by current scholars including Margaret Price, Ella R. Browning, Elizabeth Brewer, Melanie Yergeau and Cynthia Selfe, and considers a multimodal turn in composition studies and technical communication, which considers access from the beginning of the project rather than additive. This turn is in line with TPC's and social justice's "core value of designing documents, interfaces, and user experiences with multiple modes and materials to meet audiences' needs within specific contexts" (p. 538).

*Tags: accessibility, design, Disability Studies, multimodality, TPC curriculum*

## CRITICAL DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN TPC

The increased use and reliance on digital technologies has expanded the purview of possibilities and implications of TPC scholarship. This sub-section features scholarship adopting critical approaches to digital technologies and offers connections to social justice.

**Batova, T. (2020). “Picturing” xenophobia: Visual framing of masks during COVID-19 and its implications for advocacy in technical communication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 1–7.**

Batova juxtaposes the way in which countries articulate and talk about Covid-19, versus the way in which they showcase it through media. The focal point around her article is exploring “priming.” Botova examines how news media and outlets use headlines to show scarcity and encourage fear over a shortage of life saving mask, and then juxtaposes these headlines with pictures of Asians buying masks in markets. Those photographed are often of Asian descent, all having masks on. This is done to create the visual framing an to prime the memory to associate these two concepts together; shortage of life saving masks but those of Asian descent have them and/or are hoarding them all. This context, or lack thereof, can begin to sow malicious feelings and, in this case, xenophobia. The call to action that Botova leaves technical communication with is one to push for the sharing of context, not only when it comes to texts but also when it comes to the sharing and using of multimedia images and videos. Technical communicators can bring context to images and videos, but to be truly socially conscious and just, they must also hold accountable those who use their information without proper context. It is not enough to share information; technical communicators must also monitor the ways in which it is used. To monitor the ways in which a technical communicator work is conveyed helps to fight misinformation by reestablishing the truth to the context of both images and language. It is no longer enough to just create, technical communicators must take the social justice action and monitor the ways in which their creations are spread throughout the world so as not to perpetuate systems of oppression, hate, and misinformation.

*Tags: digital media, xenophobia, COVID-19, advocacy*

**Byrd, A. (2019). Between learning and opportunity: A study of African American coders' networks of support. *Literacy in Composition Studies*, 7(2), 31–56.**

Byrd studies how African American coders develop networks of support that, he argues, are a part of their coding literacy. He uses critical race theory and ecological theories of writing to display how literacies, including digital literacies such as coding, are perceived to be as simple as access, when in reality overcoming the inequalities surrounding literacy is much more complicated. One must consider not only the intersections of identity of an individual, but also the networks or ecologies that they are entwined in. To show this, Byrd observed and interviewed participants in a coding academy that covers the cost, and therefore grants access to this digital literacy. The findings offer evidence to Byrd's claim. The coders' ability to learn and be successful in the course were enmeshed in both material and nonmaterial ecologies that the participants had some but not total control over. Each of the three case studies unveiled the complex context surrounding the coder and their ability to be successful, including racial oppression and profiling, family support or lack thereof, financial situation, and location in space and place. This article reveals how researchers can and should be examining points of access through a social justice lens in order to more deeply consider what true access looks like, and if it is enough to mend inequalities. Additionally, Byrd offered tutoring for all

students, even those who didn't participate in the study, which demonstrates taking individual action for social justice.

*Tags: critical race theory, coding, digital literacies, Black TPC, qualitative research*

**Colton, J. S., Holmes S., & Walwema, J. (2017). From noobguides to #OpKKK: Ethics of anonymous' tactical technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 26(1), 59–75.**

Colton et al. discuss the advent and proliferation of tactical technical communication, defined as technical communication that is achieved through a near-militaristic emphasis on control. Tactical technical communication includes both traditional technical documents and newer user-created, do-it-yourself guide genres. Colton et al. propose replacing the old standard of Kimball's interpretation of de Certeau's original theory of tactical technical communication with the concepts modeled after feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero's work on vulnerability. Where Kimball/de Certeau view tactical communication through a lens of the *ethics of tenacity* (or, the idea that a tactical technical communicator must not back down and concede any points lest they lose their control over the topic and reader), Colton et al. propose instead an *ethics of care*, aiming to complicate our current understanding of tactical communication and, by using care as a basis, make tactical communication more ethical. To illustrate the need for an ethics of care, Colton et al. present a case study of documents created by the hacktivist collective known as Anonymous, a group bound together only by a shared commitment to using tactical communication to make change (though not any *specific* change, as the members of the collective don't share any specific political ideology or social goals beyond simply disliking society's status quo).

*Tags: digital technology, tactical technical communication, ethics, activism*

**Del Hierro, V. (2018). DJs, playlists, and community: Imagining communication design through hip hop. *Communication Design Quarterly Review*, 7(2), 28–39.**

Del Hierro presents Hip Hop as a model for social justice-based technical communication work. Hip Hop, Del Hierro claims, promotes reflexivity, rhetorical listening, and principles of localized usability and accessibility. Through the case study of a Houston DJ, he explains how Hip Hop artists combine local contexts and cultures with global information in a way that both deconstructs and reconstructs the medium they work with. He argues that technical communicators can use Hip Hop as a model for shifting discourse in response to user feedback. DJs maintain a constant awareness of their audience and adjust their approaches based on the user feedback they gain through reading the space. This constant call and response ensures communities play a vital role in information design and communication. Throughout the article, Del Hierro reflects on the similarities between Hip Hop DJs and technical communicators. Both, he says, navigate texts and create/remix media in ways that cater to specific audiences while maintaining accessibility and curating/preserving stories, histories, and traditions. Operating in marginalized communities, Hip Hop works to leverage and honor the knowledge of community members, and promotes more just practices, such as participatory design. By studying the communicative practices of Hip Hop artists, technical communicators can learn to see and use the multiple layers of discourse present in community spaces. These layers work to make visible previously overlooked or marginalized methods of communication design. Del Hierro posits that technical communicators can use Hip Hop as a model for disseminating community-driven initiatives into globalized spaces while de-centering dominant narratives. Just as Hip Hop practices

begin as localized community practices that expand globally, so too can social justice initiatives rooted in community practices spread to promote large-scale societal change.

*Tags: technology, user-experience, usability, accessibility, participatory design, hip-hop*

**Haas, A. (2007). Wampum as hypertext: An American Indian intellectual tradition of multimedia theory and practice. *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 19(4), 77–100.**

Haas contends that readers should expand their orientation to technical communication and digital theories and practices. She writes a counterstory to the Eurocentric history of hypertext and multimedia, positioning Wampum belts as hypertextual technologies and American Indians as the first known skilled multimedia workers and intellectuals in the Americas. Haas explains how the Wampum beads were used as a sign technology to record events, perform ceremonies, and mark time. These belts represented a living rhetoric that was not static, but changing and dependent on the involvement of community members to remember and share. This revisioning of digital and visual rhetorical sovereignty reveals the many technologies developed and used rhetorically by communities outside of the dominant (white) historical timeline. This article offers a social justice framework by incorporating concepts such as digital and visual rhetoric, interactive design, and multimodal webs of meaning to support wampum as technology that is sustained through relational memory and interaction of community members. It also calls for a revisioning of history to reveal the multiple threads that weave together our shared histories. Haas flips the script by showing how Wampum technologies called for civic engagement and responsibility, whereas contemporary hypertext is disembodied and devoid of responsibility. This text pushes readers to consider the problem of objective technology and turn instead towards ideas such as plurality of knowledges, technological literacies, and experiences of the world.

*Tags: counternarrative, multimodalities, indigenous theories, digital rhetorics, technology*

**Jones, N. N., & Williams, M. F. (2018). Technologies of disenfranchisement: Literacy tests and Black voters in the US from 1890 to 1965. *Technical Communication*, 65(4), 371–386.**

In this timely article, Jones and Williams reflect on the United States' history of interference, interruption, and oppression in the nation's voting process through the use of voting technologies and technical documentation as a means of interfering with voter rights. In their study, the authors identify and examine two types of historical documents, literacy tests and voter registration applications, as specific forms of "election technologies" used to disenfranchise Black voters from 1890 to 1965. Using McCornack's information manipulation theory, which "explains intentionally deceptive messaging as a covert violation of audience expectations in relation to information quantity, quality, manner, and relevance" (p. 373) to conduct a critical rhetorical analysis, the authors demonstrate how these documents functioned as legal technologies of disenfranchisement. Ultimately, Jones and Williams conclude, "Examining historical documents in our field underscores the ways in which technical and professional communication can be used and have been used to uphold oppressive power structures and implement harmful and oppressive practices" (p. 384)—but they also demonstrate how TPC can be used just as effectively to resist these oppressive practices.

What's more, Jones and Williams point out how "Technical communication scholarship, when wrestling with communication that fails the audience, has been mostly concerned with well-meaning and unintentional mistakes in technology, text, graphics, and document design" (p. 373), while often overlooking the many instances of intentionally oppressive technical documents that "are affecting

already marginalized groups in social, political, and economic ways” (p. 374). Speaking directly to the social justice turn in TPC, the authors argue that TPC scholars have a responsibility to “grapple with intentional deception and harm that can be not only embedded in, but be the sole purpose for, the design and implementation of some texts and technologies” (372) as well as negotiate issues of power, positionality, and privilege inherent to TPC.

*Tags: anti-racism, positionality, user experience, methodology, non-neutrality, technology, accessibility, design, voter disenfranchisement, democracy*

**Ledbetter, L. (2018). The rhetorical work of YouTube's beauty community: Relationship-and identity-building in user-created procedural discourse. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 27(4), 287–99.**

Ledbetter analyzes user-generated YouTube videos to complicate and expand our understanding of what constitutes procedural discourse and to reveal how this discourse can foster community and identity. A professor and self-described member of the YouTube beauty community, Ledbetter draws on her own experience as a person of mixed heritage who turned to the platform to reduce feelings of isolation in a physical environment that failed to reflect her own identity. She performed two case studies involving participant interviews and video artifacts. Her findings reveal that women often use storytelling and personal experiences to create an ethos that gives them credibility with viewers. They create a participatory experience through feedback generated by likes/dislikes and commentary, which fosters community and agency for and within a diverse global population. Her studies prove that these videos are about much more than makeup, as they can “destabilize some of the norms of race and appearance” and can challenge “heteronormative gender norms” (p. 296-297) for entrepreneurs and participants. Ledbetter’s analysis suggests that individuals can create opportunities that allow them to share their lived experiences and personal identities, an act that is particularly empowering when those experiences and identities are distorted or absent from mainstream media and historical record. Physical representation matters and in seizing a technology that enables greater representation where little exists, the women challenge the often-unquestioned norms that privilege some individuals at the expense of others.

*Tags: feminism, user experience, entrepreneurial, technology, YouTube, identity-building*

**Noble, S. U. (2018). *Algorithms of oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*. New York University Press.**

Noble examines the ways in which search engine algorithms—though often falsely painted as neutral tools—both reflect and construct societal bias in regard to race, gender, class, and more. Inspired by a 2011 Google search of the term “Black girls” that yielded a front page of pornography sites, Noble sets out to explore how algorithms “reinforce oppressive relationships and enact new modes of racial profiling,” which she calls “technological redlining” (p. 1). Noble’s study is underscored by her assertion that “there is a missing social and human context in some types of algorithmically driven decision making, and this matters for everyone engaging with these types of technologies in everyday life” (p. 10). Noble divides her book into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the concept of an algorithm, how Google’s works, and what effects this has on public knowledge and information. In Chapter 2, she discusses PageRank and argues that a lack of education around oppression and inequity in “traditional engineering curriculum” (p. 65) “makes for the many kinds of egregious tech designs we see that come at the expense of people of color and women” (p. 70). Chapter 3 highlights the importance of noncommercial search engines, and the catastrophic consequences that can stem

from false information that appears to be factual—an issue perpetuated by the common belief that algorithms lead to the best or most truthful resources showing up on the first page of a search engine’s results. Chapter 4 critiques the field of information studies and illustrates how the issue of classification in public information is an old and systemic problem; Chapter 5 continues this line of thinking by discussing the future of public knowledge and where information professionals fit in this discussion of algorithms. Chapter 6 calls for the intervention of public policy, claiming that the harm caused by corporate control over the internet far outweighs any possible benefit.

Noble concludes the book by calling for Black feminist technology studies, an approach to Internet research that she defines as “an epistemological approach to researching gendered and racialized identities in digital and analog media studies, and it offers a new lens for exploring power as mediated by intersectional identities” (p. 171-2). Noble herself illustrates why engaging with such work is important for TPC scholars when she calls for interdisciplinary scholarship and dialogue “to better describe and understand how algorithmically driven platforms are situated in intersectional sociohistorical contexts and embedded within social relations...now, more than ever, we need experts in the social sciences and digital humanities to engage in dialogue with activists and organizers, engineers, designers, information technologists, and public-policy makers before blunt artificial-intelligence decision making trumps nuanced human decision making” (p. 13).

*Tags: algorithms, design, non-neutrality, technology, usability, user experience*

**Reardon, D. C., Wright, D., & Malone, E. A. (2017). Quest for the happy ending to Mass Effect 3: The challenges of cocreation with consumers in a post-Certeauian age. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 26(1), 42–58.**

Reardon et al. posit that the digital age has carved out new spaces for consumers that move past de Certeau’s idea of tactical action towards true strategic change. The authors apply de Certeau’s theories of tactical and strategic action to the realm of video games by analyzing the controversy surrounding the game Mass Effect 3 (ME3)—the third installment of a popular sci-fi third-person RPG game. Unsatisfied with trilogy’s lackluster conclusion, players resorted to tactical action to create and distribute their own ending to the game. Reardon et al. show how game designers stubbornly rejected the preferences and artistic vision of the players, thus shutting down the opportunity to embrace cocreation. However, because players had access to a place of their own—social media—where neither game designers nor the corporate creator could touch them, they were able to turn their tactics into strategic action that laid claim to the game’s aesthetic space, a move that ultimately encroached on the corporation’s economic space. Through this cautionary tale, Reardon et al. show technical communicators how cocreation with users allows for the inclusion of marginalized voices. Crowdsourcing and open sourcing, they note, give users a voice in the design process and users who engage in modification often bring more diversity to the table than professional designers. This diversity is valuable, oftentimes allowing cocreated documentation to outperform expert deliverables. What’s interesting about the ME3 case is that players were able to carve out spaces where their action became strategic and actually damaged the corporate creator of the game, thus giving them power above mere tactical action. This ability to turn tactics into strategic action through the use of digital space creates possibilities for similar socially just change in the future.

*Tags: user experience, multimodality, user-generated documentation, tactical communication, participatory design*

**Sano-Franchini, J. (2018). Designing outrage, programming discord: A critical interface analysis of facebook as a campaign technology. *Technical Communication*, 65(4), 387–410**

Sano-Franchini studies how the design and interface of Facebook have contributed to and even instigated affective responses and hostile interactions between of users, and how these have been intertwined with political aims. She analyzes the ways in which the browsing, commenting, reacting, and posting features work together to create a sense of reality that speeds up users' sense of time and flattens complex concepts and identities. Through this detailed examination, Sano-Franchini shows how the design and functionality of Facebook actually flattens not only peoples' identities but also politics and political campaigns in a way that causes them to be easily quantifiable and commodified. This is an important analysis for social justice work in TPC because of the position of the technical communicator within projects that include user design, functionality, and etc. These virtual realities have embodied and material consequences, and we must consider how an interface has been created, for who, and with what purposes in mind. If they are not created with social justice in mind, then they very likely are oppressive in their use of algorithms and other capabilities.

*Tags: social media, digital literacies, user experience, human-centered design, non-neutrality*

**Tofteland-Trampe, R. (2017). Crossing the divide: Implications for technical communication user advocates. *Technical Communication*, 64(2), 141–153.**

Based on her ethnographic study of the teaching strategies utilized by community technology center tutors working with inexperienced users, Tofteland-Trampe argues that technical communication scholars and practitioners need to develop more culturally sensitive design and research methods. Her research contributes to existing scholarship on usability and user experience by conducting her study with participants who are often underrepresented (based on age, race, and experience with information and communication technology) and in a setting that is often overlooked (a community technology center located within a public library) in technical communication research. Tofteland-Trampe explains, “taking an approach of combining ethnographic data collection methods with a community-based setting is unique in usability research, offering meaningful insight into novice ICT users’ experiences” (p. 144) as she goes beyond typical business settings to improve user experience for those historically underrepresented in usability research. The results of this study indicate that inexperienced information and communication technology users are unable to take advantage of online resources because “they often lack the necessary physical experience working with [the technology] and the cultural knowledge to operate them” (p. 141). Based on these results, the need for additional contextual information and physical practice interacting with ICT hardware for novice users becomes apparent. These digital disparities, Tofteland-Trampe contends, will continue to endure unless technical communication user advocates work to understand the usability aspect of digital divides and address the needs of these particular users. In conclusion, the author argues that “in order to cultivate culturally sensitive methods, scholars and practitioners should seek settings and users with less privileged ICT access and take a user localization approach to develop more empathic, empowering, and culturally meaningful methods of communication” (p. 152).

*Tags: user experience, community engagement, methodology, technology, qualitative research, accessibility, design, user advocate, digital literacy*

## THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO TPC

This sub-section features scholarship drawing on critical orientations and theories to inform the social justice turn in TPC. This includes, but is not limited to, critical race theory (CRT), feminist theory, queer theory, and decolonial theory. Additionally, attention is made to the ethics of citational practices and its relevance to social justice approaches to TPC scholarship.

**Abbott, L. (2020). Tires, cigarettes, tampons, and the gendering of instructional comics. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 29(3), 240–254.**

Abbott claims that comics-based instructional documents include constructions of traditional genders. These visual instructions demonstrate how throughout time, gender has been constructed not only through words but through the conventions of the comic. When readers view the visual instructions, they associate certain gendered behaviors with what they are seeing. Abbott makes a strong connection between embodiment theories and cognition, and examines how a person's experience in a social environment is what continues to refine their cognitive thoughts. These environments, impact the social knowledge and feelings that are accepted as norms. One example included in this article is of two tampon instructionals for young women. The first, from the 1940s, does not even show the placement of the tampon, while a more recent how-to from the 1990s is more visually positive about the female body. These instructionals reflect socially constructed thoughts and feelings about the female body and how it should be represented in public forms of writing. While Abbott does critique these social constructions of gender, the purpose of this article is to use this history to show what is possible in the future. New and different gender roles can be constructed and normalized in similar ways: through integrating them into the medium of the instructional comic. Because technical communicators create these, they have power to create more inclusive representations of gender, which can alter what people in society think about gender roles.

*Tags: non-neutrality, visual rhetoric, digital literacies, feminist theory, instructional documents*

**Agboka, G. Y. (2020). ‘Subjects’ in and of research: Decolonizing oppressive rhetorical practices in technical communication research. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 50(1), 1–16.**

Agboka highlights the problematic use of the term “subjects” to refer to human participants in research projects. Starting from the specific example of Institutional Review Board forms, he explains the problematic history of the word “subjects,” particularly in terms of its use to describe those oppressed people who were subjected to the will of Euro-centric colonizers. Research “subjects,” he argues, are therefore positioned as inherently inferior to their researchers (read: masters) in a way that, while not intentional, does real harm to the participants. He advocates for instead using terms like “participants,” which does not imply a hierarchical structure to the research framework; the researchers can even be seen as “participants” themselves, thus placing everyone involved on the same level. Agboka then branches out from a specific focus on the word “subjects” to provide a call to action for TPC scholars to actively question the words we use in order to move toward a decolonial framework for the field. Although the use of words like “subjects” is by no means restricted to the TPC field, he argues, the interdisciplinary nature of TPC places us in a unique position to point out and correct oppressive rhetoric across a variety of contexts.

*Tags: anti-racism, methodology, decolonial frameworks, interdisciplinarity*

**Ahmed, S. (2016). *Living a feminist life*. Duke University Press.**

Ahmed's work retraces and regrounds her earlier scholarship in feminist theory to think through what questions of praxis. Though she carries on her method of exploring the charged histories of words such as "will," and "diversity," she reflects on how those words work in practical contexts and how they shape how she moves in the world. Indeed, *Living a Feminist Life* an academic memoir which seeks to extend beyond the reach of academic feminism through its commitment to accessible, albeit still highly poetic and theoretical, language. While the work does not explicitly make connections to socially just technical communication, it may usefully influence technical communication scholars' ethical commitments. In particular, Ahmed deploys a strict policy of resisting the citation of white men as such a practice reinscribes their power and influence in feminist theory. She even characterizes critical theory as a practice re-citing and reinscribing the power of a canon of critical theorists. Such a practice raises questions of disciplinary formation through citation, which may be worthy of consideration in light of the social justice turn.

*Tags: citation ethics, disciplinary formation, feminism, feminist theory, methodology*

**Borg, E. (2000). Citation practices in academic writing. In *Patterns and perspectives: Insights into EAP writing practice* (pp. 26–44).**

Borg's article analyzes the citational practices of native and non-native English speakers in academic writing samples. He observes that non-native speakers seem to have comparable problems when formatting citations relative to native speakers and that the actual rhetorical use of citations is similar. A key difference in citational error between the two groups, however, is the non-native speakers experienced greater difficulty citing authors secondhand. In other words, when they try to cite sources that their original source cites, they find the formatting of this citation less intuitive. Borg's attributes this difference in formatting less to a failure to acquire a particular formal practice, but more to differing ideologies surrounding citational practices. He arrives at this conclusion by observing two trends: 1) that the non-native students preferred to submit writing samples that relied more heavily on drawing from personal experience, and 2) that the non-native speakers, when tasked to write in a genre that requires more active citation, would use fewer citations than their native-speaking counterparts. Borg conjectures that his results are informed by the different kinds of ideological norms between the native speaker and non-native speaker samples: the native speakers are brought up in an individualist British cultural context whereas the range of non-native speakers all come from collectivist cultural context. From a collectivist standpoint, given that all thoughts and feelings are inextricably connected to others, the necessity of attributing a source to an individual author is less culturally relevant.

However brief and limited Borg's study is, his work demonstrates how competing ideologies are embedded in the practice and assessment of writing. This has implications for the social justice turn in technical communication insofar as it challenges the privileged epistemic ground of the global technical communicator as their compositions may not always be engaged on their terms. Further, it demonstrates that dominant citational practices are grounded in a primarily Western and individualist epistemic ground. This study further raises questions about the maintenance of generic forms in a global context as well as questions of how to cite scholarship when citing for non-Western audiences broadly.

*Tags: citation ethics, global rhetorical practices, language, pedagogy*

**Caminero-Santangelo, M. (2016). *Documenting the undocumented: Latino/a narratives and social justice in the era of operation gatekeeper*. University Press of Florida.**

The United States' increasingly politicized views of immigration make Caminero-Santangelo's text particularly timely. She touches upon three decades of change concerning the Latino/a/x immigrant experience and exposes how ideological shifts, particularly in the Reagan administration and later in the Clinton administration with Operation Gatekeeper in 1994, have affected the individual and cultural identity of undocumented immigrants. As public rhetoric increasingly characterized undocumented immigrants as criminals, illegals, and unwelcome invaders, the need for counternarratives pushing back at these distortions and facile representations became even more important. She examines the narratives of the often voiceless undocumented and delineates the agentic process of transforming trauma to testimony to ethics, a cycle that makes the narratives themselves capable of enacting social change. Caminero-Santangelo posits that while trauma is individual, it is also collective and shared. For example, undocumented individuals and their families often experience the trauma of raids, arrests, separation, and death. The multitude of these experiences creates a collective trauma and grief, a cultural identity that is shared across many. Furthermore, trauma is pervasive and shared, but it also complicates ways of being, knowing, and naming. Its representation in narrative serves as a testimony that compels others to acknowledge and witness individual and collective suffering. This, in the best of circumstances, catalyzes into action as readers and listeners transform into moral agents who mitigate suffering and seek to remedy the wrongs foisted upon an entire population. She reveals that narratives are more than potentially internal, therapeutic discourses; they are action externalized that then invites further action through transmittal. In pushing back against destructive, hegemonic ideological associations, the narratives, or counter narratives as they are, can foster civic engagement and redress the wrongs committed against undocumented individuals.

Caminero-Santangelo's work reveals the link between narrative representations and social activism or at least its potential. The harmful rhetoric concerning immigration and undocumented persons has worsened and become more ubiquitous since the book's publication in 2016 and the policies of immigration reinforcement have grown increasingly draconian. As Dreamers' futures hang in jeopardy, their voices should be amplified instead of silenced, and their narrative contributions must be part of the conversation instead of absent from it.

*Tags: critical race theory, anti-racism trauma, immigration narratives, cultural identity*

**Chakravartty, P., Kuo, R., Grubbs, V., & McIlwain, C. (2018). #CommunicationSoWhite. *Journal of Communication*, 68(2), 254–266.**

Chakravartty et al. assert that racial inequalities and the colonial legacies of white supremacy permeate scholarly and public discussions today. They contribute to an ongoing movement to decenter white masculinity as the normative core of scholarly inquiry by making a preliminary intervention. The authors coded and analyzed the racial composition of primary authors of both articles and citations in journals between 1990–2016, and found that non-white scholars continue to be underrepresented in publication rates, citation rates, and editorial positions in communication studies. They assert that the disparities are rooted in citation practices scholars are socialized to perform that are based on perceived attributions of authority, quality, rigor, and topical fit. Such attributions' filtering function reproduces hegemonic models of scholarship, as they are premised on the accumulation of iterative citations. Their findings reinforce previously-mentioned scholarship on

how disciplinary norms, including the reproduction of knowledge and the distribution of resources, continue to institutionalize whiteness. Further, their attention to citational representation is not about pluralistic difference; it is about attending to structures of power embedded within knowledge production. They urge scholars to be more attentive to their own racialized and gendered citational practices. They posit that an important way to counter citational disparities is to expand the range of scholarship with which we critically engage. In other words, they are not simply proposing adding scholars of color to extant sub-fields, but rather rethinking normative theories of communication.

*Tags: citation ethics; disciplinary formation, anti-racism, epistemology, feminism*

**Chang, R. S. (2009). Richard Delgado and the politics of citation. *Berkeley J. Afr.-Am. L. & Pol'y*, 11, 28.**

Chang analyzes the argument as well as the impact of Richard Delgado's famous article, "The Imperial Scholar: Reflections on a Review of Civil Rights Scholarship," to illustrate how the text laid the ground for more contemporary work in critical race theory. Chang observes that within legal studies scholarship, examining citational practices became an area of inquiry (p. 28). He describes that Delgado's work controversially asserts that citation practices in legal scholarship privileges an inner circle of about a dozen white, male writers who "comment on, take polite issue with comment on, take polite issue with, extol, criticize, and expand on each other's ideas" and "only infrequently cite a minority scholar" (p. 28). Chang examines how Delgado is often credited for politicizing citational practices in legal scholarship, which assumes that citational practices before Delgado were neutral and objective. Building off of Delgado, Chang agrees that white legal scholars need to be held accountable to and respectful of the perspectives of legal scholars of color. He further asserts that the exclusion of white scholars in critical race theory contributes to a structural "ghettoizing" of the field that would fail to challenge whiteness on its own terms. Though rooted in legal studies, Chang's argument may be extended to technical and professional communication insofar as it suggests a need for citational coalition practices. Challenging a white citational center might look like rethinking norms of inclusion and the predominance of single authorship.

*Tags: citation ethics, disciplinary formation, critical race theory, anti-racism*

**Colton, J. S., & Holmes, S. (2018). A social justice theory of active equality for technical communication. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 48(1), 4–30.**

Using political examples, Colton and Holmes provide a critique of the current trends in bringing social justice to the field of TPC. They describe how attempts by technical communicators to practice social justice are often prevented or delegitimized by passive equality. "In brief, passive equality describes systems of political organization, wherein humans are viewed as receivers of equality distributed by an organization or a state rather than as active enactors of equality" (p. 5). This poses a problem to Colton and Holmes because technical communicators can find themselves stuck in the practice of simply critiquing or calling out issues of injustice rather than providing nonpassive means for addressing the injustice itself. They rely on the teachings of French philosopher Jacques Rancière to supplement the call to action in TPC by asserting that "because Rancière is interested in cultivating politics as an ongoing process of self- and collective verifications of equality" (p. 6), technical communicators can apply that to their own active social justice practices. Colton and Holmes use libertarianism and liberalism to provide a framework for understanding how passive equality is a prevailing force in technical communication. They describe libertarianism as "arguably the default orientation that undergirds the vast majority of introduction to technical

communications textbooks” (p. 8) because they tend to value clarity and accuracy over concerns about equality or social justice. They go on to describe how liberalism tends more towards equality as its end goal, though both schools of thought still place the power to distribute things equally in the state or other governing body: “Under this [liberal] framework, the technical communicator might take part passively—and positively—to change a system of social justice by calling to include marginalized groups and adhering to laws of affirmative action or accessibility in document design practices, but only the system can actively create social justice through a change in law, policy, or protocol” (p. 9). However, Colton and Holmes argue, by following Rancière’s understanding of passivity and politics, technical communicators (and, in fact, anyone) can begin the work of actively enacting change rather than waiting for those in power to allow for that action.

*Tags: equality, accessibility, politics, localization*

**Durack, K. T. (1997). Gender, technology, and the history of technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 6(3), 249–260.**

Durack examines possible explanations for the absence of women from the history of technical communication, suggesting that the history of technical communication does not accurately reflect the contributions made by women. Durack argues the absence of women from the history of technical communication is not reflective of the historical reality and may be attributed to a “peculiar set of cultural blinders” (p. 250). The problem, Durack contends, lies in popular associations between technical communication, technology, and the workplace, as well as assumptions about technology, work, and workplace as gender-neutral terms. Contesting the exclusion of women’s contributions from the disciplinary history of technical communication requires that two assumptions be challenged: “First, (the assumption of agency) that women are not significant originators of technical, scientific, or medical achievement; and second, (the assumption of technological significance) that women’s tools are not sufficiently technical, nor their work sufficiently important, to warrant study of their supporting texts” (p. 251). Durack goes on to investigate these assumptions, demonstrating how definitions of technical writing—including what counts as technology, whose work is valued, and where that work is allowed to take place—actively exclude the significant contributions of women to the field.

*Tags: feminism, non-neutrality, methodology, technology, TPC histories, revisionist historiography, feminist theory*

**Earhart, A. E., Risam, R., & Bruno, M. (2020). Citational politics: Quantifying the influence of gender on citation in digital scholarship in the humanities. *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*.**

Earhart et al. use citational analysis to consider the role of gender in citation practices in conference special issues of Digital Scholarship in the Humanities. Their examination of citations in Digital Humanities conference special issues from 2006 to 2015 demonstrates gender bias in citational practices. This bias is consistent with broader trends in citational politics across the academy more broadly but is a threat to equity and justice within the scholarly community. They further offer proposals for improving citational practices to resist gender bias. Quantifying the impact of gender on citations, they argue, is one approach to understanding gender inequalities within digital humanities communities and to generating solutions to promote the broadest representation of digital humanities scholarship in scholarly communications. In line with Erin Frost’s famous call for apparent feminism, citational analysis methods make visible citational elisions. Earhart et al.’s work

demonstrates how cataloguing processes contribute to obscuring key authorial details such as gender identity and race.

*Tags: citation ethics, disciplinary formation, feminism, anti-racism*

**Frost, E. (2014). An apparent feminist approach to transnational technical rhetorics: The ongoing work of Nujood Ali. *Peitho*.**

Frost offers connections between her apparent feminist methodology and transnational feminist rhetorics. Frost applies the case of a young Yemen woman, married at the age of 10 and brutally abused, the girl eventually divorced her abuser only to return to her family and be married off again. Such a case is useful to widening perspectives of what constitutes feminist rhetorical possibilities (an articulation Frost takes from Royster and Kirsch's *Feminist Rhetorical Practices*). For Frost, apparent feminism is a three-pronged methodology that does the following: one, apparent feminism operates in a postfeminist world to make more apparent the importance of feminism. Two, apparent feminism makes a case for feminism, by working with non-feminist allies who may not self-identify as feminist but whose actions align with the social justice spirit of feminism. Three, it critiques rhetorics of efficiency, and in doing, argues that efficient work must be useful to a diverse audience and must incorporate their perspectives (p. 184). Applying this methodology to her case study, Frost concludes the essay suggesting that feminist activists could learn much about the interventional possibilities available by applying an apparent feminist frame to our scholarship.

*Tags: feminism, translational, methodology, TPC, efficiency*

**Garfield, E., Sher, I. H., & Torpie, R. J. (1964). *The use of citation data in writing the history of science*. Institute For Scientific Information.**

Garfield et al. pose the question, "Can historical analysis be performed by a computer?" (p. iii). They test the hypothesis that citation indexes are useful heuristic tools for historians. Their work approaches the history of science as a chronological sequence of events in which each new discovery is dependent upon earlier discoveries. They construct models of history consisting of chronological maps and topological network diagrams. They use two of such models: the first based on events in the history of DNA as described by Dr. Isaac Asimov in *The Genetic Code*; the second based on the bibliographic citation data contained in the documents which are the original published studies of events represented in the Asimov book. The authors map and compare interdependencies of linkages among 40 major events, or nodes, included in both network diagrams. They ultimately find that their hypothesis is reasonable. Garfield et al.'s approach to the history of science demonstrates how powerful citational chains are. Though they are not critical of the elisions such citational chains reinforce, they provide evidence of citation as an exclusionary mode of disciplinary formation. Technical communication scholars invested in social justice may turn to this article as an example of the danger and possibly subversive potential of citation analysis as a mode of disciplinary history writing.

*Tags: citation ethics, disciplinary formation, technology, history of science*

**Gollihue, K. N. (2019). Re-making the makerspace: Body, power, and identity in critical making practices. *Computers and Composition*, 53, 21-33.**

Gollihue details her research methodology in her study of critical making practices. She begins with a story about her late father, asserting that Story precedes Theory insofar as story is the ground from which the critical understandings of the world grow (p. 56). She describes a decolonial cultural rhetorics approach to ethnography which acknowledges the histories of violence within research practices, seeks to resist erasing marginalized people and allows them to speak and contribute to research practices. She argues that making is not a process of design imposed on a material, but a movement with and alongside material and is therefore especially suited to sensory, walking-and-talking methods for ethnographic study. She ultimately describes her primary data collection method she proposes for critical making research, a method she calls videovoice after the already-established photovoice methods in social science and humanities research. Gollihue's approach models a mode of scholarly relationality that resists a traditional hegemonic Western center in spite of being a white scholar herself. She notably frames her research as "sibling" to the research of other cultural rhetorics scholars, thereby resisting a disciplinary progress narrative that produces a hierarchical framing of her work against the more marginalized scholars she cites. Technical communication scholars invested in social justice could benefit from Gollihue's cultural rhetorics-informed practice of relationality, as disciplinary progress narratives dominate disciplinary genealogies which, in turn, marginalizes alternative genealogies of scholarship.

*Tags: cultural rhetorics, coalition building, decoloniality, counternarrative*

**Haas, A. M. (2012). Race, rhetoric, and technology: A case study of decolonial technical communication theory, methodology, and pedagogy. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 26(3), 277–310.**

Haas writes about her experience designing and teaching an interdisciplinary graduate course which was basically focused on social justice at Illinois State University which was the first for her both in in course design and scope-wise—that being a graduate one. In this article, she pens about the disparity between her academic training at graduate school and her “lived, embodied field experiences” as a technical communicator which were rhetorical, technical and technological work in nature (p. 279). She notes how different scholars’ race and culture-focused work that facilitated her and her students understanding of how people with different cultural, national, and political background approach and subsequently modify technology and technical documents manifesting discreteness in Western and non-Western ways of doing such things. Perhaps the most important assertion she makes in this piece is the significance and value of sticking to one’s “own ethnic cultures” since losing it may result in losing the sense of originality and the ability/sense of advocating for sustainability of other cultures (p. 285). Defining rhetoric and technology she underlines the importance of getting to know technology in broader ways. She attributes critical race theories and decolonial pedagogies to be highly critical to build “usable and useful” theories for the field of technical communication. Detailing on the ways in which she developed the aforementioned graduate course and how successfully it came out producing equally successful students, she concludes the piece by rationalizing and documenting the need for critical race theories and decolonial methods to productively contributing to diversifying the field in meaningful ways. Finally, Haas’s piece, with its concentration and critical analysis on differences in cultures and human ways and the call to sustain such differences manifests its rootedness in social justice approach in technical communication.

*Tags: ethnic cultures, sustainability, decolonial, differences*

**Katz, S. B. (1992). The ethic of expediency: Classical rhetoric, technology, and the Holocaust. *College English*, 54(3), 255–275.**

Katz argues that the “ethic of expediency” served by the rhetorical practices of TPC must be interrogated because of its ability to be used to commit violence and even atrocities. His argument moves beyond this point to also critique the reliance on western rhetorical traditions that emphasize objectivity, which is a falsehood, and utility. Focusing on deliberative rhetoric, or rhetoric applied to make a choice or decision about a future course of action, he insists on the importance of ethics in the perpetuation of expediency. If the ethic of expediency is seen as a moral approach, Katz implores that this will lead to the type of thinking that existed in Nazi bureaucracy that led to the holocaust. Ultimately, if the *ethos* of a culture predisposes that culture toward an ethic of expediency, that culture is at risk of perpetrating violence. Crucially, he makes it clear that rhetorical acts are in no way neutral and cannot be determined as “good” simply because they are efficient. The “good” is “defined by society” (p. 260) Katz says, quoting Dale Sullivan, and if expediency becomes the good rather than a deeper sense of ethical good, this opens the possibility of bureaucracies to commit atrocities. His analysis of Hitler’s approach to creating a “moral” framework for his political actions demonstrates in painful detail the ways in which ethics can be used for corrupt purposes. Ultimately, his critique of expediency/ efficiency could be applied to many technical documents in policing, medicine, and law that work against the people they allegedly serve and shows the pernicious ways in which something seen as logical in a cultural sense, or appealing to logos, something of utility, can have severely troubling outcomes.

*Tags: rhetoric, efficiency, expediency, atrocity, technical communication*

**Leverenz, C. S. (1998). Citing cybersources: A challenge to disciplinary values. *Computers and Composition*, 15(2), 185–200.**

Leverenz asserts that citation styles serve as one means of codifying specific disciplines’ values regarding knowledge making. She explains that disputes over how to cite online sources using existing documentation styles, particularly those of the Modern Language Association and American Psychological Association, are reflective of larger questions about the value of those sources. She describes that one reason teachers question the value of cybersources for students’ research is that the nature of cybersources challenges deeply held beliefs about authors, texts, and knowledge-making that teachers wish to pass on to students, particularly because, unlike published print-based texts, web sources can be altered at any given moment. This suggests a culture of discomfort around the idea that scholarship is always tentative and situated in a moment as opposed to fixed. Leverenz compares MLA and APA styles, revealing that the relationship between citation style and disciplinary values helps reveal why online sources challenge those values. Although she explains that the internet and World Wide Web will inevitably change the way scholars at her time of writing do research, they will not change the reasons why we do research. The real challenge, she posits, is how to use online sources to engage students in the research process.

Her work notably asserts that the discomfort among scholars to engage with web-based texts emerges from how these texts reveal the shifting nature of knowledge and the difficulty of newer citation practices to attribute an idea to a text whose content is in flux. Leverenz’s analysis considers the fluctuating temporality of cited sources: because printed works are dated and unchanging, they can easily mark the moment of an idea. When sources shift, the moment of the idea becomes less accessible and brings about challenges to attribution practices. This is useful to consider for technical communication scholars invested in social justice because it demonstrates that as technologies of

knowledge production change, citational norms must also shift. Further, Leverenz's observation also lends one to conclude that dominant knowledges are situated under the illusion of fixity; knowledges produced in flux, such as oral histories or gossip, are understood as illegitimate in part because modes of attribution easily slip.

*Tags: citation ethics, disciplinary formation, technology, epistemology, citation style*

**Longo, B. (1998). An approach for applying cultural study theory to technical writing research. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 7(1), 53–73.**

Longo's work makes three central moves: she explores how cultural studies helps illuminate technical writing issues left unseen in more scientifically modeled research studies; she discusses how some of the implications of using a speculative research model in institutions where nonscientific knowledge is often seen as illegitimate; and she offers guidelines for designing a cultural study of technical writing focusing on how to limit the study and provide theoretical reasoning for this delimiting process. She argues that because works of technical communication are embedded in systems of institutional power, their claims to objectivity are naive at best. Because such a claim begs the question of how one might approach research that produces some form of otherwise legitimate knowledge (as opposed to "objective" knowledge), Longo suggests five possible themes upon which a researcher might reflect: the object of the study is discourse; the object is studied in its cultural context; the object is studied as historically situated; the object is ordered by the researcher for the purposes of study; and that the most important relationship is between the object and the researcher. Though Longo's work has been canonized in TPC as an important node in the field's cultural studies turn, the work might be constellated in a genealogy of social justice-oriented technical and professional communication. Notably, as Longo makes a sharp critique of the claim to objectivity in which technical communication sometimes participates, she cites famous poststructuralists to advance this claim. The ideology embedded in this citational practice uncritically positions poststructuralists as cultural critics privileging their methodology over other modes of cultural critique. In other words, she argues to practice a kind of critical reflexivity but does not herself practice this reflexivity. This is not to dismiss the importance of Longo's intervention in the field; instead, this critique suggests that technical and professional scholars can learn from Longo's work by thinking through the degree to which their methodologies and argumentative styles align with the frameworks they propose.

*Tags: disciplinary formation, cultural studies turn, epistemology, methodology, non-neutrality, citation ethics*

**Martinez, A. Y. (2019). Core-coursing counterstory: On master narrative histories of rhetorical studies curricula. *Rhetoric Review*, 38(4), 402–416.**

Martinez deploys counterstory methods to think through the politics of teaching a rhetoric course to undergraduate students. The bulk of this article is presented as an email to a mentor to whom Martinez's fictional rhetoric professor, Alejandra Prieto, writes. Prieto explains that she teaches a first-year rhetoric course in which she presents cultural rhetorics criticism in conversation with the work of traditional Western scholars of rhetoric. Martinez narrates how a few of Prieto's white male students are resistant to listening and fully engaging with Prieto's subversive syllabus. The exchanges Prieto has with students leads her to question her methods and reflect on the challenges of criticizing white fragility and white rhetorical canon. Martinez's work speaks to the struggle of challenging disciplinary norms: her resistant students are exemplary of the kind of fragility a subversive syllabus

might elicit. For technical communication scholars, Martinez's work might help anticipate some of the pushback a social justice-oriented technical communication pedagogy might elicit. Her counterstory methodology subverts the traditional academic essay genre providing a ground to provide a critique and line of inquiry informed by personal experience.

*Tags, counternarrative, critical race theory, methodology, pedagogy*

**McNely, B. (2017). Moments and metagenres: Coordinating complex, multigenre narratives. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 31(4), 443–80.**

Noting the multiplicity of and increasingly complex narratives across many genres, McNely argues that multigenre coordination is necessary for writers seeking to create layered, textured, and engaging experiences for consumers and audiences. McNely conducted a systematic qualitative case study with seven individuals participating in London's Soho Theater's transmedia workshop. Through interviews, artifacts, and photographs, he identified "genre ecologies" that revealed how participants layer their transmedia stories in ways that were "less monolithic" and more experiential for audiences (p. 459, 471, 469). McNely's research suggests that a systematic examination of narratives and their intersectionality in multigenre work can foster immersive, diverse experiences for diverse audiences. McNely's research has implications for technical and professional communicators seeking compelling ways to interact with and influence consumer thought and behavior. McNely's example shows how even a non-profit with limited resources can benefit from multigenre narrative storytelling, which makes it a powerful tool for organizations of all kind, including those seeking to advance social justice initiatives.

*Tags: technology, user experience, marketing, multi-genre, narrative*

**Miller, C. R. (1979). A humanistic rationale for technical writing. *College English*, 40(6), 610–617.**

Written as a response to a departmental debate as to whether or not a technical writing course should be allowed to serve as a humanities course, Miller makes a case for the humanistic value of technical writing. According to Miller, the positivist view of science supports a mutually exclusive understanding of technical communication and rhetoric. She explains, "positivism is the conviction that sensory data are the only permissible basis for knowledge; consequently, the only meaningful statements are those which can be empirically verified" (p. 612)—a view which underestimates the power of language and ignores the inherent relativity of human knowledge. To make her argument for a humanistic rationale for technical writing, Miller highlights four features of technical writing pedagogy that she attributes to its positivist legacy and perpetuate the problems faced by instructors: 1) unsystematic definitions of technical writing that depend largely on the idea of clarity, 2) an emphasis on style and organization at the expense of teaching invention, 3) an insistence on an objective and neutral tone, and 4) an analysis of audience in terms of level. Miller calls for the field of technical communication to embrace a communalist view, teaching technical writing "not as a set of techniques for accommodating slippery words to intractable things, but as an understanding of how to belong to a community" (p. 617).

*Tags: community engagement, methodology, pedagogy, non-neutrality, professional writing research, professional writing pedagogy, positivism, science*

**Nakassis, C. V. (2013). Citation and citationality. *Signs and Society*, 1(1), 51–77.**

Nakassis explores the semiotics of citation by arguing that Derrida's insistence on the necessary possibility of citationality elides the fact that citations are always already achievements in context, and thus empirical facts about particular (types of) acts in the world. He posits that not all acts are reflexive about their citationality, and this has consequences for their material form and their pragmatics. The essay ultimately turns to the recalcitrance of events of semiosis to being cited to taboo speech. Nakassis asserts that taboo speech presents a case of speech that seemingly cannot be bracketed, where performative effect necessarily and always attains. He therefore demonstrates that citation brackets and suspends, but never totally. The central claim Nakassis' argues is that although citation both recalls and transforms cited referents, the recontextualization of these referents does not necessarily always subvert the power embedded in these referents. To cite an acclaimed scholar like Martin Heidegger, for example, even to contradict the nazi ideology embedded in his work, continues to affirm his power by virtue of recalling it. Even using Heidegger to make a social justice-oriented claim still carries the political baggage of his history. Nakassis' observations have profound impact in ways of rethinking how technical and professional communication scholars may work to reorient the discipline toward socially just ends: it remains imperative that even when we seek to subvert those we cite, the negative attention continues the legacy of their thinking. Although avoiding problematic thinkers altogether would suggest a lack of awareness of their arguments, alternative modes of attribution among other strategies may be deployed to focus instead on citing more marginalized thinkers.

*Tags: citation ethics, critical theory, epistemology, non-neutrality*

**Petersen, E., & Walton, R. (2018). Bridging analysis and action. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 32(4), 416–446.**

Situating their argument within the social justice turn in TPC which insists on action and change, Petersen and Walton suggest feminist critical analysis and praxis has laid the groundwork for social justice. In addition, feminist work in TPC contributes to social justice efforts in two significant ways. For one, it recovers epistemological contributions, ways of marginalized knowing, and methods for acknowledging them. By including delegitimized expertise and filling the gaps and silences in the historical and contemporary scholarship, the field gains more richness and complexity. Feminist theorizing and methodologies lend themselves to these recovery efforts. Secondly, feminist scholarship insists on reclamations of dominant topics by centering the groundwork laid by feminist research on technology and science. Key questions that Petersen and Walton ask include, in what ways do white, heterosexual, cisgender ideologies and bias overshadow our users? How can the contributions and uses by women and other marginalized groups of technology be recentered? How can we critique technological determinism when it excludes and oppresses? How can scholars and practitioners in the field act upon the knowledge that feminist research creates? The questions make clear the embeddedness of social justice in critical feminism.

*Tags: feminism, critical analysis, action, knowledge, expertise, social justice*

**Salvo, M. J. (2006). Rhetoric as productive technology: Cultural studies in/as technical communication methodology. In J. B. Scott, B. Longo, & K. V. Wills (Eds.), *Critical power tools: Technical communication and cultural studies* (pp. 219–240). State University of New York Press.**

Salvo seeks to enable cultural studies analysis to inform rhetorical action. He demonstrates how postmodern discourses, insofar as they expose and intellectually challenge systems of power as they are mediated through discursive objects, tend to yield intellectual paralysis. He argues for change through understanding the agentic capacities of cultural studies analysis: he offers that postmodern critical literacies can help users recognize and alter the ideological grounds upon which the technologies they create and engage with reproduce. Salvo's work marks a critical node in the cultural studies turn of technical communication as a discipline because it begins to ask scholars what they can do with the analyses they produce. The relationship between analysis and action remains fraught among humanities scholars across disciplines; however, Salvo demonstrates that technical and professional communication, as a discipline that centers action, takes this question seriously.

*Tags: cultural studies turn, social justice praxis, disciplinary formation, epistemology, non-neutrality*

**Smith, G. A. (2007). Documentation style as rhetorical device: A comparative analysis of two bibliographic systems. Faculty Publications and Presentations. 26.**

Smith argues that the documentation styles developed by the Modern Language Association and the American Psychological Association reflect divergent assumptions regarding the apprehension and communication of knowledge. He explains that each system expresses its rhetorical character through the aims it articulates, the sources it values, and the formats it prescribes for in-text citations and bibliographic references. Smith offers that other scholarly writing conventions, documentation styles are not arbitrary, but both shape and are shaped by the discourse communities that they serve. He asserts that emerging scholars need to be acculturated purposively to the conventions of their respective communities, while authors should consciously select bibliographic systems that support their rhetorical aims. For technical communication scholars invested in social justice, Smith's argument exposes how citation styles are embedded with epistemological claims to knowledge legitimation. By obliquely demonstrating how MLA and APA construct knowledge through citational norms, the constructedness of these conventions becomes more apparent. In light of Smith's critique, TPC scholars of the social justice turn may seek to rethink modes of attribution.

*Tags: disciplinary formation; citation ethics, citation styles, rhetorical theory, epistemology*

**Wickman, C. (2014). Wicked problems in technical communication. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 44(1), 23–42.**

As an early response to the social justice turn in Technical and Professional Communication, Wickman develops a framework for rhetorical inquiry in technical writing grounded in the concept of wicked problems. A wicked problem is an ill-defined social or cultural problem that is difficult or impossible to solve for as many as four reasons: 1) incomplete or contradictory knowledge; 2) the number of people and opinions involved; 3) the large economic burden; and/or 4) the interconnected nature of these problems with other problems. While there are similarities between a wicked problems approach and other problem-based methodologies, Wickman explains how the concept of wicked problems “adds to existing approaches, however, by teaching students how to engage with issues that have no immediate or single solution yet demand an immediate and singular response” (p. 25). According to Wickman, designing technical communication courses around public issues is difficult, but valuable, in that it requires the instructor balance “equipping students with practical skills that they can use to obtain employment and write for the workplace” while also “reinforcing practical wisdom that ideally translates into prudent social action” (p. 24-25). Ultimately, the aim of

Wickman's pedagogical framework for technical writing is to provide students the necessary skills to address wicked problems and engage with the public, beginning in the classroom and continuing beyond.

*Tags: community engagement, pedagogy, non-neutrality, methodology, professional writing, wicked problems*

## WORKPLACE STUDIES IN TPC

The ‘workplace’ has long been a scene of research for TPC. This sub-section discusses some workplace-focused scholarship and connects that research to values relevant to social justice.

**Cox, M. B. (2019) Working closets: Mapping queer professional discourses and why professional communication studies need queer rhetorics. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 33(1), 1–25.**

Cox presents case studies of LGBT employees at a large discount retailer in the Midwest in order to explore the complex calculations that LGBT individuals must make when deciding whether to be “out of the closet” in the workplace. Although all of the participants claimed that they were not closeted, they all mentioned scenarios when they chose to conceal or downplay their sexualities due to concerns about co-worker reactions, perceived professionalism, and reflecting negatively on other LGBT people. The participants described the company as “accepting but not inclusive” and challenged the company’s assertion that employees were encouraged to “bring [their] whole selves to work” (p. 13-15). While the participants spoke positively about the company’s efforts at being inclusive, they also brought up missteps and poor decisions that the company made from time to time that caused them to retreat into their “working closets” to escape the effects. Cox’s concept of “working closets” is separate from the broader definition of “closets” as places where LGBT people hide their true selves. He points out that “coming out” is never a singular event and is something that continues happening throughout an LGBT person’s life in various contexts. A person can be out in their social lives but closeted at work, for example. Working closets also, Cox argues, are not static: a person who is otherwise out at work may step back into the working closet in certain situations in order to avoid conflict or harm, then step out again when the situation is resolved. He ends the article with a call for more studies that address the multiple identities and stories of LGBT people in the workplace, studies that would help advance the understanding of LGBT issues in the larger field of technical communication.

*Tags: positionality, qualitative research, accessibility, embodiment, workplace identity, queer rhetorics*

**Dush, L. (2017). Nonprofit collections of digital personal experience narratives: An exploratory study. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 31(2), 188–221.**

Dush examines collections of digital personal experience narratives (DPENs) utilized by nonprofit organizations to understand how and to what extent they use new digital production and distribution possibilities. She references the long history of nonprofits capitalizing on personal narratives as a means of generating interest, support, and financial resources but also determines that, when compared to for profit entities, nonprofit organizations lag in their adoption of new technologies. The DPENs analyzed in her study are categorized as either networks or service organizations with networks consisting of multiple organizations connected to a shared purpose and service organizations consisting of one dedicated resource with an individual purpose. Results indicate that networks tended toward first person narratives and had wider circulation possibilities and evidence of multi-modality, whereas service organizations tended toward third person client narratives that were primarily uniform and static in expression with a single photo and accompanying text. Dush acknowledges that constraints in nonprofit work might account for the underutilization of new

technologies in digital narrative storytelling in referencing financial and staff considerations. Nonprofit organizations and networks have long been at the helm of social justice work. However, they are often compromised in their scope and influence due to financial constraints. Dush proposes that nonprofits look to the past to determine how personal narratives have shaped the fields in which they operate while also performing a text analysis of current DPENs. These actions, coupled with more qualitative research of organizations with DPENs, can help expand the rhetorical work of nonprofits and their effectiveness.

*Tags: non-profits, digital narratives, personal experience, workplace*

**Jones, N. N. (2017). Rhetorical narratives of Black entrepreneurs. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 31(3), 319–49.**

Jones uses narrative inquiry to examine how Black entrepreneurs, who are far fewer in number than their white counterparts, use rhetorical agency as a means of empowerment and success. After citing statistics and studies that speak almost exclusively to the failure and struggle of Black businesses, Jones counters with examples of Black businesses that have succeeded even with pervasive systemic oppression and racial and economic barriers. She describes four dimensions of cultural empowerment: economic, community, legacy, and social justice (p. 329). By acknowledging existing economic forces and community possibilities, Black entrepreneurs can create a space for empowerment that is an act of resistance against dominant discourses. Jones further argues that “legacy narratives,” which are created by looking to the past, can “create counternarratives that push against existing dominant discourse” (p. 338). These then can offer an intergenerational framework that empowers Black entrepreneurs and communities to resist the agentive forces that often undermine them. Fostering conditions that are more equitable for Black entrepreneurs and drawing on a rich legacy that refutes failure is one way to counter the multitude of stories that reinforce defeat and disempowerment. Professional and technical writers should consider how texts or narratives are created and critiqued because of their ability to influence human perspective and experience. In this examination, writers can advance “a more culturally sensitive approach in business and technical communication” and can create entry points for cultural empowerment that may not exist otherwise (p. 345).

*Tags: anti-racism, coalition building, positionality, Black entrepreneurship, professional writing pedagogy*

**Longo, B. (2000). Technical writing as management system control. In *Spurious coin: A history of science, management, and technical writing* (pp. 100–121). SUNY Press.**

Longo traces the history of how influential Taylorism has been on management and policy in the workplace in both hands-on work and office/clerical work. Taylorism was popularized in the early twentieth century and was described as a “piece-rate system”, designed to break down work into its component parts of maximum efficiency (p. 101). This system touted a fair evaluation of labor for the individual worker. Technical writing processes are central to both the self-reporting practices and the management system in these labor systems. Labor efficiency systems relate to social justice in the sense that labor issues and the quantification of human work is a social justice issue. For the sake of efficiency, a human worker is subject to patronizing treatment and alienating conditions. A strong present-day example of the style of piece-rate system labor Longo describes would be an Amazon

warehouse, where workers are timed and reprimanded when their work is not fast enough. The decrease in the cost of production that piece-rate systems led to in factories in the early twentieth century did not lead to higher wages. Efficient labor does not lead to higher wages, or even a living wage, in most cases today; on the contrary, low wage workers are thought of as a resource, and can be “mined” for the benefit of higher-level employees (p. 120). Management practices couched in this style of labor science oppress workers while using that very same scientific system as a justification for doing so. Ultimately, technical writing processes became efficient to support standardized labor (p. 109), and “workers relinquished the power to control their own work and became inscribed in a system controlled by technical communication” (p. 114). To remedy this, Longo ultimately insists that technical communicators must understand this history and the structures that formed the discipline to approach it more ethically while balancing their roles as creators and disseminators of knowledge.

*Tags: workplace, historiography, efficiency, management, Taylorism*

**Petersen, E. J., & Moeller, R. M. (2016). Using antenarrative to uncover systems of power in mid-20th century policies on marriage and maternity at IBM. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 46(3), 362–386.**

In this article, Petersen and Moeller illustrate how the concept of “antenarrative” can function as a methodology for feminist historiography using archival materials obtained from IBM as a specific case study. The authors argue that archival documents obtained from IBM challenge the official, public narrative of women working at the company published on the company’s website. This comparison demonstrates the use of antenarrative—defined as “the fragmented, non-linear, incoherent, collective, unplotted and pre-narrative speculation” (p. 363)—as a means of uncovering forgotten and unchallenged systems of power and legitimacy in histories of technical communication. Despite the sanctioned public narrative of a history of promoting women displayed on IBM’s website, archival documents detailing internal communications reveal a “history of relatively paternalistic policies demonstrating an organizational disempowering of married women that focused on the liabilities of women in the workplace rather than on their legitimacy in the workplace” (p. 364). As a methodology for feminist historiography, antenarrative is a form of recovery that “allows those without voice or power to re-emerge and therefore shift the way we think about historical events” (p. 366). Moreover, Petersen and Moeller argue that TPC practitioners “are uniquely poised to recognize and shape workplace narratives because of their role as designers of communication and writers of internal documents” (p. 364), which emphasizes the potential for antenarrative to “lend legitimacy and power to TPC as a field” (p. 382).

*Tags: methodology, technology, feminism, antenarrative, feminist historiography, archives, TPC histories, revisionist historiography*

**Walwema, J. (2020). A values-driven approach to technical communication. *Technical Communication*, 67(1), 7–37.**

Walwema studied the nonprofit organization GiveDirectly (GD) which connects donors and recipients by providing actual cash to poor individuals in the Global South. She uses the GD model to describe how the same organizational values can be applied to rhetoric and technical and professional communication. While most charitable organizations claim to seek the eradication of poverty, they do so by providing the goods and services that they deem to be most important to communities in need.

This strips individuals of their agency by not taking the recipient's own values or desires into account and centers the organization rather than the individual. By creating "coherence between what the donors and the recipients value and, consequently, what they both aspire to achieve" (p. 10), GD effectively practices localization and allows for its recipients to help themselves in the ways they see fit. As the field of TPC continues to expand globally, the importance of localization grows along with it. As Walwema puts it, "GD's engagement is driven by empathy and concern for the well-being of other human beings. This implies an even more responsive, context awareness for people and their needs, and has led to an agile form of TPC thinking where priorities, definitions of solutions, and results are dependent upon immediate contingent needs" (p. 11). This shift toward a more empathetic awareness is present in the social justice turn in TPC. As GD is a workplace that operates outside of traditional bureaucratic hierarchies and capitalistic frameworks (p. 13), this site was ideal for studying how TPC can be beneficial to the everyday lives of individuals when approached by a more humanistic and social-justice oriented perspective.

*Tags: non-profit, agency, values-approach, Global South*

**White, K., Kesler Rumsey, S., & Amidon, S. (2016). Are we 'there' yet? The treatment of gender and feminism in technical, business, and workplace writing studies. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 46(1), 27–58.**

White et al. explore how the concepts of gender and feminism have been analyzed and critiqued in technical, business, and workplace writing. Specifically, they follow a similar study done by Isabelle Thompson over 25 years ago in order to find improvements—if any—in considerations of gender and feminism in publications and texts produced by the field. This journal analysis of carefully selected articles and textbooks reveals a broad—though incomplete—mapping of where the field is at in regards to gender equality and feminist practices. Their findings show that women are still regarded in traditional and gendered ways, if they are mentioned at all. This is problematic as these texts, especially the textbooks, are utilized in teaching pedagogy, reinforcing the myth that technical and business writing is 'neutral.' In fact, the authors posit that neutral is a stand in for [white] male. This article works to display the gaps between perception and reality regarding gender and feminism advancements in the field through quantitative methods. In doing so, it is calling for action – it is calling for justice for all workers and students, who are workers-to-be.

*Tags: feminism, workplace writing, disciplinary formation, citation ethics, non-neutrality*

## ENVIRONMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN TPC

The ethical dimensions of environmental communication and its intersections with racism, power, and participation have long been a subject of inquiry among technical and professional communicators. This subsection focuses on works that engage with the prevalence of environmental racism, the importance of localization when working within a community to which you do not belong, the legal discourse that often stands in the way of environmental justice, and ways that technology can be used in non-neutral ways to perpetuate racist practices.

**Agboka, G. Y. (2013). Participatory localization: A social justice approach to navigating unenfranchised/disenfranchised cultural sites. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 22(1), 28–49.**

Using case studies of translated sexuopharmaceutical documents in Ghana, Agboka describes the danger of localization in technical communication, as well as how we can use these examples as a way to move forward in a more inclusive manner. He details how while the documents he studied technically adhered to the laws governing how pharmaceutical information needed to be translated into English for use in Ghana, they did not take into consideration the social implications that such drugs would have an impact on, thus doing a disservice to the users. Agboka proposes “redefining localization as a user-driven approach, in which a user (an individual or the local community) identifies a need and works with the designer or developer to develop a mutually beneficial product that mirrors the sociocultural, economic, linguistic, and legal needs of the user,” thus ensuring that “technical communicators will not be accused ... of bringing their own agendas into contexts to make decisions for local peoples within marginalized communities” (p. 44). He provides a framework for which we can move forward to ensure we are not merely following the rules or laws set forth when attempting localization, but also including the users as active participants in the design process. His framework consists of the following: 1) “localization should happen locally at the user’s site”; 2) localization should be “a collaborative effort between the user and the developer”; 3) localization should not be considered synonymous with translation; 4) “localization should be based on long engagement in the target community”; and 5) “localization should pride itself on relevance of local needs” (p. 45). By keeping these five ideals in mind with regards to technical communication and what documents are intended to do, local users will be in a position to advocate for their own needs more fully and equitably.

*Tags: globalization, localization, ethnography, linguacultural systems*

**Artz, L. (2020). Speaking the power of truth: Rhetoric and action for our times. In *Activism and rhetoric: Theories and contexts for political engagement* (2nd ed., pp. 159–172). Routledge.**

Artz examines the ways in which activists, particularly those in rhetoric, must collectively come together to overturn those in power. He argues that we do not need to speak *truth to power*, as those in power already know the truth, but rather that we must recognize that we are the majority who can take over the power. He contends that “we must not omit the social relations of power in which and through which all rhetoric must pass” (p. 164), and instead need to come up with “a more class-conscious rhetoric” (p. 164). If and when rhetoric is engaged with in this way, we can and will make a new truth. He lays out three ways in which he believes we must move forward: 1) by recognizing “the material conditions of our lives, especially the social relations of capitalism and its class contradictions in neoliberalism, consumerism, individualism, two-party elections, and the

quality and inequality of life” (p. 169); 2) we must “identify those who are capable of making fundamental social change – those social classes that have a vested interest, some predisposition, and are in a position socially, economically, and politically to reorganize society for social justice and humanity” (p. 170); and 3) we must “present a rhetoric for a new consensual, participatory social power emphasizing the truth of capitalist inequality and its destruction of human life and the environment” (p. 170). By recognizing and naming the fact that those who are currently in power are not the majority, we can begin organizing together towards presenting and advocating for a new truth that is more equitable for all.

*Tags: community engagement, activism, power, non-neutrality*

**Cagle, L. E., & Tillery, D. (2015). Climate change research across disciplines: The value and uses of multidisciplinary research reviews for technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 24(2), 147–163.**

In this article, Cagle and Tillery argue that interdisciplinary research can benefit both technical communication and environmental justice. Through a literature review of research done on communication and climate change, they demonstrate the need for working across disciplines in order to build real and sustainable solutions. They utilize texts from mass communication, risk analysis, environmental economics, science and technology studies, sociology, and psychology over the past 20 years; their result was that technical communicators should not only act as advocates but also as bridge-builders across fields and ways of knowing. This can lead to multidisciplinary concepts that allow for developing research methods and pedagogical practices that work across disciplines and reach outside of academia. This article serves as a way forward for technical communicators who hope to enact social justice frameworks in their research areas, in their teaching, and in their workplace. Through these suggestions, they can build bridges to other scholars and knowledges and in the process can work towards environmental justice.

*Tags: climate change, environmental communication, interdisciplinarity, community engagement, discipline formation*

**Enríquez-Loya, A., & León, K. (2020). Transdisciplinary rhetorical work in technical writing and composition: Environmental justice issues in California. *College English*, 82(5), 449–459.**

Using cultural rhetorics as a methodological framework, Enríquez-Loya and León propose a transdisciplinary approach to environmental justice. The authors argue that responding to environmental injustice requires a cultural rhetorics approach to technical writing as a means of 1) challenging the topoi of environmentalism, 2) creating space for discussions about race, class, and environmentalism, and 3) shifting the conversation from seeing to doing (p. 450). They situate themselves and their work not just in terms of discipline and rhetorical inquiry, but also in terms of the physical locations that their bodies and their work inhabit. They maintain that even the most globally applicable research is still shaped by the geographical borders and locales that the researchers inhabit, and that true transdisciplinary work must take these physical locations into account. As such, the author’s use California’s environmental exigences (e.g., devastating wildfires and toxic dumping) as a lens through which to argue for using a cultural rhetorics framework to advance environmental justice in the technical communication field. In their first case study, they point to the California wildfires as an archetype for the ways in which citizens are excluded from public discourse regarding the consequences, prevention, and resolutions of these natural disasters. Moreover, the authors assert that framing these events as

“natural,” when they are not actually naturally occurring, is deceptive and allows the factors contributing to social and environmental injustices to go unchecked. In their second case study, the authors identify the relationship between toxic dumping and environmental racism as they address the way environmental toxins disproportionately impact impoverished communities of color. These examples, Enríquez-Loya and León argue, illustrate the complex relationships between “environmental racism, rampant classism, technical writing, and citizen participation” (p. 455) and demonstrate the necessity of a transdisciplinary approach to environmental justice concerned with community engagement and activism.

*Tags: transdisciplinarity, environmental justice, California*

**Gilio-Whitaker, D. (2019) Environmental justice theory and its limitations for indigenous peoples. *As long as grass grows: the Indigenous fight for environmental justice, from colonization to Standing Rock*. Beacon Press. 15–34.**

Gilio-Whitaker argues that mainstream environmental justice does not adequately address the environmental justice demanded by indigenous communities specifically, and that “a new understanding of environmentalism” (p. 17) is therefore warranted. Her approach to discussing the unique positionality and multiple marginalized identities of various groups of people who have been subject to environmental racism draws connections between social justice and environmental justice. Gilio-Whitaker supports her points by analyzing legislation from the past several decades that has come up short in truly offering the decolonial environmental justice needed to enact justice for indigenous people. She also expands upon the difference between equity and justice the importance of enacting the latter: “Equity says that the burden of environmental risk should be equally distributed among all populations, whereas justice guarantees protection from environmental degradation, prevention of adverse health impacts, mechanisms for accountability, and the availability of remedial action and resources” (p. 21) The communication methods relied upon and the language used surrounding environmental justice has an impact on whether justice is indeed achieved. Gilio-Whitaker’s overview of the legal terrain of the environmental justice discourse highlights the many communication barriers to achieving both environmental and simultaneously social justice for indigenous people within the existing legal, political, and economic systems in the United States, and urges that environmental justice discourse must include decoloniality and indigenized environmental justice specifically.

*Tags: environmental justice, indigenous approaches to TPC, decolonization, law, environmental racism*

**Hirst, R. (2017). Stories from the secret city: Ray Smith's art of narrative as rhetoric. *Technical Communication*, 64(1), 6–26.**

Hirst examines the rhetorical power of narrative to determine its usefulness in supporting an industry, a community, and a historical understanding. His methodology involves a single case study of Ray Smith, the official historian of Y-12 National Security Complex. Y-12 researches, produces, and distributes information and products used in nuclear energy and is in the Oak Ridge, Tennessee community. Hirst employs storytelling techniques of his own in detailing Smith’s rhetorical techniques and demonstrates how rhetorical moves shape ways of knowing and open “up a new sense making” that supports “the major phenomenon described by many scholars working in narrative theory” (p. 11). Hirst convincingly shows how rhetorical choices can shape attitudes of often polarizing topics and can both enrich and problematize understandings of complex issues,

particularly if the understandings are not balanced by other perspectives. Although Hirst does not explicitly address social justice in his examination of Ray Smith's narrative craft, he does include examples that reinforce how narrative can engender community, foster consciousness, and promote change. Storytelling is powerful as Smith's blend of folklore and story attests in its efforts to legitimize the benefits of nuclear energy. Peace activists who oppose nuclear energy counter with narratives that expose its devastation, suggesting the story of nuclear energy and its history is not one, but many. Taken together, narrative can effectively move people to act in ways that confront social injustices, but it can also just as easily contribute to them if one story is regarded as the only story or recognizable truth.

*Tags: environmental rhetoric, historiography, narrative*

**Moldenhauer J. A., & Sackey D. J. (2016, July). Transdisciplinarity, community-based participatory research, and user-based information design research. In *International Conference of Design, User Experience, and Usability* (pp. 323–332). Springer.**

Moldenhauer and Sackey discuss how the integration of community-based participatory research and user-based information design can work as an effective approach towards researching science in the public's interest (p. 323). Using this approach, a transdisciplinary team known as D-VERSE (Detroit Integrated Vision for Environmental Research through Science and Engagement) completed two projects for the Detroit community using environmental research through a team science model. Team Science uses collaboration between individuals in diverse disciplinary backgrounds to engage in cross-disciplinary research on complex scientific issues, such as public health and environmental problems (p. 324). One aspect that makes the D-VERSE team unique is their commitment to make research decisions together with community residents. Their goal is to empower local citizens to make changes to improve their health and the environment. Social justice requires actions be made in a collective environment. Although individual actions are important, social justice aims to build coalitions between concerned stakeholders towards identifying local needs and developing action-orientated plans to answer those needs. Community-based participatory research is one method for building coalitions between scholars and local communities to develop their own local understanding of justice in health and environmental concerns, and their own understanding for expressing justice in these same spheres.

*Tags: coalition building, design, environment*

**Moore, K. (2017). The technical communicator as participant, facilitator, and designer in public engagement projects. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 64(2), 97–112.**

Through a Black Feminism lens, Moore uses an environmental impact case study to showcase how technical communicators can effectively engage the public in social justice matters and how we can make activism a part of our daily lives by engaging in inclusive and dialogic practices. She uses this study as a framework to highlight that "practitioners' frames and understandings of participation, involvement, and/or engagement exist outside of the university and its students" (p. 239). She specifically highlights the importance of collaboration within technical communication and research, though she also understands the institutional constraints on many research projects. She describes the goal of public participation in technical communication to be to inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower, though there are generally limitations to all of those categories. Moore hopes to provide practical design strategies for technical communicators to use for future dialogic projects within the communities they are serving. These actionable strategies include informing citizens

through multimodal communications in carefully planned ways (p. 247). While there are always constraints we are working under, Moore highlights the importance of listening when it comes to technical communication and actively engaging with your public to identify and work around boundaries. She contends that dialogue and inclusion must be at the center of cross-cultural work and seeks for a more equitable outcome for all involved.

*Tags: community engagement, environmental racism, intercultural communication, ethnography, Black feminism*

**Olman, L., & DeVasto, D. (2020). Hybrid collectivity: Hacking environmental risk visualization for the anthropocene. *Communication Design Quarterly*, OnlineFirst.**

In this article, DeVasto and Olman theorize a new way to evaluate Environmental Risk Communication (ERC). They focus their case study on Environmental Risk Visualization (ERV) in particular, analyzing interactive digital maps that visualize radiation and other measurements following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear plant disaster. The authors argue for the use of hybrid collectivity in evaluating risk communication in this fashion. They define hybrid collectivity as: “the ability of an ERV to collect agents around itself across traditional Modern boundaries separating human from nonhuman, expert from nonexpert, and science from politics—with an eye toward the robustness of these collectives over time and the empowerment of the most vulnerable agents” (p. 2). The authors base the development of their criteria for evaluating ERV in the world of cultural critics such as Foucault and Latour who opt out of a Modern tradition of separating humans from nature and from nonhumans, a move typical of Anthropocene scholarship which seeks to acknowledge more interconnectedness among human and nonhuman agents. Olman and DeVasto’s hybrid collectivity expands a social justice approach to risk communication because of its focus on input from nonexperts in a meaningful way, and by emphasizing the need to engage in equitable ERC through criteria such as configuring rich, diverse collectives and encouraging collective-scale responses, among others (p. 5-6). Ultimately, the authors vie for “hacking social constructionist models of risk communication for the Anthropocene” (p. 4) rather than replacing it, while still acknowledging the current approach to ERC needs to be improved.

*Tags: data visualization, environmental risk visualization, environmental risk communication, anthropocene*

**Raphael, C. (2019). Engaged communication scholarship for environmental justice: A research agenda. *Environmental Communication*, 13(8), 1087–1107.**

Raphael argues for the importance of Engaged Scholarship (ES) when committing to Environmental Justice (EJ) work in technical and professional communication and offers four streams for future ES including news and information, deliberation and participation, campaigns and movements, and education and literacy (p. 1094). He explains how each of these areas would benefit from the intervention offered by an ES approach to scholarship and elaborates on some of the problems that environmental communication faces in these specific areas. For example, within the information, news and discourse stream, he says that “mainstream journalism tends to efface the history and causes of environmental injustices” (p. 1095). Raphael emphasizes that an ES approach is designed to move environmental communication beyond merely informing and consulting groups of people for whom and environmental justice concern is at stake, but to collaborate with and ultimately empower that group of people and even take co-ownership over the research (p. 1090). He also acknowledges the difficulties of forging strong connections with communities while also meeting the

demands of scholarly work at institutions: “Like ethnographers, engaged scholars must explain why an epistemology grounded in co-production of knowledge and dialogue with research participants is a valid alternative to traditional positivist values of scholarly detachment and objectivity” (p. 1093). Despite these challenges, Raphael insists that ES improves the relevance, reflexivity, rigor, and reach of scholarship rather than hindering it (p. 1091) while furthering the ethical aims of EJ.

*Tags: environmental justice, environmental communication, community engagement*

**Ríos, G. R., & Sackey, D. J. (2014) Biocultural diversity and copyright: Linking intellectual property, language, knowledges, and environment. In D. N. DeVoss, & M. Courant (Eds.), *Cultures of copyright: Contemporary intellectual property* (pp. 211–222). Peter Lang.**

Ríos and Sackey argue that the legal protections offered to tribal communities are not adequate to protect their rights regarding their cultural knowledge. The authors explain the differences between intellectual property as it exists in Western, colonial legal systems and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) which does not fit neatly into intellectual property laws. The result of this disconnect is the inability of the law to protect indigenous cultural production and values. The authors suggest that “the move toward biocultural diversity as an analytic is an inquiry into how non-Western (primarily Indigenous-centered) approaches can alter the way we see cultural production” (p. 2). The purpose of this move is to ultimately critique the capitalistic focus of Western law. The framework offered by Ríos and Sackey fits within a social justice approach to technical and professional communication because it seeks to undermine the language of a legal system designed to work against indigenous people, despite the many legal promises that have been made on their behalf. By failing to recognize the indigenous worldview, intellectual property law perpetuates the oppression of indigenous people. Biocultural Diversity, (BCD) contributes to a social justice approach to intellectual property law because “BCD inquiry operates on the belief that language, knowledge, and the environment are inextricably connected” (p. 7). Thus, BCD when applied to intellectual property law would require protections for forms of knowledge that go beyond the current legally recognized forms.

*Tags: intellectual property, indigenous approaches to TPC, biocultural diversity, environmental justice*

**Sackey, D. J. (2019). One-size-fits-none: A heuristic for proactive value sensitive environmental design. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 29(1), 33–48.**

Environmental monitoring systems are becoming more ubiquitous, but still have yet to benefit a vast majority of potential users. Sackey argues that this is because the design of technologies like the personal air monitor (PAM) do not engage with Environmental Justice (EJ) strongly. Sackey provides evidence in the form of the costs and descriptions of the general uses for PAMs and explains that many of these devices either 1) are cost prohibitive or 2) do not collect the data that many individuals in low-income communities of color are interested in. Sackey urge the creators of these technologies to more broadly consider their users to make the devices more inclusive for these reasons, citing the need for intrinsic EJ values within product design. By framing the development of these devices through EJ, Sackey’s commitment extends to social justice more so than technical communication but considers the proximity of technological design with technical communication in terms of user-based approaches. The examples he provides emphasize the disadvantage of poor people of color in relation to environmental toxins. He insists that providing users with more agency surrounding the devices and how they are used, in addition to the data they collect, will enable people

to advocate better for environmental justice. He gives an example in which a woman is asked by a company to provide data herself that a factory is releasing toxins near her home because the air quality station near her home is not designed to monitor a wide enough range of toxins. Putting the onus on citizens, and particularly those in poor communities, is an unjust practice that needs to be corrected, and Sackey offers a range of suggestions about how to make such changes, including device designers paying closer attention to demographics who would use them in this way.

*Tags: environmental monitoring, personal air monitor (PAM), environmental racism, data collection, user participation, design*

**Sanchez, F. (2020). Examining methectic technical communication in an urban planning comic book. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 29(3), 287–303.**

Sanchez calls for a connection between participatory and participative frameworks in technical communication. By examining an urban case study, he exemplifies how the Greek concept *methexis* (participation) can be the connecting point between a user-centered and a posthuman framework. He argues that while both user-centered and object-centered theories of agency have merit, together they are most powerful in real situations such as an urban planning proposal. In his community example, a comic is created in order to convey a proposed plan while at the same time working to unpack the complicated nature of such planning processes. This comic, including visuals as well as words, also allows for multiple audience groups to benefit, such as the community itself as well as other stakeholders that may have more power over decisions. By showing how methexis is used to not only build this sort of bridge but also as an active and agential representation of the community itself, Sanchez displays the power of connecting an idea—like an improved community space—to an object, such as the comic. This embodiment is important, because the comic itself would not have agency without the participation or creation of the community members. Yet, the community on its own doesn't have the agency that the comic will in conveying a message. Therefore, Sanchez offers social justice organizers a way to think about visual representations and networks of agency.

*Tags: participation, visual rhetoric, multimodalities, community engagement, methodology, agency*

**Sauer, B. (2006) Living documents: Liability versus the need to archive, or why (sometimes) history should be expunged. In J. B. Scott, B. Longo, & K. V. Wills (Eds.), *Critical power tools: technical communication and cultural studies* (pp. 171–194). State University of New York Press.**

Sauer's text, as part of a larger collection about the cultural studies turn in TPC, engages with issues of power distribution within documents and the ways in which cultural theory can impact documentation systems for the better. She argues that risk decision-making needs to be influenced by not only bureaucratic choices, but by local knowledge as well. In her case study, she examines the protocol in mining operations and the risk mitigation protocols in place in these operations. Her point that "living documents" like mining protocols are particularly complex because of their need to draw on both scientific data and history as well as be kept current suggests that the technical communicators in charge of such documents should be aware of the "embodied experience and observations of individuals whose knowledge might contribute to safer practices" (p. 174). Ultimately, then, the goal is for technical communicators to balance the need to "maintain an archival history of risk regulation" (p. 185) with the need for new protocols. While this work comes before the social justice turn in TPC, Sauer's arguments are applicable within social justice approaches to TPC. In relation to risk mitigation and environmental risk, this approach is particularly useful.

Sauer's example of documentation systems for coal mining operations can be transferred to other dangerous jobs in which the workers themselves are not given the chance to contribute their knowledge based on lived experience to safety protocol design in a meaningful way. The positionality of workers doesn't, in bureaucratic settings, tend to allow for the privileging of their knowledge. Further, the lives of workers are undervalued in relation to the distribution of risk. From a social justice perspective, this is an unacceptable situation. Worker safety should be a higher priority, and the regulatory frameworks of high-risk industries like mining would benefit from a social justice approach in addition to the cultural studies approach that Sauer applies.

*Tags: localized approaches, risk-mitigation, environmental risk, safety protocol, living documents*

**Simmons, W. M. (2008). *Participation and power: Civic discourse in environmental policy decisions*. SUNY Press.**

In *Participation and Power*, Simmons traces the ways in which environmental policy must be influenced in a more meaningful way by community engagement. She argues that "Good policy decisions require both scientific knowledge and social justice, and an ethical framework, or approach, for decision making is needed to ensure both are reflected in a policy" (p. 4). Simmons focuses on a case study in risk communication that involves the destruction of a nerve agent using a technical chemical process. The case study takes place in Newport, Indiana, and highlights the ways in which the current legislation that requires public participation is disingenuous in its approach to community engagement (p. 12). Though the author does not claim her suggestions to be a panacea, she provides reasonable approaches aimed at government agencies that acknowledge the lack of meaningful community engagement but claim that they don't know how to achieve it. Simmons sees the potential for technical communicators to intervene and both work with communities and guide government agencies. Simmons' approach is based in a social justice orientation to environmental communication, as she explains that not all public participants have equal access to participation to begin with, and that this needs to be taken into consideration by acting agencies dealing with environmental risk communication. One of the biggest issues Simmons identifies is that, despite the legal requirement to engage community members in an environmental decision, agencies often don't want to share power with these communities, and thus the engagement is not productive (p. 37). This tends to be the case even more often in communities in which more people are of marginalized status (p. 39).

Crucial to Simmons' case study is that it works to defy the expert/citizen dichotomy by analyzing the "complexity of the institutions involved, and the multiplicity of the risk communication models employed" (45). Indeed, intentional obfuscation is a tactic that can be used by groups in power to deny access to participation in situations that involve risk management or environmental justice. The decision-making processes behind environmental risks such as disposing of the VX nerve agent—a deadly chemical weapon—in Newport leads to a complex set of discourses involving power exchanges between agencies—in this case the army—and community members that rely on coercion and the discrediting of public knowledge (p. 65). Simmons is in favor of a participatory approach (p. 118) that considers the variability of communities including different levels of access to civic participation and how to remove barriers to entry for more people to participate. Her criteria for a just model of public participation includes an assessment of power, participation, and process, (p. 129) meaning that just decision making is the result of more than just policies but must come from intentional practices that can be evaluated and improved for future use. Ultimately, Simmons explains that "while all environmental decisions and policies are made through discourse, all environmental decisions and policies involve technical information. As a result, citizens must

develop knowledge that would be persuasive in these technical settings” (p. 159). Rather than assuming community members can’t understand scientific knowledge, they must be empowered to understand through access to information, and importantly information “in a format that allows them to make sense of and use the knowledge to articulate their experience and participate in complex decisions” (p. 159).

*Tags: community engagement, public participation, risk communication, environmental communication, environmental justice*

**Simmons, W. M., & Grabill, J. T. (2007). Toward a civic rhetoric for technologically and scientifically complex places: Invention, performance, and participation. *College Composition and Communication*, 58(3), 419–448.**

Though this article is slightly dated in terms of the practice of social justice in TPC, Simmons and Grabill use environmental concerns to raise the issue of so-called nonexperts being able to weigh in on issues that affect their community. Using the example of a steel mill posing significant health risks to the surrounding areas, they showed how citizens were not allowed to participate in meaningful conversations that would enact real change. Further, they contend that “if citizens cannot access, assemble, and analyze the information they find, they will not be able to produce the necessary knowledge to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities” (p. 432). Simmons and Grabill argue that individuals not only need access to information in order to participate in these conversations and actions, they also need to be able to understand the information presented to them. They provide numerous difficult to decipher websites full of data that is essentially meaningless except to a select group of people and outline how difficult the process historically has been for ordinary citizens to obtain environmental impact information about the steel mill. For them, it is not just about disseminating the information, but also about presenting it in such a way that nonexperts are able to create meaning from what is presented. They “believe the design of civic information must allow for multiple entry points, multiple types of questions, and multiple angles of investigation to allow citizens to invent usable knowledge from the available information” (p. 434)—that is, information needs to be presented in readable ways without intentionally simplifying the meaning so much so as to prevent critical invention of new ways of thinking about that particular topic. Simmons and Grabill provide examples of coalitions, such as the Concerned Environmental Citizens, which can assist with this kind of rhetorical knowledge building, which allows for meaning to be created and understood by all stakeholders.

*Tags: community engagement, invention, indirect exclusions, environmental racism*

**Williams, M. F., & James, D. D. (2008). Embracing new policies, technologies, and community partnerships: A case study of the city of Houston's bureau of air quality control. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 18(1), 82–98.**

Williams and James describe the processes of informing, consulting with, engaging with, and collaborating with communities of color regarding air quality in Houston, Texas, which make up the “four levels of public involvement” as theorized by civil discourse experts Carolyn Lukensmeyer and Lars Torres for improving community partnerships (p. 83). Williams and James explain that, by moving through each of the four levels, the Bureau of Air Quality Control in Houston can better gauge where there are gaps in their process that need to be addressed and how to better serve these communities. This is a social justice issue because air quality is on record as being worse in communities of color, and yet the tools to measure air quality and fight this problem have historically

been unavailable to members of these communities. Further, they trace the specific steps that were made in documents and other bureau communication with the public to make the documents more accessible (p. 89) and how the bureau has worked to collect more information from constituents about how they feel the issues they see are being addressed (p. 91). Ultimately the bureau depends on community coalitions to help create a relationship between community members to shape bureau policy and procedure (p. 92). This implies that the four levels of public participation “are useful tools for environmental agencies seeking to engage poor and minority constituents” (p. 96) which should be a priority for social justice frameworks surrounding state agencies.

*Tags: air quality monitoring, environmental racism, accessibility, data collection, coalition building*

**Zimring, C. A. (2015). Searching for order. *Clean and white: A history of environmental racism in the United States* (pp. 51–78). New York University Press.**

Zimring’s book traces the history of the damaging concept that associates whiteness with cleanliness and other races as dirty, an idea reflected in environmental racism that has existed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States. The chapter “Searching for Order” discusses the specific historical period between roughly the end of the Civil War into the late 1920s. This time period was, according to Zimring, marked by massive upheaval that resulted in the desire to order and categorize society in unprecedented ways. Spurred by the industrial revolution, these attempts to order perpetuated racial division and stereotyping. Zimring interrogates the development of white identity alongside environmental and material understandings of cleanliness to critique the underlying structures of racism that still exist today. Indeed, Zimring argues that “anxieties over environmental and materialist threats to economic and physical health shape constructions of whiteness” (54). This historical period was crucial in shaping the doubly oppressive structures of industrial capitalism and systemic racism and engaging more closely with an historical methodology brings an important angle to the social justice conversation on environmental racism in the present. Regulations designed to mitigate waste hazards demonstrate an historical example of the ways in which white supremacy is connected to legislation surrounding industrial processes. Furthermore, the industrial developments during this time period forced “the reorganization of land to serve industry” (p. 55). Industry, and industrial capital, cannot be separated from social justice because of the groups industry was designed to serve, namely the rich white majority, and the legacy of these developments over a century ago still remain.

*Tags: environmental racism, historiography, economics (capitalism), industry, land*

## HEALTH AND SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION IN TPC

The social justice turn in TPC emphasizes that scientific knowledge is not objective and calls critical attention to issues of power and access in healthcare. At issue is also the communication of scientific facts and health information in TPC. This sub-section features works that contribute to addressing health disparities as a TPC issue and the need for critical approaches to scientific communication.

**Angeli, E. L., & Johnson-Sheehan, R. (2017). Introduction to the special issue: Medical humanities and/or the rhetoric of health and medicine. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 27(1), 1–6.**

Angeli and Johnson-Sheehan start off this issue with a call centered around the melding of the medical humanities and Rhetoric of Health and Medicine. Two distinct fields with a lot to offer on their own, but together, a powerhouse that pushes technical communicators into finding ways of creating equitable curriculum for both. They highlight the tension between the two fields, the drawbacks that exist in creating this mending, and the hopefulness of a future together. Technical communicators at the onset have the tough problem of creating an accurate and complete definition for the Medical Humanities; the authors weren't even able to come to a concise conclusion. This conundrum creates an opportunity for technical communicators to not only define this field concisely but also to create an accessible definition for other peers to look at and possibly apply to their own work, broadening this field and the possibilities of collaboration between them. Technical communicators can begin to find ways to better address issues such as the disconnect between patients and doctors. That comes from creating better informational resources for patients to not only be able to contact their physicians, but also receiving helpful descriptors of those physicians' roles and questions they may be able to answer. A social justice lens shows that lacking such resources could cause those without means to receive constant medical care to waste valuable care time contacting the wrong physician. On top of wasting time, such resources a patient may waste include time scheduling visits with the wrong physician, creating a monetary debt, that for those under resourced, is already crippling.

*Tags: rhetoric of health and medicine, health humanities, TPC, coalition building*

**Atherton, R. (2020). "Missing/Unspecified": Demographic data visualization during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 35(1), 80–87.**

Atherton brings to the forefront how Covid-19 disproportionately affects Black people. His article tackles the issue of incomplete data sheets, the accumulation and distribution of data, and how visual data sheets need to be more forthright with their conclusions as to have "missing/unspecified" data prints is equivalent to not reporting on minority communities at all. As Atherton begins to interrogate the two data graphs provided by the CDC, tracking the infection rates among communities and age groups, it is made clear that they are both inadequate in serving a community needs and in creating proper analyzation of the data. Atherton ends his article by giving readers a few takeaways on how to better informational graphs, first by finding a balance between simplicity and context, as to not overload the viewer but at the same time allowing them to be well informed. The next takeaway, and what is considered a call to action, was Atherton last point in saying, "Ask not only what questions visualizations can answer but also what they cannot answer" (p. 7). This last point helps direct technical communicators in the direction of underrepresented communities and shining light to their plight and injustices. Information missing is a social justice issues, as missing information leads to

communities becoming invisible, and communities becoming invisible leads to their oppression. It is on technical communicators to take up this social justice issue, bringing awareness and a voice to the “missing” communities, so that their needs may be reached and fulfilled.

*Tags: COVID-19, Data visualization, Health Disparities, Graphic Communication, User Experience*

**Batova, T. (2010). Writing for the participants of international clinical trials: Law, ethics, and culture. *Technical Communication*, 57(3), 266–281.**

Batova highlights the importance of cultural understanding of things—“way of life” as she puts it. Even though her article does not explicitly mention the term social justice, it certainly deals with issues of justice as she talks about the rights of people from different countries who are put through medical trials even without understanding the risks involved in them. Batova also highlights the cultural factors of “rights” even the understanding of the term “right” as it varies across culture. She also focuses on how “legal pressures and strains of the market” compel technical writers audiences safety issues (p. 267). Batova shares her personal experience in this piece where she notes how perceptions of an individual’s “right” vary across the cultural spectrum. For example, she states that an individual in a certain culture does not believe in the patients’ “right to know” of their condition and rather prefer the condition not to be known to the patient if it is serious. Also, she notes that the patient-doctor relationship also varies across cultures as some cultures put great trust in their doctors. Thus, Batova’s article in calling for more cultural considerations for technical communicators in their work and also informing them about the cultural milieu attempt to create just practices for technical communicators.

*Tags: clinical trial, right, cultural factors, condition, legal pressure, individual*

**Bellwoar, H. (2012). Everyday matters: Reception and use as productive design of health-related texts. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 21(4), 325–345.**

Bellwoar explores the ways patients draw from multiple sources to improve their own health literacy. She notes that the production and interpretation of medical texts are often considered tasks best left to the “professional.” Yet patients, she claims, participate in knowledge-making practices concerning their own health by synthesizing information from multiple sources ranging from conventionally produced technical communication to casually sourced artifacts. She notes that because medical conditions accompany patients into all spaces, these patients often integrate information shared outside of traditional channels to help them make sense of their health and their bodies. Bellwoar suggests this revelation should expand the way we think about usability, as patients’ understanding of any document is mediated by their prior experiences with a multitude of sources. By mixing information sources, patients are able to develop a more complete understanding of their bodies and exercise agency over their own health literacy. In terms of social justice work, Bellwoar notes the knowledge of patients is often silenced and overlooked. Both medical professionals and technical communicators’ knowledge holds more power and is viewed as more legitimate than the knowledge of patients. Yet patients who live with their conditions in their everyday lives find themselves learning through the trial and error of their experiences and the experiences of others with similar conditions. Bellwoar works to redefine the boundaries of technical communication as something practiced by everyday people in their everyday lives. It suggests centering patients and their practices rather than professionally produced texts. Her work suggests a reconsideration of how we view professional texts and how these texts work together with untraditional sources to generate understanding amongst users.

*Tags: non-neutrality, health literacy, health disparities, healthcare communication, usability, user-generated documentation*

**Ceccarelli, L. (2011). Manufactured scientific controversy: Science, rhetoric, and public debate. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 14(2), 195–228.**

“Manufactured” scientific controversies are deceptively constructed in the public sphere when rhetorical strategies are employed to specific ends by “announcing that there is an ongoing scientific debate about a matter for which there is actually an overwhelming scientific consensus” (p. 196). Ceccarelli rhetorically analyzes the argumentative dynamics in the manufacture of scientific controversy in three specific cases—AIDS dissent, global warming skepticism, and intelligent design—arguing that those who manufacture scientific controversy for a public that is uncertain about the state of scientific knowledge do so by exploiting balancing norms and making appeals to values such as open-mindedness, freedom of inquiry, and fairness. Through her analysis, Ceccarelli reveals the similarities between the arguments behind these manufactured scientific controversies, particularly their “appeals to fairness,” to demonstrate the “significant rhetorical dynamics involved in manufacturing an ongoing scientific debate in the face of overwhelming scientific consensus” (p. 197). The rhetorical analysis of these specific cases of manufactured scientific controversy illustrates the argumentative constraints experienced by mainstream scientists in their attempts to respond in the public sphere. In order to overcome these challenges, Ceccarelli suggests opportunities for response “that are more sensitive to audience and burden of proof, reclaim democratic values for science, and highlight how opponents of mainstream science do not always embody the scientific and democratic values they claim to champion” (p. 198) to take full advantage of the inventional possibilities available to those engaging with debate surrounding manufactured scientific controversies.

*Tags: coalition building, community engagement, science, rhetorical strategies, democracy, public debate*

**Ding, H. (2013). Transcultural risk communication and viral discourses: Grassroots movements to manage global risks of H1N1 flu pandemic. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 22(2), 126–149.**

Ding conducted a case study of transcultural responses to the 2009 H1N1 flu epidemic to provide a theoretical framework of risk communication. To do so, Ding examined national and regional treatment of Chinese citizens traveling from areas like the U.S. and Canada at the height of the epidemic—particularly in regard to online discussions and movements centered around these travelers. Ding argues that “global digital networks enabled tactical circumvention of global risk policies and offered professionals and concerned citizens both access to transnational risk communication channels and opportunities to influence and shape local risk policies” (p. 128). When the first transnational citizen who tested positive for H1N1 was identified as a graduate student named Bao, the “media and hospital authorities tried to personalize Bao as the first H1N1 flu case in China by exploring contexts surrounding his onset of disease and his experiences as a patient under treatment” (p. 138). However, his identification had the opposite effect—the fact that he traveled home despite knowing that he had possibly been exposed to H1N1 fostered massive backlash online against not only him, but other Chinese citizens who had traveled home: “overseas Chinese were transformed from privileged, flexible citizens into suspicious virus carriers who got shunned and stigmatized exactly because of their ability to move across national borders” (p. 140). Ding argues that this massive response is a reminder to risk experts that they “should respond from both scientific

perspectives and the people's point of view, because we—not 'us,' the experts, and 'them,' the ignorant public—must work together to contain the emerging epidemics... therefore, effective consideration of the affected public's emotional needs and cultural values can help experts make better risk policies, communicate more effectively about risk measures, and produce more desirable outcomes" (p. 146). This work plays a role in the social justice turn of TPC because it reminds writers of the importance of always taking into account audiences' lived experiences and expertise.

*Tags: healthcare communication, transcultural, risk communication, technology, pandemic*

**Ding, H., Li, X., & Haigler, A. C. (2016). Access, oppression, and social (in)justice in epidemic control: Race, profession, and communication in SARS outbreaks in Canada and Singapore. *Connexions International Professional Communication Journal*, 4(1), 21–55.**

In this article, Ding et al. use the SARS epidemic of 2003 to explore how Singapore and Toronto approached issues of epidemic control and how professional communication can be used to distribute health-related crisis information in a socially just way. Using the three types of social justice (distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice, as defined by Jost and Kay in 2010) as a framework, the authors describe the actions taken by city officials and hospital administrators to stop the spread of SARS in the cities. Some of the actions, such as enforced quarantine, were found to have negatively impacted certain groups of people (particularly within the medical care community) more than others and were implemented in ways that those impacted considered discriminatory and stigmatizing. They also discuss the economic problems that quarantine caused among lower-income people, many of whom either faced crushing financial difficulties due to an inability to work during quarantine or, in cases where the quarantine was voluntary, continued to work even while possibly infected because they could not afford to miss work. Ding et al. particularly focus on how information was communicated during the outbreaks, both internally in the hospitals and externally to the public, and the lengths that medical care workers had to go to in order to obtain access to the information and to have their own expert voices included in the guidance. The authors then discuss the implications that the study has for technical communicators, who are often uniquely positioned to use their communication skills to help ensure access to information and to advance procedural and interactive forms of social justice work within the context of an epidemic. This piece is especially interesting in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic and raises many questions about the lessons we learned—or didn't learn—from previous epidemics.

*Tags: health literacy, healthcare communication, health crisis management, pandemic*

**Dorpenyo, I. K. (2019). Risky election, vulnerable technology: Localizing biometric use in elections for the sake of justice. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 28(4), 361–375.**

Dorpenyo explores the use of election technologies, particularly biometric identification at the polls, and argues that although such identification practices are often characterized as value-neutral, they actually disproportionately discriminate against certain groups. She uses the fingerprint biometrics that Ghana implemented for its 2012 and 2016 elections as a case study to explore how the practice, though intended to increase the integrity of the election process, actually raised serious concerns about social justice and voter access for democratic elections. In Ghana, many people work in manual labor jobs that are especially hard on their hands, such as slash-and-burn agriculture, carpentry, and plumbing. As a result, biometric fingerprint scanners struggle to recognize those fingerprints, thus effectively discriminating against voters with working-class backgrounds. Dorpenyo calls on technical communicators to critically interrogate these biometric

systems and highlight the ways that these technologies contribute to social injustice. Although this article is certainly applicable to recent conversations in the United States about election integrity and potential ID requirements at U.S. polls, Dorpenyo specifically notes that the field of TPC has a tendency to overlook international contexts and that this study is intended to expand knowledge of how technology impacts social justice in non-U.S. settings.

*Tags: non-neutrality, biometrics, technology, user experience, elections*

**Edenfield, A. C., Holmes, S., & Colton, J. S. (2019). Queering tactical technical communication: DIY HRT. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 28(3), 177–191.**

Edenfield et al. examine the historical lack of accessible information about the gender transition process and how this lack has given rise to a robust online community of users who have created their own guides for self-administering hormone therapy in the absence of “official” guides. Some of the lack of access has to do with overt discrimination, but as Edenfield et al. point out, a great deal of it stems from economic concerns. Gender transition care is often prohibitively expensive for those without insurance, and even people with otherwise good health insurance often find that their policies don’t cover transition services. Because of the affordability issues, many trans individuals are therefore forced to find and self-administer hormone replacement therapies themselves, which can be a complicated process without a physician to walk them through it. Therefore, user-generated guides are essential and occupy an important space in giving agency to those who might otherwise not have it—thus making these guides a form of tactical technical communication (defined as technical communication that happens outside of institutionalized spaces and can therefore be more direct and forceful because it is not subject to corporate and institutional norms). Throughout the article, Edenfield et al. challenge the historical tendency of TPC and tactical technical communication to 1) limit its discussions of LGBTQ+ health issues to the study of HIV/AIDS and 2) view LGBTQ+ communication practices only through a lens of identity politics in which identity is a static and clearly-defined container rather than a sometimes-fluctuating concept that is unique to individuals. Although the authors acknowledge the usefulness of identity politics as a framework, they propose an alternative: tactical technical communication with a queer/new materialist overlay. Queering tactical technical communication, they argue, will help with the ethical concerns of traditional tactical communication (for example, determining whether a tactic is socially just) and will allow for a more nuanced approach to identity when discussing individuals and groups for whom identity is not a static concept.

*Tags: user experience, positionality, health literacy, tactical technical communication, user-created guides, transgender health*

**Garrison-Joyner, V., & Caravella, E. (2020). Lapses in literacy: Cultural accessibility in graphic health communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 29(3), iii–xxl.**

Garrison-Joyner and Caravella explore the use of comics as a potential method to increasing health literacy and reducing the health disparities that occur when patients don’t have access to knowledge or are unable to understand information in its traditionally presented form. They note that because comics are often aimed at children, little research has been done on how this genre might be used with an adult patient population—particularly one that has been traditionally marginalized. Using Walton et al.’s heuristic of the 3Ps as a lens, Garrison-Joyner and Caravella look at different health related comics and analyze how well they account for positionality, privilege, and power. Their unique approach—the creation of a “meta-comicary” containing both scholarly article and graphic

novel—challenges the norms of academic articles in a refreshing way. This piece can help technical communicators think about social justice by asking how non-traditional texts might benefit marginalized groups and what considerations must go into the creation of these texts to ensure they are effective at increasing health literacy and reducing disparities. When creating comics for use in healthcare, technical communicators must be aware of the privileges the healthcare system affords to some but not others and take care not to reproduce these oppressions in the text. To help assure vulnerable patients' concerns are met, technical communicators must form coalitions and engage in participatory design with patients from diverse backgrounds. By including target users, technical communicators can work to create graphics and texts that empower patients by helping them to make informed decisions, thus improving health outcomes for the most vulnerable patient population.

*Tags: health literacy, health disparities, graphics, accessibility*

**Holladay, D. (2017). Classified conversations: Psychiatry and tactical technical communication in online spaces. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 26(1), 8–24.**

Holladay viewed online mental health discussion boards through a de Certeauian lens to examine the ways in which patients use tactics to rebuild ethos and dispel diagnostic stereotypes. Holladay identifies online discussion forums as an important site of research, as these are spaces where patients translate the language of medical professionals in a way that accounts for their own experiences. Current medical discourse, he notes, tends to privilege biological factors over social ones, even though social factors greatly contribute to many conditions, particularly those concerning mental health. In Holladay's examination of mental health discussion boards, he finds that patients use tactics—or discursive moves—to 1) demonstrate credibility through the display of scientific literacy, 2) reconcile their own experiences with biomedical knowledge in an attempt to (re)define themselves after a diagnosis 3) navigate health spaces, and 4) modify medical language to allow for more community access. The mental health forums that Holladay examines create a non-hierarchical space for patients to wrestle with their diagnoses and come to terms with their new identity. Through the incorporation of dialogue and story, message-board users begin to resist, repurpose, or use other tactics when dealing with medical documentation. This inclusion of patients' voices prompts ethical evaluation that can lead to more just communication practices. Indeed, Holladay calls for technical communicators to promote social justice by working as allies to marginalized and often ignored groups. Technical communicators, Holladay posits, must realize that because medical documents function in unexpected—and perhaps, unintended—ways, their professionally created texts live a life outside of the organization in which they were created. Therefore, technical communicators must seek a deeper understanding of the culture their texts may find themselves in so they can become advocates for more inclusive and socially just communication practices.

*Tags: health literacy, healthcare communication, user-generated documentation, tactical communication*

**Moeller, M. E. (2018). Advocacy engagement, medical rhetoric, and expediency. In A. M. Haas & M. F. Eble (Eds.), *Key Theoretical Frameworks: Teaching Technical Communication in the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 212–238). Utah State University Press.**

Moeller's chapter outlines the ways advocacy work can either empower or oppress those it seeks to serve. Using the nonprofit group Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Moeller shows how instructors might teach students to critically examine the cultural ideologies of nonprofits through a critique of organizational commitments. Moeller claims that advocacy approaches to technical communication

must account for the marginalization of bodies through the careful consideration of normative narratives and oppressive data visualizations. As nonprofit work opportunities rise, Moeller stresses the importance of preparing technical communication students to engage in advocacy work in ways that are ethical and socially just. Students, she states, must learn to understand workplace power structures, critique how workplace communication affects bodies, and identify opportunities to disrupt narratives of normalcy. This case study shows how the ethics of expediency and exigence can serve to hide problematic or oppressive values, resulting in an organizational culture that fails at inclusivity and social justice. Using Feminist Disability Studies as a lens, Moeller calls for a critical approach to advocacy that critiques its own rhetorical work and constructs cultural change. Moeller posits that technical communicators hold places of power that shape discourse and understanding. The very nature of advocacy, she says, is to work towards justice for members of marginalized groups, yet even advocates too easily fall into the trap of furthering normative narratives. Therefore, special attention must be given to the multiple positionalities of users and the resistance of potentially harmful medical narratives. Moeller claims that as technical communicators work in the public sphere, they have influence and responsibility in how information gets disseminated to the general public.

*Tags: rhetorics of health and medicine, healthcare advocacy, data visualization, feminism*

**Moeller, M. (2015). Pushing boundaries of normalcy: employing critical disability studies in analyzing medical advocacy websites. *Communication Design Quarterly Review*, 2(4), 52–80.**

Moeller provides an analysis of the Susan G. Komen website, discovering how its online advocacy reifies narratives of normalcy. Specifically, she argues that it functions as an altruistic site “promoting health and wellness for all while simultaneously extending harmful biopolitical logics that saturate this current historical moment” (p. 54). She advocates that a feminist disabilities studies lens may aid more critique to counterbalance the normalizing work of medical advocacy groups. She writes that as technical communication researchers and teachers, we have an ethical obligation to consider how and what types of information are disseminated upon the general public and influence their understandings of health as well as what advocacy is. Ultimately, she asserts “employing a feminist disability studies lens will provide a way in which students can further deepen critical engagement with cultural texts—and thus recognize how they, and others, construct and are constructed by varying notions and in particular altruistic, web-based articulations of medical health and well-being” (p. 75).

*Tags: normalcy, rhetorics of health and medicine, advocacy, websites*

**Molloy, C., Beemer, C., Bennett, J., Green, A., Johnson, J., Kessler, M., Novotny, M., & Siegel-Finer, B. (2018). A dialogue on possibilities for embodied methodologies in the rhetoric of health & medicine. *Rhetoric of Health & Medicine*, 1(3), 349–371.**

Molloy et al.’s article uses dialogue to examine the positionality of eight RHM scholars. Researching topics in which the researcher has a close personal stake in, the authors claim, can expose vulnerabilities and lead to burnout. This research, they note, can lead to issues maintaining objectivity and perspective, yet at the same time, these experiences give researchers an insider view that leads to richer understanding and scholarship. Collaboratively, the authors take up three main topics in their discussion: 1) the choice to take on research to which they are personally connected, 2) the issues of ethically representing vulnerable populations, and 3) the decision of whether or not to disclose their connections to their audience. Regardless of their decision to reveal their positionality

or not, the authors all expressed the need for care for bodies, both those of the participants and of the researchers. They also note the need to “step back” when doing insider research in order to truly validate personal experiences. This article provides an example of coalition building, as it brings together multiple authors in the hopes of addressing social and ethical concerns. Though Molloy et al. primarily highlight the intersectionality of scholar-advocates, technical communicators must also remain reflexive about how intersecting identities affect their work. While the authors examine the privileges afforded them through their universities, technical communicators too must learn to recognize the privileges given to them in their institutional roles. Molloy et al. ask readers to consider issues of ethics and social justice as they relate to bodies. Just as the authors expressed the need to ethically represent patients’ voices and experiences in ways that address stigma without leaving the researcher or their participants open to ridicule, technical communicators must find ways to respectfully amplify marginalized voices rather than silencing them.

Tags: *rhetorics of health and medicine, embodiment, methodology*

**Moore, K. R., Jones, N., Cundiff, B. S., & Heilig, L. (2018). Contested sites of health risks: Using wearable technologies to intervene in racial oppression. *Communication Design Quarterly*, 5(4), 52–60.**

In this article, Moore et al. use the case of Eric Garner, the Black man whose death at the hands of police in 2014 inspired protests against police brutality, as a case study to imagine how activity and fitness trackers could be used to advance social justice in encounters between people of color and police. Eric Garner was put in a chokehold by police officers and held that way until he died, despite his continued pleas that he couldn’t breathe. Afterwards, the role of the chokehold in his death was downplayed by those who brought up his personal fitness and pre-existing conditions, claiming that a healthy person put into the same chokehold would not have had the same respiratory distress and that, therefore, Garner’s death was in some ways his own fault. Moore et al. challenge this argument on the grounds that Black bodies have been historically dehumanized and their health concerns dismissed due to systematic racism. They imagine Garner’s encounter with the police if he had been wearing an activity tracker that linked to police systems or in some way displayed his physiological distress to the officers—if the police had been able to see actual data showing that his oxygen levels were dropping and that his body was indeed shutting down, it may have overridden their racism-driven disbelief of his statements. After imagining the situation with activity trackers included, they argue that “by collecting data that can contribute to the narrative of health (or unhealth), the technology can be used to communicate to others, including police, that the person they are interacting with is indeed a human whose physical health and unhealth matters” (56). In addition to potentially intervening in the moment, they further state that data gathered from an activity tracker could have been used to refute any arguments in court that the chokehold did not contribute to Garner’s death. While Moore et al. recognize that it is “ridiculous” that such technological interventions might be necessary at all—after all, it seems obvious to those who respect the humanity of others that people should not need to quantitatively prove that they are dying in order to not be killed—they also highlight the value that wearable technologies could add to such encounters within a police system that is so entrenched in systemic racism. They end the article by calling for technical communicators and technology designers to bring imagined social-justice-minded technological innovations, such as wearable technologies and activity trackers that could alert police and onlookers to a person’s physiological distress, to fruition.

Tags: *anti-racism, health disparities, health risk, wearable technology, police brutality*

**Novotny, M., & Hutchinson, L. (2019). Data our bodies tell: Towards critical feminist action in fertility and period tracking applications. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 28(4), 332–360.**

Novotny and Hutchinson situate digital women's health applications as technical communication and reflect on how these apps' promises of self-empowerment often come at the expense of users' privacy. The authors examine the fertility and period tracking app Glow, which improves reproductive health literacy, gives users access to their health data, and increases autonomy over reproductive health for groups who may otherwise be unable to access or afford private reproductive care. Though Novotny and Hutchinson note the many benefits users can obtain from DIY health technology, they conclude that the app's makers neglected to recognize how expediency erodes users' agency. The authors claim Glow should reposition users as the main stakeholders and propose three actions necessary for Glow to improve the ethics of their app; Glow must provide users 1) the option to opt out of data collection, 2) the right of ownership to their personal data, and 3) the ability to remove data after quitting the app. Novotny and Hutchinson build clear connections between social justice and feminist commitments and shows how coalition building can help identify new avenues for advocacy and action. They remind us of the need for critical analysis when it comes to technologies marketed to vulnerable population and help readers to see how the human-centered redesign of digital health apps can enact social justice in TPC. The authors call technical communicators to consider how barriers get enacted through the design or language of documents and how these barriers can degrade user agency. Ultimately, Novotny and Hutchinson remind us that technology is not neutral and technical communicators must strive to improve the relationships between technology and its users in ways that make privacy policies and consent transparent.

Tags: *rhetorics of health and medicine, health literacy, feminism, fertility, user data, applications*

**Opel, D. (2014, September). Social justice in technologies of prenatal care: Toward a user centered approach to technical communication in home pregnancy testing. *Proceedings of the 32nd ACM International Conference on The Design of Communication*, 1–8.**

Opel argues that not all users are reflected in the product packaging and design of at-home pregnancy tests. Using Schriver's elements of information design, this article presents a case study of three brands of home pregnancy tests to show how the marketing is targeted at middle-class white women and follows the mainstream narrative of pregnancy. In effect, home pregnancy tests are system-centered rather than user-centered in that they privilege users who desire pregnancy while failing to account for the users who do not wish to be pregnant or have no intention of continuing the pregnancy. Opel sees this as one of the potential pitfalls of information design—that is designed for readability and usability only as it relates to a certain set of users. Usable documents may not be user-centered, or at least not centered on all users. Opel claims that the key to making technical communication more inclusive is non-binary collaboration between users and technical communicators. To accomplish this, she says brands must make space for user-participation without reproducing the dominant narrative. Opel notes that users of at-home pregnancy tests are racially, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse, yet the lack of inclusion in the tests' branding serves to "harm or disempower" users (p. 7). This shows technical communicators the importance of considering counter-narratives when crafting documentation. In terms of social justice, Opel's article raises issues important to reproductive justice—a woman's right to choose if and when to become a mother. Pregnancy tests, like all products, should be designed to reflect the needs of all users, even ones that do not fit the dominant narrative. By taking into account the power inherent in design, technical communicators can produce deliverables that open up options for users rather than restrict users to the status quo.

Tags: *healthcare communication, information design, usability, participatory design, pregnancy*

**St. Amant, K. (2019). The cultural context for communicating care. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 49(4), 367–382.**

St. Amant attempts to help the reader understand not only the importance of communicating care but the potential problems and hurdles associated with it when doing it across cultural channels. He looks to show the reader how to integrate concepts from health, medical, and care communication as a basis to then push them into a broader international and cross-cultural communication spheres. St. Amant defines “health” as a state of being “well” which is constantly changing. “Medical” being the recognized practices and tools used in the process of keeping a person healthy. The most important definition being “care”, which is a proactive action that is either preventative or restorative for the person (p. 368-369). St. Amant lays out some of the hurdles involved in communicated care, which includes credibility, language around care, the person administering the care, and of course the context where everything is happening. These are all real obstacles, but they are also all manageable as long as the technical communicator takes their time to research the cultural implications and definitions of health, medical, and care. The importance of this research is underscored by St. Amant when he documents the fact that global migration is constantly growing, for instance, the United States has seen their immigrant population more than double since 1990 (Pew Charitable Trust, 2014). This means a technical communicator must constantly be informed and recognize the growing changes their communities are undertaking. It is only through a social justice lens that if nations and countries are accepting the migration of people from across cultural spheres, that they must ensure that these people are taken care, and able to live healthy lives. It is on the technical communicator to take up this social justice issue, ensuring that with evolving cultural demographics, their knowledge and ways of communicating are evolving as well.

Tags: *healthcare communication, cross-cultural communication, healthcare*

**St. Amant, K. (2020). Communicating about COVID-19: Practices for today, planning for tomorrow. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 50(3), 211–223.**

St. Amant illustrates the ways in which technical communicators can not only address public health concerns happening today with Covid-19, but also implement and be better prepared to address public health problems of the future. He lists five keys to address public health crises; 1) having instructions for identifying a condition, 2) instructions on how to shop strategically, 3) implementing protocols for assessing sources of information (while flagging/fighting against disinformation), 4) safety procedures and steps for taking care of others, both healthy and compromised persons, and 5) having clear cut instructions on how to not only acquire and access online virtual tools, but also a step by step guide on navigating and using these tools. St. Amant is writing about a world that will constantly have to deal with pandemics, and which has constantly dealt with pandemics, just not to the magnitude of COVID-19. He ends their piece with a call to action for the reader, asking them to do three things, first is to take the time out to find all audiences that may have eventually have access to this information and address the needs of every subgroup. Second is to develop ways for materials to be viewed and stored ranging from webpages with mobile access to giving out physical pamphlets. Lastly, he pushes for a working relationship with local organizations and healthcare providers to raise awareness within communities. These are more than just recommendations, but social justice initiatives to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all those during a global pandemic. St. Amant and his structural guidance illustrates the ways in which technical and profession

communication can not only be more proactive within communities but also a valuable resource in the spreading of information pertinent to the communities they're involved in. The steps provided by him are the starting point to creating a world filled with equitable knowledge so at least those who are most vulnerable can have the knowledge to protect themselves for not only today but tomorrow as well.

*Tags: public health, COVID-19, Information Design, health communication, community engagement*

**Scott, B., Segal, J. Z., & Keranen, L. (2013). The rhetorics of health and medicine: Inventional possibilities for scholarship and engaged practice. *Poroi*, 9(1), 1–3.**

Scott et al. concisely take a look at the field of Rhetoric of Health and Medicine and help point out areas for growth and exploration for technical communicators. Firstly, their call to action is one of inclusion, asking technical communicators to refer to the field as Rhetoric of Health and Medicine. Advocating that the broad overarching name gives room many different genres, health texts, artifacts, and pedagogies to not only be relevant but also be included. This is obviously a social justice trait, as the push for inclusion widens the field and gives more people, especially marginalized voices, room to collaborate and highlight their issues and campaigns. However, they also acknowledge that growth may require writing outside the academy, and welcome partnerships among policymakers and those in the public health sphere. This is an obvious push for technical communicators to be more flexible in their work, to work with policymakers and health stakeholders as to have a wider understanding of the field of RHM, creating a working dialogue between academy and public spaces. This wider knowledge only serves technical communicators in allowing them to take the research further and deeper than where the field is currently. The social justice aspect can be dug out in the push for collaboration from the authors.

*Tags: rhetorics of health and medicine, community engagement, TPC*

**Singer, S. (2019). Women and their bodies: A feminist rhetorical approach to user-centered technology. *Peitho*, 21(3).**

Singer's work uses a feminist rhetorical lens to critique the ethical implications of collecting user health data. Through a comparison of the rhetorical appeals used by the 1970s book *Women and Their Bodies* (WATB) and the modern patient-driven research project MyLymeData (MLD), Singer shows the potential risks data sharing poses to vulnerable populations. She begins by showing how WATB functioned as an accessible, user-centered, empowering text that personally benefited women, while asking nothing in return. She then contrasts this to MLD, a project that asks for personal data yet offers little gain to users besides the feel-good notion of contributing to research. She identifies three rhetorical themes at play in MLD's appeals: power, individuality, and simplicity. Singer ends by claiming MLD could improve its methods to provide transformative access by 1) giving users the right to their own data, 2) acknowledging the complexity of research and "big data," and 3) re-envisioning website documents in ways that are user-centered and accessibly designed. Singer's critique of MLD brings to light the ethical issues of data collection. From a social justice standpoint, technical communicators must find ways to include user expertise without forcing the users to give up the rights to their own experience. For sites such as MLD to truly be considered "patient-powered," patients must have a more equitable say in the research decisions that rely on their data. This highlights the need for an equitable distribution of power between patient and researcher and a commitment to focus on users over systems. Singer's article reminds technical communicators to consider who benefits from information and who gets disenfranchised, as well as

to remain sensitive to the uncompensated labor they are asking others to perform. Singer shows technical communicators that true transformative access to information gives users power over their bodies and their knowledge.

Tags: *feminism, healthcare communication, user data, health design*

**Walwema, J. (2020). The WHO health alert: Communicating a global pandemic with WhatsApp. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 1–6.**

Walwema explores how the World Health Organization (WHO) was able to help fight disinformation during a global pandemic by taking advantage of the communicating app, WhatsApp. As the WHO realized the risk for disinformation can come in many forms and with volatility of social media platforms, the WHO had to turn to other means of effectively getting their message across while also being able to communicate it across cross cultural boundaries. By creating a system of text responses, either numerical or emoji, the WHO was able to give access to vital information, making it readily available in a variety of languages and also circumventing any kind of restriction on information that may have been imposed by government entities. By actively fighting against the ways in which disinformation can spread, the WHO has built a network and system to keep those that are most vulnerable engaged, aware, and prepared for Covid-19 and the current global pandemic. Technical communicators can look to this article as an example of new ways to present information to their users, incorporating visuals and apps to effectively pass on information. To take it further, technical communicators can use this article as a way to advocate open lines of communication between borders, as humans may have borders, but virus and diseases do not. Technical communicators must take the social justice approach by not only creating lifesaving information, but also ensuring that that information reaches those that are most vulnerable, regardless of where they may reside. In doing so, technical communicators are creating a world in which information is no longer privy to those in power but one that it is accessible to all those who need it to survive.

Tags: *health communication, COVID-19, applications, health technology, technology*

**Welhausen, C. A. (2015). Visualizing a non-pandemic: Considerations for communicating public health risks in intercultural contexts. *Journal of Society of Technical Communications*, 67(4), 1–21.**

Welhausen examines the visual implications of texts and graphs and what messages are being conveyed, especially during the time of a pandemic. This article forces technical communicators to take a more holistic view of the information that they are sending out into the world. By being aware of both the text and visual representation connected with it, technical communicators can be concise and clear on the message that they are trying to convey. Welhausen is also telling technical communicators to take cultural context, such as individualistic and collectivistic cultures, into consideration when publishing information.

Welhausen leaves technical communicators with three goals to creating better graphical design, 1) use multitude of different graphical designs 2) include explanation text to along with graphical data, and 3) create comparative graphical data. By doing these three things technical communicators can ensure the proper message and feeling is conveyed to their audience. Social justice plays a role because if a people are not properly informed about risk to not only them but those around them, the ones less likely to receive proper care always those of lower social and economic means. By ensuring

proper risk communication, this gives agency back to those that aren't professionals, ensuring that they can take the proper measures to ensuring their safety and health.

*Tags: graphic communication, health risk, health communication, public health, user experience*

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