



Abstracts

CONCURRENT SESSION 1

PANEL A

Strategies for Fostering Excellence among Technical Communicators and Engineering Graduates through Academic-Industry Partnerships

An Overview of the Benefits of Partnerships

Diane Martinez, Utah State University

The Engineering Faculty Perspective

David Bigio, University of Maryland

The Managerial Perspective: Expectations of the Role of Technical Communicators in Engineering Environments Pt. I

Calvin Langford, Northrop Grumman

The Managerial Perspective: Expectations of the Role of Technical Communicators in Engineering Environments Pt. II

Rebecca Torzone, Northrop Grumman

Technical Communication: A Faculty Perspective

Laura Vernon, Utah State University

The Student and Recent Graduate Perspective

Greg Wu, Northrop Grumman

Many contend it is beneficial to maintain distance between academia and industry so that education does not become solely career/market driven. However, this distance can create a chasm for students that can be difficult to cross after graduation. This is especially true for technical communicators whose work is grounded in workplace communication; thus, it is not difficult to argue that some level of partnership with industry is beneficial to technical communication programs.

But along with industry, technical communication programs would benefit from interdisciplinary partnerships as well, such as with engineering schools, because it is our own separateness in academia that contributes to the problem of students and graduates who do not know how to communicate effectively. For instance, engineering schools produce engineers and technical communication programs produce technical communicators. This separateness generates specialists who lack fundamental and universal work skills like communication. But the workplace is not as separate. Practicing engineers know that engineering and communication are not separate as both are needed for success.

The benefits of academic-industry partnerships are well documented, but consider a triad situation where a technical communication program is partnering with another school and with industry. The



triad partnership creates an ideal situation with benefits for all stakeholders. Industry gets the benefit of having access to research-based knowledge about discipline-specific practices (in this case, engineering and communication), and technical communication and engineering programs benefit from learning about industry practices and needs. Additionally, industry can help build bridges between departments so that communication is not separated from learning and applying knowledge within a particular discipline.

The proposed panel for this conference is an academic-industry panel comprised of two engineering managers from Northrop Grumman, one engineering faculty member, two technical communication faculty (from USU), and recent graduates and/or working engineers (from a variety of places). The purpose of the panel is two-fold: to discuss how industry and technical communication and engineering programs can work together to help engineering students improve their overall communication skills, and to discuss the preparation for technical communicators in engineering environments, as all panel members agreed that even if engineers could communicate more effectively, there is still a need for technical communicators on their projects.

PANEL B

Learning from Alumni: Implications of a National Survey of Workplace Writing for Technical and Professional Communication Programs

This panel will present the results of a nationwide, multi-institutional study that surveyed professional and technical writing alumni from over 20 institutions in an effort better understand their writing behaviors and preferences. To study these behaviors, we administered an online survey in May of 2011 that asked alumni to describe their current writing practices. For example, what types of writing do they do the most? For what purposes do they do that writing? Where do they typically write? What kinds of writing do they consider most valuable?

An Overview of the Recent Survey of Professional & Technical Writing Alumni

Stuart Blythe, Michigan State University

The presenters will provide an overview of the survey and compare its purpose and design to previous surveys.

Should We Care About Writing Anymore?

Stewart Whittemore, Auburn University

This presenter will provide an overview of the results of the survey and comment on significant trends in the data.

Implications of Survey Results for Undergraduate Programs and Students in Technical Communication

Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch, University of Minnesota

This presenter will use data from this survey to investigate whether the profile of students interested in professional and technical writing programs is changing and comment on what may be a devaluation of traditional writing skills by those entering our field.



Communicating Visually: What Alumni Can Tell us about Design Tasks and Software in the Technical Communication Workplace

Claire Lauer, Arizona State University

The presenter will use the data to show the nature and frequency of visual communication tasks routinely performed by technical communicators, and suggest ways to revise technical communication curriculum accordingly.

Identifying Patterns in Professional Activities and Exploring Their Implications for Program Design

Bill Williamson, Saginaw Valley State University

The presenter will use the data to examine the relationship between writing and professional identity among recent grads, and consider the implications for program administration.

PANEL C

Aligning Programmatic Objectives with Industry Expectations with Student Experiences in Technical Communication

Framing Current Objectives for Student Success in Technical Communication: Results From Alumni/Industry Partner Feedback

Necia Werner, Carnegie Mellon University

Putting Theory into Practice: Using Industry Experience to Help Prepare Students for Technical Writing Jobs

Jennifer Cirolì, IBM

From Aristotle to Oracle: One Student's Journey From Philosophy to Technical Writing

Sam B. Myers, Carnegie Mellon University

Write, Revise, Prognosticate: The Challenges of Writing Within a Development Cycle

Diane Warner, Carnegie Mellon University

"Is This Thing On?": Strategies for Negotiating End-User Needs While Planning and Writing a Large-Scale Healthcare Document

John Wayne Williams, Carnegie Mellon University

Carnegie Mellon's graduate program in Professional Writing (MAPW), celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, is a three-semester program with a required internship. Although MAPW graduates pursue a wide range of careers (e.g., editing and publishing, public relations, corporate communications, healthcare and medical writing), a sizeable contingency are drawn to internships and full-time work at companies like IBM, Oracle, Yahoo!, and Apple. One of the programmatic challenges we face is therefore crafting and communicating core program objectives that are relevant to a variety of post-graduate careers, but also address the particular needs of technical communicators. For these students, we must be additionally mindful of changing industry expectations, and help them cultivate and articulate their expertise to prospective employers.



This panel attempts to align the needs and expectations of three different groups with vested interests in bridging the academy-industry gap in technical communication: 1) the MAPW program director, who uses curricular objectives to advise students on courses, internships, and career options in technical communication; 2) an MAPW alumnus who works full-time in the software industry and is also the instructor for our Software Documentation course, and; 3) current MAPW students who took Software Documentation, obtained technical communication internships, and seek careers in that field after graduation.

The panel is organized as follows. First, the program director will provide a brief overview of the MAPW curriculum and program objectives, followed by results from a survey of alumni on the core set of academic, professional, and industry-specific “objectives for success” they would encourage students in technical communication to cultivate. Next, our instructor/industry professional will provide first-hand experience crafting (and subsequently modifying) objectives, assessments, and assignments that are both accessible to her students and map onto her own industry expectations. Additionally, she will discuss her experience forging an academy-industry partnership with MadCap Software. Finally, our current students will speak to their own experiences negotiating the genre knowledge and expectations of the technical communication field, as they sought to apply their coursework to their summer internships and look ahead to the job market.

Our goals in this panel are to: draw on alumni-, instructor-, and student-driven experiences in technical communication to assess programmatic objectives; provide other conference attendees a set of “objectives for success” in technical communication that we may interrogate as a group, and; together with our students, formulate a plan of action on how best to help them transition from academy to industry.

PANEL D

Technical Communication Program Curricula as Loci for Academy-Industry Stakeholder Negotiation

Whether explicitly acknowledged or not, technical communication program curricula are the product of complex negotiations among multiple stakeholders from industry, the academy, and beyond. The interests of students, disciplines, departments, university administration, accreditation organizations, instructors, neighboring academic programs, local industry, state governments, professional groups, scholarly organizations, local communities, and even global capitalism have profound determining influences on individual program curricula.

This panel explores multiple mechanisms for such stakeholder negotiation, and offers frameworks for understanding the role of stakeholder negotiation in the construction not only of local curricula, but of a larger academic discipline and industry profession.



An Overview and Introduction

Jim Nugent, Oakland University

This presenter will begin the session by providing a brief overview of program research to ground the discussion in what is known about technical communication curricula. As several scholars observe (Harner & Rich, Nugent), program curricula are remarkably diverse in their character and construction. Contending that this curricular diversity is a direct function of the varied sites and outcomes of stakeholder negotiation, Jim will then discuss some of the ethical, political, disciplinary, and professional implications presented by such negotiation.

The Classroom and the Workplace: Initiating the Conversation

Laurence José, Grand Valley State University

This presenter will continue the session by exploring the potential for introductory courses to become a locus for enacting connections with the workplace. Reflecting on the programmatic function of such courses, she will discuss the implications and the affordances of opening the classroom to professionals in the field. Drawing from the debates surrounding the role of the technical communicator (R. Johnson, Savage), she will discuss how enacting tripartite dialogues between teachers, students and professionals can become a means to productively address the binary opposition between practice and theory. She will conclude by discussing ways to foster and to sustain such partnerships while considering their larger impact on pedagogical and programmatic outcomes.

Vocationalism, Advisory Boards, and Institutional Identity Shifts: The Terrible Triad

Erik Hayenga, University of Findlay

This presenter will call to the fore the balance between vocationalism and preparing graduate Scientific and Technical Communicators (STCs) to do real work. In the early 2000's, Erik was part of a team to implement broad changes to the STC program at one of the oldest and most well-known programs in the country. The changes were intentioned to provide a more concrete programmatic identity for a field that has sometimes been defined more by reaction than proaction. His presentation will specifically track the challenges in, and implications of, establishing a degree program advisory board made of working STCs, while also addressing the political tensions that are a part of such institutional identity change.

PANEL E

Service Learning and Relationship Building

(Re)Introduction to the SLOT-C Database

Jo Mackiewicz, Auburn University

Project Management and Usability Testing: Strategies Learned from Developing the SLOT-C Database

Susan Youngblood, Auburn University



University instructors looking for meaningful, real-world communication-related projects for their students sometimes have little contact with organizations outside the university. Such instructors often rely on nonprofits affiliated with their institutions or otherwise familiar organizations to fill their class-project needs (see Judge, 2006; McEachern, 2001). And, when students are required to identify their own communication project opportunities, they often fall back on working with student organizations or workplaces with which they are already involved (see Bowden & Scott, 2003; Sapp & Crabtree, 2002). When instructors and students fall back on familiar organizations, their projects may indeed have merit; however, they eventually may strain their relationships with community partners if they over-rely on them. Additionally, a nonprofit's project may be difficult to match to a student's experience and assignment, and vice versa.

The Service Learning Opportunities in Technical Communication (or SLOT-C) Database helps solve the problems outlined above by broadening the range of organizations that instructors and students have for client-based projects. The SLOT-C Database facilitates targeted partnerships between upper-division and graduate communication students and nonprofit organizations and, at the same time, enriches the curricula (and, potentially, the mission) of the participating universities. It helps instructors assess the appropriateness of a given organization and communication project for the assignments in their classes by including the information about both the organization and its project needs (e.g., writing instructions and grants, developing a website, creating presentations, designing marketing materials) and details that help generate successful project-student pairings (e.g., skills that the student needs to have or a nonprofit's mission statement). In connecting instructors, students, and nonprofit representatives, the SLOT-C Database promotes students' academic and professional growth, as well as their development into good citizens of their states and their local communities.

Our purpose in this presentation is to describe the development of the SLOT-C Database up to its planned official beta launch on 29 August, 2011. We focus on strategies that we learned for working with graduate student interns and IT (database) experts. We also discuss strategies that we developed as we worked with volunteer usability-test participants—including representatives of nonprofit organizations—on this complex project. We also discuss preliminary findings from after the database's launch, including users' reactions to the SLOT-C's content, design, and navigation and users' postlaunch feedback about the partnerships that the database facilitated.

Incorporating both Formative and Assessments and Evaluations from Community Partners in Technical Writing Courses with Service Learning Projects

Xiaoli Li, Clemson University

In an institution that encourages Boyer Model of Scholarship, we find an incentive to employ service learning projects in all our technical communication courses, both for our majors and in our service course for engineering students. Years of assessing these service learning projects have led us to develop a model that can be used to enhance teaching, learning, service, and get connected with all stake holders of our service learning projects: instructors, students, clients, and end users. In this



presentation, we focus on the use of formative assessments (short quizzes and exams, portfolio, and reflectional journals) as well as progress reports and formal evaluations from community partners in technical writing courses with service learning projects. We describe the ways how each assessment is used, for what purpose, and to what effects. We believe that using formative assessments can benefit students. They can be motivated about their learning and they can acquire life-long learning skills such as self-assessment and goal setting. For instructors who use formative assessments, they can make teaching and learning more student-centered and more individualized by adapting teaching to students' learning styles, backgrounds, and providing timely feedback on their progress and help them to set appropriate goals for improvement. In our presentation, we highlight the benefits of each one while mentioning the challenges. We also offer suggestions for alternatives and justifications for each option in addition to a simple description.

Connecting Service Learning and Community Engagement & Programmatic Assessment

Kenneth R. Price, Western Carolina University

Technical communication relies heavily on experiential learning, which is typically gained through internships and coops. Similarly, in technical communication courses with community engagement and service learning assignments and activities, students have the opportunity to blend the theoretical with the practical and thus bridge the university to the world of work.

This presentation outlines the methodology for using community engagement and service learning assignments in technical communication courses as a programmatic assessment tool in the accreditation process and details the problems that arise in having industry influence and, in some cases, determine the content of these courses.

Connection of the proposed presentation to the conference theme

Experiential learning, academia/industry alliance— examining the role of program assessment and program review as a mechanism for fostering academic and industry partnerships.

Courses with community engagement and service learning assignments and activities provide invaluable experience for students as well as offer a means of strengthening the relationship between the University and the community. These courses do, however, raise questions about how technical communication programs might be transformed by standardized assessment and whether we should follow industry dictates in keeping our courses and programs current and useful.

Summary of the approach used to examine the proposed presentation topic

All technical communication courses at Western Carolina University have Course Content Guides (CCGs) that provide a concise description of the course, its topical areas, instructional goals, student outcomes, and methods of evaluation and assessment. These guides establish a baseline for assessment during the accreditation process.

The CCGs, however, also raised programmatic concerns pertinent to all programs in scientific and technical communication:



- Will we be asked or feel the demand to restructure the curriculum in our classes to reflect a prescribed list of standardized proficiencies?
- Will the theoretical be sacrificed for the practical in the curriculum, if industry dictates?
- What is the most effective methodology to assess technical communication programs and writing skills?

Summary of what attendees can “take away” from the presentation to apply to or use within the context of their own organizations or programs

A rubric of criteria and standards of assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of these technical communication courses.

CONCURRENT SESSION 2

PANEL B

Considering Curricular Perspectives on Fostering Academy-Industry Relationships and Partnerships

Creating a Crossdisciplinary and Sustainable Graduate Program

Sarah Perrault, University of California-Davis

This presentation addresses how creating a crossdisciplinary certificate program may help resolve two problems faced by graduate programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (TSC): program sustainability and the need for interdisciplinarity.

Program Description

In this presentation, “crossdisciplinary” means people adapt tools from one domain for use in another, and “interdisciplinary” means people from different domains work together to solve common problems. The TSC program will be crossdisciplinary, enrolling PhD students in TSC and certificate students whose allegiances are to other disciplines (e.g. science, engineering, business) but who will work on TSC issues related to their fields. However, coursework will be interdisciplinary as students work on issues of mutual interest.

Sustainability

The certificate will help create a sustainable program, meaning one that can have strong research and teaching agendas but still place its graduates in jobs, by enrolling students from many areas.

Enrollment is often driven by program’s needs (e.g. to fill courses) rather than by employment opportunities for graduates, resulting in an oversupply of graduates for available positions. Even the physical sciences, often touted as an area of infinite job possibilities, now see PhD production rates vastly outnumbering the available jobs in academia and industry (see the 2011 issue of *Nature* on “The



future of the PhD”). Rhetoric and composition may also be heading that way; Miller, Brueggeman, Blue, & Shepherd indicated concern about this as early as 1997.

Although this problem isn’t yet affecting TSC, the history of other disciplines, combined with the growth in TSC, suggests that it may if we do not take action and heed Rude and Cook’s (2004) call for “responsible and strategic growth.”

Interdisciplinarity

As TSC professionals work more interdisciplinarily (see Spilka’s *Digital Literacy*, or the 2007 *TCQ* issue on “the Age of Distributed Work”), we must prepare future professionals for such work, and future professors for related research and teaching. Courses in the certificate program will do so by:

- Providing experience in crossdisciplinary communication.
- Beginning crossdisciplinary dialogues that could continue beyond the academic setting.
- Providing interdisciplinary research opportunities for graduate students

Mutual Continuing Learning: Collaborating with Practitioners to Develop and Maintain a Technical Communication BS Degree

Marjorie Rush Hovde, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

As academics in a field closely tied to industry, we question how to prepare students for the challenges they face after graduation. How do we teach current practices but also make clear that typical practice in the workplace is not necessarily optimal? How do we teach students to adapt to unique workplace circumstances while creating useful and usable technical communication? How can faculty collaborate with professionals for mutual benefit? How do we avoid judging a discourse community in which we ourselves are not directly involved?

In this presentation, I will use recent experiences at our institution in developing a BS in Technical Communication as a case study, looking at the dynamics of employing an academia-industry network to create an innovative curriculum that uses our school’s strengths and that serves as a long-term resource for our region.

This degree development included:

1. Past connections made through interacting with members of a (now-defunct) STC regional chapter, interviewing regional practitioners, and conferring with advisory board members have provided a foundation for perspectives that guided the curriculum content for the new BS, incorporating coursework in communication, technology/science/math, organizational/cultural dynamics, and general studies.
2. In the future, we would also like to serve as a regional resource for technical communicators, especially those who have little to no contact with other local technical communicators. We anticipate that the ongoing relationships will be a source of mutual learning, with academics



and practitioners drawing on the strengths of their respective contexts to strengthen theory and practice. Specifically, we plan to:

- integrate practitioners into ongoing assessments of the degree program.
- utilize the resources of practitioners in order to conduct workplace research.
- integrate practitioners with our service learning emphasis.
- offer regular workshops and/or seminars to regional individuals who wish to enhance their technical communication abilities.

Our advisory board helped us refine a list of knowledge, skills, and personal traits that technical communicators should develop during their educations. I plan to share this list as an example in conjunction with this presentation.

This presentation and the ensuing discussion should prove useful to participants who are developing a new degree program or re-conceiving an existing one. Specifically, they will gain additional insights into the complex process and the benefits of collaborating with non-academic experts in technical communication for ongoing mutual learning opportunities.

Topic-Oriented Content Development: Implications for Technical Communication Programs

Rebekka Andersen, University of California, Davis

No abstract available.

PANEL C

Pervasive Partnerships: Leveraging Industry Relations across the Curriculum

Three faculty members from the University of Wisconsin-Stout will present their perspectives on building and maintaining strong industry ties to provide their students a more relevant curriculum.

Beyond Course Delivery: Encouraging Critical Student Perspectives of Online Education

Paul Anheier, University of Wisconsin-Stout

This presenter examines the use of distance education technologies for online classes, and how those technologies prepare students for the geographically distributed workplace. Increasingly, “presence” in the workplace is being replaced with technologically mediated communication strategies, and the inclusion of these technologies in our curriculum lays the groundwork for our students’ success.

Bringing the World to Campus: Building Industry Ties Regionally

Quan Zhou, University of Wisconsin-Stout

This presenter reports on the many ways our program, located in a small Midwestern town, maintains world-class industry ties by keeping our technology on the cutting edge. Partnerships forged through both service projects and involvement on our industry advisory board connect faculty and students to the businesses and organizations in our region.



User-Centered and Robot-Compatible: The New Rules for Audience Analysis

Matt Livesey, University of Wisconsin-Stout

This presenter considers how our curriculum is constantly shaped by our interactions with industry. The example of the effect of rapidly changing rules of search engine ranking algorithms shows how programs can only hope to maintain their currency through regular interaction with industry partners.

PANEL D

Literacies, Competencies, and Skills: Perspectives on Fostering Academy-Industry Relationships

Research Methods for Undergraduates

Tim Giles, Georgia Southern University

This presentation will engage the topic of a research methods course for undergraduates. In general for English Language Studies, “research methods” is usually a title for a graduate course, an approach related to its presence in the traditional English Department where students are introduced to how to start thinking about doing thesis/dissertation research. As a result, this type of course is typically not part of an undergraduate program, and perhaps has been left to the wayside even in technical communication graduate programs since it is more so identified with that traditional English Language Studies program. Indeed, research (Spilka 2009) indicates that about 65% of technical communication graduate programs at 114 institutions did not offer a research methods course. Ironically, one of the selling points to undergraduates seeking a degree in technical communication is that they can get a job as a technical communicator. The idea of writers considering their audience is emphasized in most writing classes, beginning in grade school, and certainly such an idea permeates technical communication programs where students are likely to be taught about usability. However, an undergraduate research methods course can take those concepts and apply them more broadly than in a usability class, which generally has a lot of its time taken up with developing a prototype and with testing as well as learning to use available video equipment. With a course focusing on ethnographic research, a program that lacks support, for example, for software to record how usability study participants use a computer, or for video cameras, can broaden how technical communication students can study the audience whose needs shape the documents written for them.

Technology Skill-Sets and Industry Demands: Evaluating Curriculum on a “Continuum of Program Foci”

Brian D. Ballentine, West Virginia University

This paper explores technology integration and its relationship to curricula and learning outcomes from the perspective of a newly established professional writing program. With programmatic learning outcomes that emphasize print and electronic publishing, technical editing, writing for the web, and visual rhetoric, successfully meeting the program’s goals becomes tied inherently to administrative decisions regarding technology. This presentation identifies specific questions that program administrators should answer for themselves and their programs before committing to



resource intensive technology integrations. Beyond the more obvious (yet still challenging) decisions regarding hardware, software, and instructor training, this presentation will advocate for program administrators to locate themselves on Yeats and Thompson's "continuum of program foci" (2010, 232). On their scale of "1-10," a "1" represents programs characterized by an "English studies" emphasis and higher numbers represent programs emphasizing "technical communication" (a 7 or 8) and "human centered design" (a 9 or 10). As frustrating as it may be to commit to a ranking, the exercise itself reveals much about a program's strengths and limitations. By way of example, this presentation will evaluate courses in a newly established professional writing program based on the continuum and demonstrate some of the difficult revelations the ranking displays. The natural question(s) is what to do next? If a program's placement on the continuum is not a good fit for local industry jobs and/or student needs then the logical answer would be to alter the curriculum but how and by how much? It is believed that the exercise can aid program administrators as they attempt to improve upon their collaborative industry relationships.

Harnessing the Power of Games: Applying Innovative Approaches to Collaborative Team Projects

Thomas McNally, Kutztown University

Ninety-seven percent of the students entering our colleges and universities play video games, and have grown up within this community of Massive Multiplayer Online (MMO) gaming. In this environment, everyone works together to overcome challenges, synchronizing their efforts, and creating innovative solutions to problems, all in the pursuit of a worthwhile goal. Using the gaming format for collaborative effort in the assignment of large writing projects in courses can serve as a model for students interested in careers in the fields of research and technology, providing valuable practice in organization, motivation, and collaborative creativity.

PANEL E

Examining Academy-Industry Relations in Medical and Health Contexts

Writing (and Experiencing) the Health Sciences: Building Academy-Industry Partnerships through Community-based Learning

Michael J. Klein, James Madison University

This individual presentation provides a model of how a university and local businesses and organizations can mutually benefit from collaborations through community-based learning (CBL). The speaker reports on a health sciences communication course that utilized CBL instructional methods as a means of training students.

Unlike traditional client-based projects, the work conducted for the class developed by *partnering* the students with local organizations. Students agreed to work with one of 13 different organizations after consultations amongst the organization liaisons, students and the instructor. Thus, rather than bringing clients to the classroom and having them assign projects to the students, the students went to the organizations and familiarized themselves with the organizations' communicative practices.



The students collaborated with the members of the organization in creating projects meaningful to the organization, the students and the community. Additionally, the students observed the communicative practices of the organizations they worked with, reporting the findings to their partner organizations and their peers in the classroom.

By incorporating a large experiential learning component into a formerly traditional curriculum, the faculty member initiated and established relationships with a number of health-related community organizations, including a health and human services institute and a local community health center. Additionally, the students enrolled in the course—both advanced undergraduates and graduate students—transferred knowledge learned in the classroom to projects with the community partners. In doing so, the students not only provided services to the organizations and their clients, but also had the opportunity to observe, record, and reflect upon the way the organizations themselves used language.

Pedagogy, Usability, and Assemblage Theory in Electronic Health Records Research

Elizabeth L. Angeli, Purdue University

Since the 1960s, medical professionals have been pushing for electronic health records (EHRs) to become the standard, most effective form of medical documentation. Barack Obama made the biggest push, stating that by 2014 all health records would be electronic (Jaques, 2011). While EHRs are intended to improve patient care and have advanced over the past 20 years, they can lead to communication gaps and necessary workflow redesigns (Millard, 2010; Stead, 2007; Baron, Fabens, Schiffman, and Wolf, 2005). These gaps are quick to emerge in emergency medical services (EMS) and emergency departments (ED), two areas of medicine that are high-stress and ever-changing due to the unpredictable nature of 911 calls. The rise of EHRs and the unstable nature of EDs lead some researchers to view EHRs as “user-driven,” an ecosystem “capable of wider deployment, easier maintenance, and smoother transactions” (Millard, 2010). However, current EHRs lack common features, making them next-to-impossible to move between medical facilities and accompany the patients who rely on them.

This gap opens a space for technical communication programs to address, programs adept at fostering relationships with industry. This presentation provides attendees with strategies on how to address this gap, and these strategies are based on preliminary results from the speaker’s ongoing study that examines networks of communication in EMS.

Communicating Public Health with Technology

Josephine Walwema, Clemson University

Teaching scientific communication in our writing classes serves, among many purposes, to prepare our students for the world of work. As we well know, the role of technology in communicating science has expanded beyond its perception as a physical inorganic tool. Technology serves an important role in advancing the ability of scientific and technical communication to redefine the way people approach the functional and structural space of text.



Consider entities that provide public health information to the public at large. Such entities are constantly innovating ways of communicating technical information, a challenge to us in the academy. Recently, I learned about such efforts by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to reach rural and low-technology communities in developing countries such as Kenya through utilizing the available technology, the short message service (SMS).

In light of such innovative ways of communicating scientific, often life-saving information, and given such limited means as the SMS, we in the academy can engage with entities such as the CDC to train our students to distill important information for intended audiences in the form of text messaging for surveillance, outbreak updates and alerts, training, and delivering health messages. Already, the CDC and Kenya's Ministry of Health (MOH) are working to design automated systems, but that is not to say that we cannot position responders to communicate in real time.

CONCURRENT SESSION 3

PANEL A

Academy-Industry Partnerships in Usability Testing Labs and Courses

In response to the guiding theme of the 2011 CPTSC conference, we submit a panel proposal that addresses the ways in which the panel members' universities collaborate with industry via their usability labs, and industry representatives collaborates with academic partners.

Each panel presenter brings a somewhat different approach to this collaboration, with some presenting ways in which they partner with industry practitioners to conduct user research and others presenting ways in they collaborate and consult with academic partnerships to support company/industry goals.

A Brief History of our Lab's Partnerships in Usability Testing

Carol Barnum, Southern Polytechnic State University

Carol Barnum shares the way in which she collaborated with an industry mentor to teach her first usability testing course in 1993, even before she had a lab, and how she then sought funding for her first campus-based lab. She will show the evolution of her thinking about the role of the lab in a university setting and her relationship to clients for commercial and student-focused projects. In her usability testing course, she identifies a sponsor for the students, and over time has evolved the responsibilities of the sponsor company and the deliverables, thereby providing an excellent opportunity for students to do real-world usability testing and present the results to a committed sponsor/client.



The Evolving Role of Usability Facilities in Academy-Industry Partnerships and Relationships

Tharon Howard, Clemson University

Tharon Howard describes how he originally constructed his usability testing facility in 1994 to meet the demand for proprietary sponsored research for NCR, AT&T, IBM, and other large industry partners. In this early phase, the graduate students able to access the lab and to learn usability research methods hands-on were mainly limited to those who were on sponsored graduate research assistantships and who had signed NDA's. Over time, however, he will describe how his industry partners' needs changed toward more needs assessment and task-analysis studies. Evolving from the earlier validation testing of mission-critical products has allowed industry partners to sponsor client-based projects for classes, thereby making it possible to support more students at both the graduate and undergraduate level.

Being an Ambassador: Partnering with Industry/Academia for Usability Testing

Liza Potts, Michigan State University

Liza Potts describes how she has moved between industry and academia, partnering with both while she was the Director of Design Research at a consultancy and as the director of a usability lab in academia. Specifically, she will discuss the issues involved in collaborating with academics and industry professionals to complete usability studies in traditional lab settings, conduct field research for internet start-ups, and publish with a design anthropologist. As someone with extensive experience in both worlds, she will give insights into issues regarding intellectual property, corporate sponsorship, and agile development.

Collaborative Usability Testing in Agile Environments

Gerianne Bartocci, Intuitive Company

Gerianne Bartocci discusses her work as a design anthropologist at two design consultancies where expectations are high for academic partnerships and collaboration. Basing much of her decision-making on her strong academic training as an anthropologist, Bartocci keeps connected with professors at the University of Pennsylvania and Old Dominion University by discussing issues within the field and engaging in shared academic projects. She will discuss how she bridges these two spaces and how she works to integrate these partnerships into her day-to-day practices.

Inventing an Eye Tracker: When Usability Labs Create New Technologies

Brian Still, Texas Tech University

Brian Still highlights his efforts beginning in early 2010 to develop low-cost eye tracking technology for usability practitioners in industry. Clients have increasingly requested additional methods for analyzing user interaction, especially eye tracking data, but many labs lack the financial means to employ tools to gather it. Brian discusses the challenging, at times torturous, process, working with key stakeholders at the university and in industry, to re-make his lab so that it serves the field by not only evaluating usability, but also by creating affordable, effective usability evaluation technology.



PANEL B

From the Academy to Industry: Issues of Diversity in Technical Communication

The presenters of this panel will discuss how diversity and intercultural communication raise new programmatic questions concerning academy-industry relations.

Decolonizing Intercultural Technical Communication: Localizing in Unenfranchised Sites

Godwin Agboka, University of Houston-Downtown

This paper underscores the social justice implications of localization in non-industrialized and unenfranchised nations at risk of re-colonization, with the goal of fostering academy-industry conversations. The presenter will report the findings and implications of a study that investigates poor localization efforts in the design, distribution, and use of documentation that accompanies sexuopharmaceuticals imported into Ghana. The results may offer useful lessons on (a) how to undertake undergraduate and graduate research projects that study technological expertise and information and technology transfers in international contexts and (b) how stakeholders in academia and industry can offer training beyond the instrumental angle of technical communication.

Teaching and Assessing a New Technical Communication Course at a Historically Black University

Miriam F. Williams, Texas State University

This presenter will discuss her experience teaching a Technical Communication course in a business school at a historically black university. The presenter will discuss the departmental pressures to prepare a class of predominately African-American business majors for communicating technical and business communication in industry. These pressures included questions from administrators and faculty regarding course syllabi, suggestions of impromptu class visits, and questions from faculty regarding the need for computer classrooms. The presenter will conclude by discussing the administration's ultimate acknowledgement of the usefulness of technical communication curriculum and computer classrooms as prerequisites for work in business and industry.

Technical, Scientific, and Professional Communication Programs in Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the United States: Regional Differences and Programmatic Adaptations

Natalia Matveeva, University of Houston-Downtown

This presenter offers the results of her investigation into available technical, scientific, and professional communication programs in Hispanic-Serving institutions in the United States. By identifying existing programs, examining their course offerings, and determining any regional differences that exist in their curricula, we can better understand whether and how well the programs respond to the demands of local industries that will employ graduates in the future. The knowledge of such programmatic adaptations might be useful to administrators and educators who aim to increase the competitiveness of their programs and better prepare students for the rapidly changing job market.



PANEL C

From Crayons to Clients: A Graduate Course in Visual Discourse

An Overview of a Graduate Course in Visual Discourse

Donna J. Kain, East Carolina University

Preparing Teachers to Teach Visual Literacy

Katrina Hinson, East Carolina University

Providing Experiences with Tools

Therese Pennell, East Carolina University

Incorporating a Client Project

Justin Kingery, East Carolina University

Visual literacy challenges the primacy of words and requires a broadening understanding of the notion of literacy. For technical and professional communication researchers, practitioners, and educators, this visual turn means reconsidering the ways that, to paraphrase Carolyn Rude, visual “texts” and “communication practices mediate knowledge, values, and action in a variety of social and professional contexts” (2009). As the boundaries blur between professional communication and areas of inquiry such as media and film studies and graphic design, programs in technical and professional communication are developing new strategies for incorporating visual literacy into curricula and addressing challenges such as determining exactly what students need to know to function in the professions.

We discuss a course in which students worked with a variety of theoretical perspectives from discourse analysis; rhetorical theory; cultural theory; film theory; aesthetics; and theories of integrative design, for example, relationships between text and image, content and arrangement, page and document, and frame and film. Multiple guest-speakers introduced students to different areas of expertise and knowledge domains.

The course content and approach connects to the conference theme of Academy/Industry Partnerships in several ways that three of the course participants discuss.

- **Providing experiences with tools.** Technical communication programs have grappled with whether tools such as Camtasia and Photoshop should be taught in their programs. Students come to technical communication programs seeking knowledge about how to use different tools as well as how to use them effectively in the profession. I focus on a working definition of what tools are and how incorporating technology in one visual discourse class was undertaken.
- **Incorporating a Client Project.** Creating materials for actual clients involves putting theory into practice as well as working to develop a grammar for discussing visuals. The logo project that was part of the seminar required students to create a visual identity, to think through project requirements, create visuals, and collaborate with the client. The project underscores



the ways that representing an idea are mediated by the affordances and limitations of visual communications

- **Preparing Teachers to Teach Visual Literacy.** Graduate students need to ask themselves how information they are learning in their graduate classes translates to the classrooms in which they are teaching. Information learned in the visual discourse class becomes a new modality by which writing courses can be taught and affords students new ways of thinking, acting and working within a space that is at once familiar and different. I discuss how graduate students can transfer information from the graduate classroom to the undergraduate classroom to enable instructors to better engage students with complex content.

PANEL D

The Roles of Advisory Boards in Fostering Academy-Industry Relationships and Partnerships

How Advisable are Advisory Boards for Academic Programs?

Kevin LaGrandeur, New York Institute of Technology

The Technical and Professional Writing Program at NYIT makes use of an advisory board of local business practitioners in the Technical Communication business world. These people are at the management level in their businesses. There have been many benefits: the Tech. Comm. business community is generally ahead of the academic world in terms of using new tools and developing new practices; for instance, at the advent of the smart phone revolution we learned of what types of tasks members of our board were performing in the design of user interfaces for these phones and what training our students should have for it. Members of the Board also have volunteered to talk to classes about the profession, to demonstrate latest practices, and to outline the latest specific expectations for job applicants at their particular corporations.

But there are also difficulties: how do we compensate advisory members? Is buying them lunch in order to pick their brains enough? How often is it appropriate to meet in order to balance the needs of the academic program to get advice with the busy schedule of the advisory board's members? I would like to discuss these questions and others with conference attendees, to give the benefit of my experience with this, as well as to discover what other programs have done with respect to advisory boards for a Technical and Professional Communications program.

Integrating the Industry Advisory Board Directly into the Curriculum

Sandi Harner, Ceaderville University

When I first incorporated the Board into my program, they met two afternoons a year to give advice on our technical and professional program--after all, they were an ADVISORY board. We talked about curriculum issues, the needs of industry and how we could prepare the students to meet those needs, how to market the program, and how to prepare students to be successful in the job search process.



One day as we discussed how to prepare students to be successful in getting a job, one of my board members said, "Use us! Put us to work." And that was the beginning of bringing the board members to campus to interact with the students.

This presentation will explain how we incorporated the board members directly into two courses: Professional Portfolio 1 (sophomores) and 2 (seniors). I will share the process of board members conducting mock phone interviews, followed a few weeks later by face-to-face interviews during fall semester. I will also share the process we use in the spring semester when the Board returns for portfolio reviews.

For several years, I have thought about sharing this process at the conference. But when I read the theme for the 2011 conference, I felt it was a perfect fit. I know that many programs have an advisory board, but they are rarely used to interact with students on such a personal level. Our board members have made such a difference in the level of confidence our students exhibit when faced with phone and face-to-face interviews.

I will share with participants evaluation forms we use for mock phone interviews, face-to-face interviews, and portfolio reviews.

Best Practices in Creating Working Community Advisory Boards on Professional Writing and Communication

Pavel Zemliansky, University of Central Florida

In May of 2011, together with colleagues from UCF's Department of Writing and Rhetoric, I applied for a CPTSC research grant. The purpose of the presentation proposed below is to describe and reflect upon the initial stages of the implementation of this project. At the time of the writing of this conference proposal, the grant application is being reviewed by CPTSC.

This research project will investigate best practices for forming a working community advisory board on issues in professional writing and communication. UCF's Department of Writing and Rhetoric coordinates campus-wide writing across the curriculum and writing outreach programs, and creating such a board will strongly impact writing instruction at this university of over fifty thousand students. Such a board will consist of professionals from industry, government, business, and non-profit organizations in Greater Orlando and central Florida. We envision a board whose members will contribute to the advancement of writing at UCF through guest lectures and workshops, joint projects with faculty and students, financial sponsorship, and other activities. Discussions are already underway at UCF about the formation of the board.

During this research project, funded by the CPTSC research grant, we seek to answer the following specific research questions:

1. What successful models of academic-workplace partnerships, including fundraising models for writing and professional communication programs, exist at other universities around the country and overseas?



2. What are the best practices in identifying and attracting board members whose participation will benefit both the university and their own organizations?
3. What specific activities will ensure an efficient, sustainable, and mutually beneficial academic-workplace relationship between academics and professionals?

Should we receive the grant, we will begin implementing the initial stages of the project in early fall. Therefore, in this presentation, I will outline our steps in contacting individuals interested in serving on the Board and the initial stages in articulating the Board's activities.

PANEL E

Academy-Industry Partnerships in Global Contexts

Development of Academia-Industry Relationships in French Universities: The Example of Université Paris Diderot

Lucy Veisblat, Université Paris Diderot

Until very recently, French Universities have considered that their task was to pass on knowledge, not skills, to their students, and that working for the industry was not particularly desirable and not what they were preparing their students for.

Similarly, French industrials have long considered that university students did not have the appropriate skills and understanding of the industry to be seen as employable. Most French companies preferred to hire students from the "Grandes Ecoles" (major business and engineering schools such as HEC or Ecole Polytechnique) as they were seen to be more prepared to work in a business environment.

In the past few years, however, several factors have dramatically changed these points of view:

- Unemployment amongst the 15-25 year-olds is one of the highest in Europe.
- Universities are starting to see the industry as an "honourable" place to work.
- Student placement has been identified as the third mission of the University (alongside Research and Teaching) in the great change towards autonomy that has taken place/is taking place in France.
- The industry is confronted with a deficit of qualified candidates for entry-level management positions they are trying to fill.
- In the tow of the concern around sustainable development and ethical management, companies are realizing the need to diversify their recruitment sources.
- HR Managers are starting to realize the benefits of hiring into managerial positions students from different backgrounds (social, ethnical, educational).
- HR Managers are increasingly interested in what a graduate with research methodology can bring to their company.



In the wake of this, most universities have established agencies for student placement. This presentation will aim at showing the innovative approaches taken by some French universities, including Paris Diderot:

- "Translating" degrees into skills for greater readability for the industry
- Developing bilateral partnerships
- Working with professional organizations
- Defining new approaches to bring the students to understand the codes of industry
- Working with professional organizations to define alternatives to internships in order to gain understanding of the industry
- Developing incentives for students to study or work abroad and gain international awareness
- Inviting companies to develop "skill philanthropy"
- Offering the companies in the Paris area a single entry point to all the universities in their employment base

These are very enriching and forward-looking times for French universities, and there is much shared enthusiasm about possibilities of collaboration.

Virtual Team Literacy: Using a Flexible Virtual Team Teaching Module to Connect Classrooms to the World

Pamela E. Brewer, Appalachian State University

In this presentation, I will share my experience in developing a virtual team teaching module that may be adapted across disciplines and across the academy/industry divide. For the past two years, I have been constructing international virtual team projects between my technical communication students and students in universities around the world. For example, I have constructed virtual teams from among students in my technical writing class and students in a tourism class in Armenia. I have also begun to help health and wellness classes work with healthcare professionals who are not on site. In the case of my own technical communication classes, I give each team a common purpose consistent with a concept I am teaching such as researching and writing proposals.

As these projects developed, I recognized the powerful teaching tool that they are; I can challenge students in a technical communication genre and at the same time help them to improve their online and international literacy—a rich combination of theory and practice. This pedagogy opens my classrooms to the world with nothing more than the equipment the department and the students already have, and it is consistent with successful pedagogies wherein students make connections, are faced with compelling situations, and actively participate in learning.

Most recently, and in response to interest from colleagues, I began to develop this approach into a module that can be adapted by educators in any discipline in order to create educational programs which support international growth and academy/industry bridges. I am currently articulating and refining the module (based on many of my own mistakes) so that it can be easily adapted by others to



open their own classes to international and industry opportunities without the cost and time constraints of travel. Those attending this session at CPTSC will receive an overview of this virtual team module as well as the opportunity to discuss how they might incorporate such teams into their own programs.

Responding to Field Convergence: Updating Curricula and Programs as the Roles of Technical Communicators and Technical Translators Merge

Bruce Maylath, North Dakota State University

This presentation asks the audience to consider how their professional/technical/scientific communication curricula and programs might (and must) be updated in the face of growing evidence that the roles of technical communicators and technical translators are converging (Groethuysen 2002, Gneccchi 2003, Maylath 2004) and that members of both professions are seeking cross-training on their own initiative to capture the work, and pay, of the other profession (Gneccchi et al. 2008, Gneccchi et al. 2011). The trend is especially strong in Europe but gaining speed in North America as well. Moreover, many technical communicators are being appointed by their companies to serve as project managers of translation projects. Oddly, though there have been calls for reform (Byrne 2006, Mousten 2008, Andrews et al. [in press]) universities on both sides of the Atlantic seem largely oblivious to the trend—or in denial—leaving professionals to follow their own advice in patching together a crazy quilt of courses that they hope will qualify and certify their expertise in their added field. The presentation will provide an encapsulation of such evidence, offer examples of curricula that are beginning to reform in light of field convergence (see below), and prompt discussion of reform models.

CONCURRENT SESSION 4

PANEL A

The Role of Technology and Media in Fostering and Maintaining Academy-Industry Relationships and Partnerships

It's a Two-Way Street on the Information Highway: Bringing Employers to the E-Campus while Getting Students to the Workforce

Susan L. Popham, University of Memphis

Getting students from the classroom to the job site remains a challenge for most teachers. Course work should provide students with a theoretical and research-based understanding of communications, rhetorical and analytical tools necessary for shaping the information, practical skills for managing group projects and processes, and the opportunity to develop them. For the employers the educated employee ought to have communicative skills, the theoretical and analytical knowledge, and a pragmatic sense of what the job entails as well as how it might change to meet future industry-related changes. The problem is that work places change, and the skills necessary for successfully participating in a workplace can change quickly. Students need to learn skills for analyzing and



adapting to workplace changes, and usually such skills are best learned “on the job.” The class-to-job transition, however, can sometimes become even more difficult with changing teaching venues. In an online, distanced classroom, teachers may find it somewhat challenging to have students explore the dynamic details of a worksite, if the students are all working in different cities and with different life obligations; in such distances, it becomes difficult for teachers to take students on a field trip, to set up site visits, or require internships. One way to work around this “distanced” challenge of exploring real and ever-changing workplaces is to use the technologies to bring the workplace to the e-course through the use of computer technologies. This presentation explores ways in which alumni, now successful employees, can help train and teach students, with minimum effort and disruption of their work lives, through such newer technologies as audio/video files and discussion board postings. Such real-world interaction can have a long-lasting benefit for those distanced students. Conference attendees will learn a few tips on how to set up workplace resources for online/distanced courses and will have a chance to offer their own experiences in doing so.

More than Polishing a Mirror Image: How Pedagogic Theory Can Embrace the Self-Awareness that Industry Demands

Jim Zimmerman, James Madison University

As a longtime consultant to industry as well a student and teacher of rhetoric and leadership as it relates to technical communication, I have helped leaders of large organizations and college students enhance their preparation and performance in meetings, presentations, and speeches. Again and again, I encounter a great gap in preparation that video review of rehearsals (i.e., drafts of the material to be presented) goes a long way toward closing. That gap involves the inadequate anticipation of reactions from the target audience(s). Instead of fully imagining the probable remarks and unspoken thoughts of the most important (and often therefore the most difficult) audience members, presenters tend to practice, rehearse, and polish their content as if they were actually speaking to a mirror. But a live audience is radically different from one’s image in a mirror, and it can include resistant, critical, and even emotional reactions. By performing what amounts to a usability test on a draft of the presentation, the prospective presenter, with the help of peers and the instructor (or coach) can analyze the embodied, spoken draft with the aim of projecting possible audience reactions and then revising content to anticipate or even answer possible objections and confusion. One thing stands in the way of this opportunity: most students and CEOs share the natural human tendency to dislike one’s appearance and voice as it is revealed to them through recording, which, when done properly closely approximates what the intended audience will see and hear. Despite the disinclination to study oneself, the fact remains that presenters are the only ones who are in ignorance about the ways they are seen and heard. Video recording and careful analysis provides the necessary feedback for improved preparation--and subsequent optimum performance. This is especially true in relation to the way we react to questions, suggestions, comments, and challenges from our most difficult audiences. An antidote to blind preparations is a particular technique I call “anticipating audience reactions,” based on the principle of “listening in advance.” As academics, we more often not undervalue the use of video recording in our own and our students’ preparations for important rhetorical performances.



Industry demands self-awareness and excellent preparation; we owe it to our students to theorize and practice the requisite principles and techniques that will help develop content even before final rehearsal for important presentations.

Industry-University Partnerships: Exploring Concepts and Practices through Emerging Technologies

Russell Carpenter, Eastern Kentucky University

Technical and scientific communication overlap both industry and the academy, and these partnerships have changed a great deal in recent years. They will continue to evolve and develop as emerging technologies become more prevalent. The ways in which these partnerships have transformed through emerging technologies and academy and industry expectations is worthy of further consideration.

This presentation offers perspective from a co-editor of the 2011 collection *Higher Education, Emerging Technologies, and Community Partnerships*. The collection will serve as a lens through which the presenter will examine and theorize academy-industry partnerships taking place throughout the country and internationally. Through this synthesis of lessons learned from the edited collection about community partnerships, attendees will take away specific concepts and models to explore on their own campuses in a variety of programs—a condensed set of best practices for developing and reshaping partnerships. Specifically, the presenter will highlight overall lessons learned and recommendations for developing community partnerships between industry and the academy based on the process of co-editing this collection, which offers unique perspectives from both sides. While establishing effective relationships and partnerships can be challenging, both success stories and partnerships that did not turn out the way intended are equally valuable.

This presentation will conclude with a model for multiliteracy spaces—like the one that the speaker directs—to become advocates for industry and academy partnerships. Finally, this presentation will explore possibilities for meaningful collaborations on campus that will enhance academy-industry efforts. The presentation will conclude with a look toward the future of academy-industry partnerships that employ emerging technologies.

Do YouTube and Facebook? Can Social Media link the Academy and Community Partners?

Jim Dubinsky, Virginia Tech

Most, if not all, of us in our discipline are aware of popular social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, as well as other useful tools such as Academia.edu, LinkedIn, and Digg. These tools have been growing in popularity worldwide, even though some reports indicate a slight drop off in Facebook use in the US and the UK during May and June of this year.¹ In terms of their use in industry, a look at advertising spending reveals a dramatic increase: each click on Facebook this past fiscal

¹ <http://www.ecpulse.com/en/topstory/2011/06/17/facebook-losing-popularity/>



quarter was worth 40 percent more in terms of advertising dollars², which results in EMarketer Inc. claiming that advertising spending will increase to \$4.05 billion on Facebook, which is more than double the spending in 2010.

As these platforms and tools mature, they have become an integral part of our students' lives, which has led many of us to integrate them into our classrooms. Articles such as "100 Ways to Teach with Twitter"³ and the creation of groups such as the Association for Social Media and Higher Education are indicators of such use. Equally interesting is the recent acceptance and use of these tools by many of our community partners, who, after being introduced to successful examples/models such as <http://digg.com/search?q=nwf.org> and <http://www.facebook.com/ONE>, choose to devote their scarce resources to such tools. Yet, despite the growing popularity and increase in use both in and out of the classroom, a quick search of our literature reveals that few of us have devised ways to use these tools/platforms to connect with and build bridges to our community partners.

One of our goals as educators and administrators is to develop strategies for using these and other social media tools/platforms to increase visibility for our work, get students (more) involved in their projects, and help them become more effective and productive citizens. To do so, we need to analyze the changing communications landscape, test outreach tools and tactics, and identify measures for building relationships with community organizations. Using what I have learned in my roles as faculty member and director of our university's center for student engagement and community partnerships, in this presentation I will describe ways to leverage social networking channels and engagement tools to build bridges to your partners, supplement educational projects, and create additional value for everyone involved. I will also discuss risk management, as there are challenges and risks involved when undertaking community-engaged work, particularly when adding in the use of social media.

PANEL B

Merging Course and Community Objectives: Incorporating Service Learning in a Technical and Business Writing Program at a Division II University

Service Learning in an Intercultural and International Technical and Business Writing Course: Helping the Community

Nicole St. Germaine-McDaniel, Angelo State University

Service Learning in a Usability Testing course: Recruiting Clients

Kevin Garrison, Angelo State University

Service Learning in an Introductory Web Publishing course: Challenges and Opportunities

Joe Erickson, Angelo State University

² <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-04-11/facebook-increases-ad-prices-40-on-rising-popularity-marketing-firm-says.html>

³ <http://www.emergingedtech.com/2010/02/100-ways-to-teach-with-twitter/>



In the past decade, educators in technical communication programs have striven to implement calls toward service-learning opportunities (McEachern, 2001; Sapp & Crabtree, 2002). This move is part of a larger shift in the academy that seeks to place our “students into the world of value creation, competition, and free markets” (Carter, 40, 2005) rather than simply teach them the traditional values of academic discourse. Derek Bok’s call in 2006, for instance, toward “fixing” our underachieving colleges focuses two chapters on civic engagement and career preparation – both of which service learning can help achieve.

In this panel, the presenters will discuss how the Technical and Business Writing program at Angelo State University (ASU) has embraced the above calls to action by preparing students for future career opportunities via the integration of civic engagement responsibilities into the program’s core courses. Situated in a community of approximately 100,000 people, ASU is a division II institution currently enrolling approximately 6500 students. Acting on the ASU Mission Statement, which asks educators to “prepare[...] students to be responsible citizens and to have productive careers”, our program has recently been seeking opportunities for students to serve immediate community needs through the completion of their coursework. In addition to explaining why we have chosen to take this approach with our courses, each of the three faculty members from the program will specifically describe how he or she plans to implement service learning into a specific program course. As such, attendees can expect to come away from the panel with specific examples of how they might incorporate service learning into their own courses along with a strong rationale for doing so.

If accepted, this panel will approach the question of service-learning via three courses:

- **Service Learning in an Intercultural and International Technical and Business Writing Course: Helping the Community**
Nicole McDaniel will present ways to enact localization with local health care services in her course “Intercultural and International Technical and Business Writing” as she attempts to serve the growing Hispanic population.
- **Service Learning in a Usability Testing course: Recruiting Clients**
Kevin Garrison will discuss his research on ways to market and utilize the department’s Usability Testing Lab in order to acquire clients for his course “Usability Testing in Technical and Business Writing.”
- **Service Learning in an Introductory Web Publishing course: Challenges and Opportunities**
Dr. Joe Erickson will describe his plans to work with students in his “Web Publishing” course to provide web development services to local non-profit organizations.



PANEL C

Project-Based Learning, Internships, and Academy-Industry Relationships and Partnerships

Project-Based Learning: Bring the Workplace Into the Classroom

Deborah S. Bosley, University of North Carolina-Charlotte

Using authentic writing projects in a technical writing classroom allow faculty to

1. Create alliances with businesses, government agencies, and non-profits that provide writing projects.
2. Provide students with writing assignments that have a real audience, purpose, and context.
3. Engage students in participatory research and community engagement.

Universities are extraordinarily good at teaching students how to excel in academic environments. But our pedagogical methods, even in our technical communication courses, do not always prepare students to be successful in the workplace. One way to rectify this “disconnect” is by using a project-based approach to teach students to understand authentic rhetorical situations, participate in community-based research and writing, and to learn accompanying decision-making and writing skills. Projects-based learning

- is an instructional approach built upon authentic learning activities that engage students in problems in the community and reflect the types of learning and work people do in the everyday world outside the classroom
- teaches students 21st century skills such as communication, organization and time management, research and inquiry, self-assessment and reflection, and group participation and leadership
- is generally done by teams of students working together toward a common goal; performance is assessed on an individual basis, and takes into account the quality of the product produced, the depth of content understanding demonstrated, and the contributions made to the ongoing process of the project.

Examples of projects include

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. website: usability testing | university |
| 2. employee handbook: | engineering firm |
| 3. fundraising material: | public library |
| 4. website: | insurance company |
| 5. instructions and usability testing | technology company |
| 6. curriculum materials: | training firm |
| 7. patient information: | hospital |
| 8. letter to young investors: | bank |



Creating Bridges with Internships

Susan Katz, North Carolina State University

This presentation will describe the internship program in the Department of English at North Carolina State University. The program, which was created specifically for technical communication and journalism students in 1998, has since grown to encompass not only all English majors, but invites participation by all students majoring or minoring in any program in the NCSU College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Over the years we have also expanded our list of prospective employers, meeting individually with many of them, encouraging them to use NCSU Career Center resources to connect with students, and providing them with planning and evaluative tools to help ensure that both they and the student have good experiences.

My experiences as coordinator of this program have allowed me to develop solid partnerships with many area employers. This is a true partnership:

- Employers assist NCSU by providing internship opportunities and also volunteering their time to talk with students, both as guest speakers in the internship class and in networking events hosted by the program.
- NCSU assists employers by providing easy access to our students for both internship and full- or part-time positions. The program has gained such a solid reputation among employers that they frequently contact us directly when they have employment needs, and they trust us to make recommendations based on our experience with students.

For many years I have asked students and employers to jointly complete an Internship Agreement form, which serves as a contract and allows all parties to understand expectations. I have also always asked employers to complete an evaluation of the students' work, which serves as a guide for what we hope students will accomplish and how they will behave. For the past several years I have also asked students to complete a pre-internship survey that asks them what they hope to achieve by completing an internship, and a post-internship survey that asks them what they have achieved. These documents, along with a description of the types of interaction I have with local employers, will form the basis for my presentation.

Client Projects for 21st Century Technical Editors

Ryan K. Boettger, University of North Texas

In this individual presentation, session attendees will receive an overview of three client projects for the undergraduate and graduate technical editing course. Technical editing is arguably the most scholarly and pedagogically underdeveloped subfield of technical communication, and its instructors often grapple with making the profession relevant to students beyond providing a foundation in grammar and punctuation. The three projects discussed focus on the comprehensive aspects of



editing as well as the global communication and new media proficiencies required of 21st century editors.

The first project engages students in their university community by editing a document written by a nonnative speaker of English. Student editors then review their editorial suggestions with the clients and tutor them on their major writing deficiencies. Concurrent with the project, students receive an introduction to second language acquisition to provide a context for the common error patterns they will likely encounter. This project heightens students' cultural awareness and provides a relevant forum for honing their editorial tone.

In the second project, students work with the world's leading provider of air transportation solutions. The project involves groups of students editing authentic documentation that will be used by the company, which increases the competitive aspect of the project and promotes stronger group communication. Students also interact with a variety of audiences, who do not always share the same needs and constraints, including subject-matter experts, managers, technical specialists, and technical writers. At the end of this project, students formally present their product at the company's headquarters.

The third project develops student editors' new media literacies as they work with a published author on converting three of her books to eBook format. This process involves students scanning the original texts with OCR software, tagging the texts in HTML, and converting the files to a compatible format. The experience keeps future editors current with the changing industry of publishing.

Collaborating with Industry Using Mentoring and Internships

Herb J. Smith, Southern Polytechnic State University

To foster partnerships with industry that benefit students in technical and professional communication degree programs, Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU) has established both a mentoring program and an internship program.

This position paper describes these programs, noting the benefits for students and also providing some guidelines and talking points for attendees who may want to establish similar programs.

Description of SPSU's Mentorship Program

Our mentorship program has been in place for about 7 years and is part of our senior capstone course, Project Portfolio, where each student designs and creates both an electronic and paper portfolio showcasing their best projects. One of the course objectives is to help students bridge their academic careers with the professional careers they are about to begin. To help do this, we established a mentorship program where each student is paired with a working professional communicator who mentors the student, providing the student with career advice and feedback on the student's developing portfolios. The mentoring program requires that the mentor and student participate in a minimum of three activities. The activities include a face-to-face information-getting interview,



feedback on the student's resume, a review of the student's portfolio design, a review of the finished electronic portfolio, and a review of the student's paper portfolio.

Internships

Both our Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts degrees provide students with an internship elective worth 3 credit hours. The internship can be paid or unpaid, and either the internship director or the student can set up the internship. Typical internships involve web design, public relations, journalism, user documentation, new media, and instructional design. To qualify for an internship, the student must have a minimum of a B average and must have completed at least 21 hours (7 courses) in the major. To earn 3 credit hours, the student must complete a minimum of 120 hours of internship activities, submit three progress reports, complete two conferences with the internship director, and write a final project report.

Conclusion

This presentation should generate several talking points about mentoring and internships that attendees will find useful. Some of these talking points are as follows:

- What are some of the activities best suited for mentors?
- Who should be a mentor and why?
- Should internships be paid, unpaid, or both?
- What qualifications should a student have to qualify for an internship?

PANEL D

Examining Academy-Industry Relationships in Military and Governmental Contexts

Warrior Writers: Investigating the Relationship between Military Personnel and Academic Writing

Ashly Bender, University of Louisville

Much of the work of technical and professional communication shows that writing and other forms of communication are directly tied to the discourse community of the profession, as well as the specific context (McCarthy 1987; Selzer 1983). A number of studies have focused on discovering the authentic workplace practices of engineers, scientists, and other business professionals. These studies have encouraged productive relationships between the academy and various industries. In these relationships, it is often the role of the academy to prepare students to identify and accurately perform the communication expectations in their jobs. This preparation facilitates the traditional academic to workplace path that many students follow. However, an increasing number of students are nontraditional or returning students who may be entering the academy with extensive workplace experience which will necessarily shape their academic success and, more specifically, their expectations and values around writing (Beaufort 2007).



In 2008, the GI Bill was revised to offer more substantial financial support for servicemen and veterans attending college—including more tuition coverage and better stipends for housing and books. With the Post-9/11 GI Bill and more soldiers returning from engagements in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other service locations, universities and colleges are expecting to once again see an increase in students with military experience. These veterans will enter the academy with extensive, intensely-structured workplace experience. As technical and professional communication scholars, we should expect that these students' prior experience with writing and other forms of communication will influence their success in the academy.

Although the field at large has spent little time working with the military complex until recently, this presentation culls the existing research to identify what writing expectations veterans may have developed during their service. These expectations are then compared to academic writing expectations established in technical communication and WAC studies to identify similar and differing aspects between the two (Thaiss and Zawacki 2006). By understanding how military workplace writing and academic writing intersect, we can help veteran students better transition into the academy and thus back into civilian life. While this is an important population consider, this presentation also gives us insight into any students entering the academy with extensive workplace experience. Ultimately, this presentation and study promises to enrich our understanding of how we engage with, respond to, and invite nontraditional students in our classrooms.

The Military-Academic Complex: Benefits and Challenges of Military Veterans in College Technical Communication Classrooms

D. Alexis Hart, Virginia Military Institute

and

Common Problems: What the Academy Should Know about Veteran Employment

Roger Thompson, Virginia Military Institute

At the 2010 Conference on College Composition and Communication, Marilyn Valentino used her Chair's Address as an opportunity to acknowledge the rapidly growing demographic of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans entering our writing classrooms. She noted that nearly 500,000 veterans entered college during the previous year. Valentino's comments ended with the assertion that "we do have an ethical obligation to react responsibly" to veterans in our writing classes. As teachers of technical and professional writing, one ethical obligation we have to the growing demographic of veteran students is to foster input from and collaboration between our academic classrooms, the military workplaces from which these students are coming, and the military world to which many of them will return. We also need to recognize the pedagogical value of the "real world" writing and reading experiences (experiences with performance reviews, technical instructions, equipment manuals, and other workplace genres) that these veteran students bring with them to college technical communication classrooms. Veterans have practical knowledge worth sharing with more traditional college students such as narratives about working within a hierarchical organization, about traveling internationally, and about transnational workplace communication. While allowing veteran



students to share these experiences can benefit both us as professors as well as the other students in our courses, we also should communicate with military professionals outside of the academy to understand the conditions in which veteran students were trained to read and write for their military workplaces, to learn about the guidelines for source attribution and styles of writing as well as the strictures on methods of delivery and genres, and to examine the different expectations of their military supervisors as compared to their college professors. During our presentation, we will share the initial findings of a 2011 CCCC Research Grant study whose purpose is to provide guidance to writing program administrators and to teachers in writing classrooms that are increasingly including “warrior writers” as students. We will offer suggestions for making the most of veteran students’ experiences and discuss ways in which we as professors can collaborate with our counterparts in the active military service.

Academic-Industry-Government Partnerships: Employee Writing Workshops and Handbook Development

Barbara A. Heifferon, Louisiana State University

In response to the guiding theme of the 2011 CPTSC conference, this individual proposal addresses a method for TC/PC academics to collaborate with government (specifically a large, state agency), which sought collaboration with an academic partner for improvement in employee online writing.

Objectives: This academic/industry/government partnership was formed in order to develop workshops, assignments and a deliverable for the employees of the State Department of Insurance to improve their online writing capabilities on the agency website. The employees in question spent their days/weeks/months answering very specific and often very complicated questions regarding various insurance programs and businesses.

Time Frame: Collaboration lasted approximately six weeks and required several meetings to facilitate advance planning and development, two three-hour workshops, and reviews.

Constraints included the following: (1). The Director of the State Department of Insurance had ascertained via careful monitoring the twenty most problematic writers in the agency (grammar, spelling, syntax, audience awareness issues, etc.). In order to insure compliance from these twenty employees who were chosen, they needed to believe their error rate was not the reason for the invitation. (2). This work needed to be accomplished in a minimum of time because the employees were needed online. (3). A deliverable to sustain the work would be necessary to insure some lasting effect of the short-term writing instruction.

Advantages included: (1). Excellent computer lab/conference room and equipment. (2). Fully cooperative and motivated Director and staff. (3). Full access to archives of answers with errors identified and taxonomized, which provided examples of writing strengths and weaknesses.

Plan and Implementation: (1). Frame the invitation to the employees as writers chosen to develop guidelines for online writing for the State Department of Insurance. (2). Feature in the first workshop



taxonomies of errors with anonymous examples, while recognizing participants as SMEs. (3). Assign individual workshop attendees specific errors on which to work, to develop examples of problems and the guideline or rule, followed by corrected examples. (4) Furnish employees with both print and online templates to use for each example. (5) Invite employees to develop worksheets for the Appendix to the Guidelines using real insurance queries. (6). Collect homework in advance and analyze (academic and government directors together). (7). In second workshop, offer various examples, review them and have participants weigh in on effectiveness of each. (8). Assemble the corrected handbook and review.

The compliance among employees was 95%.

PANEL E

The Struggle for Profession Building: Are We Leading the Way?

This panel presents CPTSC Conference participants with perspectives on achieving professional status for our field from authors of the special issue of *Technical Communication* on profession building (November 2011). While each of the panelists offers a unique perspective, we aim to provide an overview of the critical issues facing program developers who must provide professional development for our students. Are we ignoring profession building and hoping it will go away? Or, are we leading the way?

The following panelist descriptions will demonstrate connection to the conference theme, summarize the approach used, and forecast the take away for conference participants.

Building Communities of Practice to Achieve Professional Consciousness

Thomas Barker, Texas Tech University

Joel A. Kline, Lebanon Valley College

One way to encourage profession building in technical communication is to encourage activities where both academics and practitioners can shed their organizational identities and work toward common goals. Work with students and work in research have been proven to encourage professional consciousness in the past. Some ideas for growing professional consciousness, which Kline and I explored in our article, include the following: work on populating articles for the body of knowledge wikipedia project of the STC (TCBOK), contributing toward the constant reshaping of programmatic and certification educational goals, identifying qualities of technical professionals both groups would like to see in students, and encouraging mentorships. The following issues face technical communicators and practitioners in leading the way toward professionalism.

1. What theories of distributed education and learning can guide our exploration of practitioner-enabled education?
2. What kinds of teacher-research projects would answer questions for those wishing to implement academic/practitioner collaboration?



3. What roles do academics and practitioners both play in the shaping of capable job candidates for today's technical communication employment needs?
4. What activities among professional organizations would best encourage professional consciousness?

Internships and Professionalism in Technical Communication

Janel Bloch, Northern Kentucky University

This presentation looks at the professionalization of technical communication from the perspective of a sample of internship reports of technical communication graduate students. These reports have been used to provide insight into the progress (or lack of) towards professionalization of technical communication. I have used these firsthand studies of interns over the recent quarter century to look at professionalization of the field and provide recommendations for students, academics, and sponsoring organizations to design internship programs that will help contribute to the professionalization of the technical communication field. This presentation argues that steps toward enhancing professionalization can be made in the earliest work experiences of a technical communicator's career, by all involved—interns, employers, and faculty. Takeaways include recommendations for interns, employers, and faculty to help interns to be perceived as professionals and to improve the professionalization of technical communication as a whole.

Some of the issues raised are the following:

1. How can internship programs be structured to increase professionalization of technical communication?
2. "Professionalized" fields such as medicine and law have more structured internship requirements. Could such structure benefit technical communication?
3. What major variations in internship programs affect professionalization?
4. Is there or should there be a set of best practices for technical communication internships?
5. How have internships changed over the years and how has that impacted professionalization?

Still In the Test Tube: A Rhetoric and Professional Writing Master's Program at Longwood University

Kristen Welch, Longwood University

One way to encourage profession building in technical communication is to encourage activities where both academics and practitioners can shed their organizational identities and work toward common goals. Work with students and work in research have been proven to encourage professional consciousness in the past. Some ideas for growing professional consciousness, which Kline and I explored in our article, include the following: work on populating articles for the body of knowledge wikipedia project of the STC (TCBOK), contributing toward the constant reshaping of programmatic and certification educational goals, identifying qualities of technical professionals both



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- What theories of distributed education and learning can guide our exploration of practitioner-enabled education?
- What kinds of teacher-research projects would answer questions for those wishing to implement academic/practitioner collaboration?
- What roles do academics and practitioners both play in the shaping of capable job candidates for today's technical communication employment needs?
- What activities among professional organizations would best encourage professional consciousness?

Expanding our notion of industry: artists and technical communication program/industry partnerships.

Angela Crow, Georgia Southern University

In local departmental conversations about developing industry relations, we have tended to lean towards traditional industries typically associated with professional writing. In this presentation, I argue that our department may benefit from finding ways to partner with writers in industries that we typically don't explore. In research that I've conducted on ceramics artists and the businesses that support them, I have found opportunities to rethink some of our curriculum design, specifically exploring the needs of those who communicate technical material as part of their online identities as ceramics artists.

This presentation draws on my research of ceramics artists who make a living running small businesses selling their ceramics. Examples of technical communication by ceramics artists also requires a focus on social networking venues such as YouTube, Facebook, and some blog venues, many of which also ask the artist to navigate a rising DIY aesthetic. Given the demands that ceramics artists face, based on the examples from research, this presentation suggests potential implications for curriculum design when working with artists whose documents must navigate online communities and establish viable online identities.

Takeaways: While focused on the ceramics industry, this presentation suggests the challenges of imagining differently when it comes to conventional notions of industry, research, and possible partnerships that might help us shape curriculum. In addition to questioning presumptions about the range of appropriate industries for partnerships, this focus affords a glimpse of the challenges facing industries as they (and we) navigate the role of online social networking venues.



Visualizing a new critical cultural communication model in Technical Communication

Flourice Richardson, Illinois State University

Reforming the field of technical communication to include new pedagogical approaches that provide students with a more culturally and historically method for the study of technical communication that will better prepare students for the field of technical communication.

Scholars in the field of technical communication have called for new pedagogical approaches that provide students with a more contextualized view of diverse cultural and historical perspectives (Scott, Longo & Wells, 2006; Hunsinger, 2006, Savage and Hunt, 2006). Although the work of Appaduri (1996) and Hunsinger (2006) have provided a new framework for visualizing a new critical cultural communication studies model, there has been little work in the field of technical communication that avoids simply spreading traditional Western knowledge while silencing the voices of diverse groups of people. Critical communication pedagogy challenges students interrogate concepts of power, knowledge and identity in Western culture and introduce other ways of knowing. I believe that critical cultural communication will open the field to new areas of inquiry and provide a new theoretical gateway will revitalize the field of technical communication and better prepare technical communication students with the tools they need to compete in the global market.

This work draws on the critical communication model presented by Brenda J. Allen (2010) author of "Critical Communication Pedagogy as a Framework for Teaching Difference and Organizing." Allen asserts that "Scholars and teachers should strive to help students understand how varying dimensions of social identity articulate with one another, with a focus on the consequences of those articulations for organizing". The pedagogical model that I propose will expose students to a contextualized examination of cultures that is not clouded by luminal, colonized views. It examines the relationship between power and communication in a global context. As instructors in the technical communication field and in an increasingly global society, we must begin to adopt pedagogical practices that expose students to diverse cultural and historical perspectives.

When the Robot Unicorn Attacks: Gameplay, Collaboration, and Audience

Angela M. Harrison, Old Dominion University

There is a disconnect between the technical writing done in academia and industry. Texts that students produce are somewhat distanced from industry; that is, students are writing in a vacuum. Though the classroom provides important pedagogical lessons, students see little to no return on the efforts they put forth outside of the classroom and may not grasp the impact their writing can have. The gap that exists between academia and industry, the one in which everyday people operate, is the key to building the bridge between the two.

Students can start to explore this space through pedagogical lessons in the classroom that can be transferred outside the university. One lesson of note is how notions of audience and collaboration are explored via gameplay, particularly small applications on iPhones and Androids. Specifically, games such as Robot Unicorn Attack have complex implications on considerations of audience. In playing



this game, students explore different ways they can write instruction to different audiences and highlight the many different ways the game can be approached. Thus the lessons in technical writing are taught on the pedagogical level, but the impact of this writing is put to use. Exploring a game such as Robot Unicorn Attack is useful because these games have spaces in which players can review them. Theoretically, developers look at these reviews and use that information to improve and/or modify their games. Thus there is no writing in a vacuum in these instances; the information that is shared in the review space becomes a forum in which people are not simply users, but participants and collaborators. An instance of this kind of participant collaboration is seen in the the heavy metal version of Robot Unicorn Attack, released eight months after the original.

What students gain from such an exercise are lessons in usability testing, collaboration with others, consideration of audience, and sharing of the information they write. They gain the skills they need in the workplace, but the skills would not be on the theoretical level. Rather than writing for imaginary audiences and feedback from the confined space of the classroom, students can venture out of that space and into much larger ones where everyday people share information. In this sense, students also become collaborators with industry, because they share their experiences of gameplay with the developers.

CONCURRENT SESSION 5

PANEL A

Positioning Programs to Maximize Academy-Industry Relationships and Partnerships: A Call for CPTSC Adoption: tcWPA Outcomes Statement

Tracy Bridgeford, University of Nebraska at Omaha

K. Alex Ilyasova, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

Our conference proposal offers up a technical communication WPA outcomes statement (tcWPA), which aims to articulate a more uniform set of core or foundational expectations for our field. In offering up this statement we invite discussion about it, and ultimately, call for our professional organizations, i.e., CPTSC, to adopt a WPA outcomes statement specifically for and appropriately identified by technical communication theories and practice.

We decided to propose the creation of a tcWPA outcomes statement out of a shared concern that an outcomes statement from a composition standpoint continues to hinder efforts in the field to define technical communication, its theories, its practices, and its identity. This hindrance is evident in our ongoing conversations to define the field and to identify the field's value—our value. Even as we are calling for the creation of tech comm. specific outcomes statement, we are aware that this technical communication-based outcomes statement is also created in response to identifying similarities we share with the individuals within the composition field to craft an original WPA Outcomes Statement. The WPA Outcomes Statement was intended to speak to those inside and outside the discipline about the essence of composition programs, to speak to these stakeholders in a language that showed the



status of the field. Moreover, the statement was created at a time as a step toward professionalizing the field of first-year composition when the professional work of flourishing graduate programs seemed to be denied or dismissed. We are optimistic that creating a technical communication-specific outcomes statement will help us address some of these same issues.

Like the original WPA Outcomes Statements, we acknowledge and intend the tcWPA outcomes statement to primarily address an audience of writing program administrators and writing teachers, while also supplying information about what we do to other stakeholders—students, other administrators, parents, legislators, the public at large—who have some right to know (Rhodes, Peckham, Bergmann, and Condon, 2005). As a result, the tcWPA outcomes statement and the discussion/debate we hope ensues serves to progress the ongoing conversations about defining the field and the field's value to the forefront by establishing a basis for what technical communication programs and teachers share in common as well as a measure for what students should be able to do after going through a technical communication program.

Cultivating Rhetorical Engagements: Learning from Program Alumni and Students

Michelle F. Eble, East Carolina University

Over 15 years ago, Deborah Bosley wrote "Collaborative Partnerships: Academia and Industry Working Together," published in *Technical Communication*, where she suggested that the partnerships between academia and industry are critical to the development of technical communication programs. These collaborations and their improvements as well as how these partnerships can help us build, maintain, assess, and revise our programs continue to be a topic of inquiry. We know these relationships are important to the vitality of our programs and our students' successes. At the same time, as we are asked to do more with less given the economic times, how can we build and maintain these important relationships?

This presentation will report on a model for developing and maintaining relationships with industry, government, non-profit, and academic contexts by surveying our current and past students and by focusing, at least in part, on their learning needs. This model depends on building mutually beneficial relationships with our current students and our alumni. In the ADE Ad Hoc Committee on the Master's Degree recently published report, "Rethinking the Master's Degree in English for a New Century," the authors remind us that "a curriculum out of sync with the world around it risks isolation and irrelevance, as well as a loss of opportunity to make the humanities meaningful in the current environment" (10). Assessment and revising our educational programs in ways that make sense to students while also incorporating recent research and best practices is essential for the continued relevancy of our programs.

To cultivate these relationships, we should maintain contact with the students who graduate from our program and are employed in industry and other contexts or those enrolled in our programs who may be employed. These follow-up emails, surveys, or interviews will help ensure we educate students



with the knowledge, skills, and perhaps most importantly, the habits of mind needed to communicate in a wide variety of contexts to foster these collaborations.

Developing Academy-Industry Relationships as an Administrative Lone Ranger

Chalet K. Seidel, Westfield State University

Jamie L. McDaniel, Pittsburg State University

In the 2006 *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* article, “The Lone Ranger as Technical Writing Program Administrator,” David Alan Sapp writes about the challenges faced by “Lone Ranger” program administrators. Often freshly minted PhDs, Lone Rangers are hired to develop technical writing programs with few resources, including few or no colleagues specializing in technical communication or professional writing. These “Lone Rangers” often lack the support and sometimes the respect of colleagues in literary disciplines and may be caught in the crossfire between the two cultures of English Studies: literature and composition and rhetoric. Thus, these junior faculty administrators are more likely than their colleagues to collaborate across disciplines and to “establish greater camaraderie with professionals employed in industry” (202). This panel takes up the conference theme of “Academy-Industry Relationships and Partnerships” from the perspective of the Lone Ranger. As Sapp argues, collaborations both within the academy and with industry partners help lone technical communication administrators to build program sustainably, maintain their passion for the field, and even gain mentoring and professional development opportunities outside their departments. Thus, the panel will take up a number of topics related to the conference theme, discussing strategies for:

- Developing industry partnerships while a new faculty member still acclimating to a new community and institution.
- Building alumni networks in order to forge service learning partnerships, especially in document design and new media courses.
- Leveraging local industry needs to build niche writing programs and negotiate tensions over professionalization within literature-centered departments.

The organizers of this panel envision the panel as both an idea sharing session and a launching pad for an online resource such as a discussion list or wiki for further collaboration among Lone Rangers in the field.

PANEL B

Positioning Programs to Facilitate Academy-Industry Relationships and Partnerships

Intra-Institutional Partnerships for Technical Communication

Stuart Selber, Penn State University

Technical communication programs in college towns and/or rural settings often find it difficult to develop meaningful academy-industry relationships and partnerships. Simply put, the options and opportunities can be limited in real and significant ways. But an absence or lack of non-academic



industrial partners in a geographical location should not discourage technical communication programs from developing intra-institutional partnerships, which can provide students with valuable real-world experiences and insights.

This presentation argues that academic settings can provide students with the same sorts of real-world experiences and insights as non-academic settings, challenging the commonsense assumption that colleges and universities are “ivory towers” with little resemblance or relevance to the outside world. One part of this presentation discusses the institutional structures of today’s university, which in many respects operates like a corporate organization. For example, centers and programs defined as “cost centers” must generate considerable revenue to cover their own expenses, and information technology units offer a range of for-fee services to a campus community. Although the field (rightly) resists the argument that students are our customers, in one way of thinking teachers and programs can very much be the customers of certain units in an academic institution.

Another part of the presentation discusses the opportunities for technical communication students to gain real-world experiences and insights in an academic setting. These opportunities include writing documentation for an IT unit, writing and editing articles for campus publications, and serving as research assistants for faculty projects in technical communication. The final part of the presentation discusses strategies for creating intra-institutional partnerships for technical communication programs. These strategies include bundling technical communication courses with composition courses to leverage impact and scale and emphasizing the technological nature of writing and communication in the 21st century (technology development and use is a major focus of academic institutions).

Traditional academy-industry relationships and partnerships are obviously valuable, but the field should not discount the real-world experiences and insights that can be provided right on campus via intra-institutional partnerships, especially for programs in college towns and/or rural settings.

Writing with Number Crunchers: Building Academy-Industry Collaboration with Accounting Firms

Allen Brizee, Loyola University Maryland

The recent global recession has severely impacted public and private education, leaving many schools operating at drastic losses. These lean times have forced schools to cut programs in technical communication (TC), freeze job searches, and even extinguish tenure lines. Despite these challenges, we are still expected to serve our students, build relationships with industry, and bring in money. Of course the question is: how can we accomplish all of this in such dire economic climates? While scholarship exists on building academic-industry collaboration through internships (Tovey, 2001; McEachern, 2001; Zimmerman, Paul, 2007) and virtual and global relationships (Hill Duin, 1998; Starke-Meyerring, Hill Duin, Palvetzian, 2007), less scholarship exists on building academic-industry collaboration through programs located *outside* of TC.



This presentation provides attendees with information on a graduate-level certificate program that partnered a TC professor with two accounting professors and enrolled employed, or soon-to-be employed, accountants in an eleven-week summer session. The certificate program (three accounting courses and one TC course) developed a relationship between the university's business school and the writing department, and it developed relationships with successful accounting firms in two metropolitan areas.

Accountancy has long known that their students and employees have problems writing and that courses in writing address these issues and assist in the understanding of accounting principles (MonPere Mclsaac, Sepe, 1996; Willits, 2010; Lingenfelter, Umansky, 2010). Moreover, research shows that the low readability of 10-K forms (public company annual reports filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission) leads to profit loss and decreased investor confidence (Lehavy, Li, Merkley, 2011). Working from these findings and from experience, the presenter argues that rich opportunities exist to partner with accounting programs and develop academic-industry collaboration. The presenter suggests that TC programs can share programmatic expenses with accounting programs to work with industry in mutually beneficial ways. In turn, educational opportunities for writing instructors and students increase as relationships with accounting programs and corporate partners flourish.

Three Effective Methods for Improving Collaboration with Industry

Stan Dicks, North Carolina State University

Almost ten years ago, referring to the difficulties of effective collaboration between academia and industry, I asked the question, "Cultural Impediments to Understanding: Are They Surmountable?" During that ten-year span, I have directed our M. S. in technical communication and experienced first-hand those difficulties. But I have also discovered, at least in the particular case of our university in our location, some programmatic activities that have helped us interact effectively with industry. My presentation will directly address the conference theme of effective collaboration between academia and industry by covering three of the activities we have found to work most effectively: internships, alumni relations, and a strong relationship with a single organization. We are doing each of these in somewhat non-traditional ways, and my presentation will focus on the methods we have used and the results we have experienced.

Internships

We maintain active internship programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. The undergraduate program includes a 3-hour course taught every semester in which students read about work-related issues, report their weekly progress, produce a portfolio of their work, and write reflectively on their experience. For our M. S. in Technical Communication, we require the equivalent of one semester of internship, co-op, part-time or full-time employment. My talk will cover the implications and consequences of these policies.



Alumni Relations

We are approaching having 300 M. S. alumni, many of whom still live and work in our geographical area, with an increasing number moving into management and supervisory roles. We are learning how to take better advantage of what an excellent resource this provides, in terms of internships and job opportunities they offer, input they provide about curriculum and course content, and, potentially, donations. My presentation will cover additional methods, including social media, that we are using to improve alumni relations and input.

Strong Relationship with a Single Organization

This methodology is fraught with possible problems (too much input from one source), but, if managed carefully, can yield many benefits. My presentation will cover both the methods we have used to interact with our “sister” company and the benefits that both the university and the company have enjoyed.

Goal Consensus in Academia-Industry Partnerships

Natasha N. Jones, University of Washington

While there are many studies and theories regarding goal consensus and goal setting within organizations, there is not as much research that considers goal consensus and goal setting between organizations (Vancouver and Schmitt, 1991, Vancouver, Millsap, and Peters, 1994, and Schaffer, 2007). Another concept, goal congruence (“how goals within the organization coincide with one another”), has also been examined extensively in business and organizational management fields (Schaffer 2007). However, there is a lack of research specifically focusing on the alignment of goals between academia and the industry organizations that host internship and coop positions for students enrolled in academic programs. My research aims to discover if goal consensus exists among the students that participate in academia-industry partnerships, the academic departments that encourage these partnerships, and the organizations that facilitate these partnerships. The academia-industry partnerships that this study examines are specific to technical communication academic programs and industries that cater to students that major in technical communication and related disciplines. Further, my study asks the following questions:

- What are the perceived benefits (i.e., benefits to be gained by students, academic departments, and organizations)?
- Are these perceived or actual benefits realized?
- How can we (as academics) ensure that the goals and benefits of all stakeholders are aligned and realized? What do we (as teachers) need to do in the classroom to encourage this “alignment”?

In order to address these research questions, I propose a qualitative and quantitative study to identify perceived goals and benefits and the consensus among all parties involved in academia-industry partnerships (students, academic departments, and organizations). My findings will be presented in a



five to seven minute, individual presentation. It is my hope that the findings of this study will provide insight to academic program directors and teachers regarding how to reconcile the goals of the academic program and its students with the needs of industry, enabling maximum benefit for the students and potential employers. In addition, a more comprehensive understanding of the expectations of industry partners would ideally allow academic programs to more successfully develop curriculum that incorporates theoretical and academic concerns along with the practical concerns of industry.

PANEL C

Entrepreneurship and Technical Communication: Academic and Professional Perspectives

Both in industry and in the academy, entrepreneurship is a vibrant site of technical and professional communication, and yet the pedagogy and scholarship of technical communication has been slow to build relationships with this professional network, and sites of entrepreneurship education have been slow to embrace what technical communication has to offer in preparing nascent entrepreneurs. In light of this, we argue that the discipline of technical communication must (re)assert itself as a force in entrepreneurship education. Drawing on surveys and interviews with seasoned entrepreneurs and leaders of entrepreneurship programs, this panel will describe how professional and technical communication programs can begin meeting the needs of entrepreneurs in the field, provide improved instruction for future entrepreneurs in their classrooms, and integrate their disciplinary expertise into the entrepreneurship programs at their universities.

Technical Communication within Entrepreneurship Programs: A Michigan Case Study

Gregory J. Schneider, Kettering University

The dramatic growth of entrepreneurship programs is evidenced by the fact that most institutions of higher learning have incorporated entrepreneurship or innovation into their curriculum to one degree or another. In order to provide a picture of the current state of the relationship between technical and professional communication and entrepreneurship programs, this paper will report the results of a survey of these programs within public, private, and community colleges in the state of Michigan.

Technical Communication at the Hub: Building Cross-Institutional and Industry Relationships

John M. Spartz, University of Wisconsin-Parkside

This paper will identify and explicate the real communication needs and values of professionals in the field by drawing on interviews and surveys conducted with entrepreneurs (and small business owners) in the Allegheny Region of Pennsylvania as well as the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area in Minnesota. The interviews and surveys ask entrepreneurs about the documents necessary to fund, start, and maintain their businesses, the writing skills they value, the writing training they have received, and their confidence about their writing abilities.



Beyond the Business Plan: The Technical Communication Needs of Practicing Entrepreneurs

Ryan P. Weber, University of Alabama in Huntsville

Building on the data from Papers 1 and 2, this paper offers insights on how professional and technical communication can align its pedagogy with real-world entrepreneurial writing and communication practices, while contributing the unique knowledge, skills, and methods provided by the discipline. It will further illustrate the way(s) in which research into the communication practices of industry practitioners serves to provide technical communication pedagogues—and varied institutional stakeholders—the requisite information to develop and amend curricula that more closely aligns with that which industry values, needs, and desires. Finally, it will offer recommendations for developing and optimizing both the technical communication/entrepreneur and technical communication/academic entrepreneurship program relationships.

PANEL D

Angles of Repose⁴: Encouraging Productive Exchange among Technical Communication Programs and the Workplace

Technical communication programs and the workplace often find themselves residing on a slippery slope, each representing different goals and aims, but sharing a compelling interest to work together to achieve them. On the one hand, programs need to determine what kinds of knowledge and which skills they will teach their students to prepare them for professional life. This charge, in part, depends on consulting with those already in the workplace about what knowledge and skills are valued there. Slippage occurs if programs don't listen to these voices, or if they listen uncritically, taking them as absolute mandates for programmatic and curricular development. On the other hand, the workplace benefits if its practitioners understand how programs are preparing students for professional work in their organizations and if they can serve as consultants in the preparation process. Slippage occurs here if practitioners do not respect, or cannot appreciate, academic interests while offering advice.

This panel reports on three initiatives to establish sites where our program, including faculty and students, can engage in productive exchanges with workplace practitioners, including program graduates, advisory board members, and workplace professionals.

Fostering Conversations about STC: Bringing Professionals, Students, and Faculty Together

Ann Brady, Michigan Tech

Reports on bringing professionals together with students and faculty in an Advisory Board and STC Speakers Series.

⁴ Angle of Repose: The point on an incline at which objects come to rest rather than sliding downhill.



Developing Professional Identities: The STC Student Chapter

Marika Seigel, Michigan Tech

Reports on the professionalization and outreach initiatives of our program's Society for Technical Communication student chapter, including students' attendance at the national summit.

Getting Feedback from Alumni: How Can We Better Prepare Them for the Workplace?

Joanna Schreiber, Michigan Tech

Reports on initial findings of STC alumni survey. The purpose of the survey is to determine what knowledge and skills they use on the job, what they've had to acquire, and what they wish they had learned in the program.

PANEL E

Can Academy-Industry Relationships Succeed for a Program Committed to Social Justice?

As our M.A. in Professional Writing and Rhetorics at Illinois State University continues to develop, we are increasingly emphasizing social justice issues that are concerns for organizations involved in globalization: neocolonial corporate practices, human rights concerns relating to race, ethnicity, and gender, environmental effects of development, and issues of access for people with needs that do not correspond to presumed standard abilities or resources—a generalized list that we do not mean to suggest encompasses the full range of social justice concerns.

As we work toward this social justice focus in our teaching, research and program design, we are conscious of potential conflicts and disconnects with industries that may not regard such issues as primary concerns of business. We are relatively early in the development of this focus in our program but we recognize the likelihood of resistance by some—perhaps many—industry managers who might be interested in hiring otherwise well qualified graduates of our program.

In this panel, we will present an overview of our curricular developments that reflect our social justice commitment; discuss how this emphasis is playing out so far with students; and provide a case of how it has been received by one industry.

Challenges of Moving Social Justice to the Center of a Technical Communication Program

Gerald Savage, Illinois State University

Our program has begun to include postcolonial and decolonial perspectives in our approaches to intercultural and international technical communication. These perspectives are important in understanding the ways in which knowledge management and information design may participate in colonizing resources, economies, and human lives in what are usually referred to as the Third World, developing countries, or the Global South. These unfranchised areas may represent at least half of the world's population, yet they seem scarcely considered in the goals and commitments of business and industry.



This raises a hard question for technical communication. Historically, our field is so closely linked—one might even say subordinated—to industry that we seem unable to imagine a future as a profession that would not find us tied to corporate interests. This kind of relationship seems so natural and inevitable that, despite a genuine concern for professional ethics, we have not seriously confronted the contradictions between our commitment to industry and our commitment not only to audiences—which are increasingly defined more narrowly as users—but also our civic obligation to social domains beyond those of the employer or the client/user.

To the extent that technical communicators are going to pursue careers in industry, they may have to live with these ethical contradictions. But, to riff on a metaphor offered by Dale Sullivan more than twenty years ago, we are not bound to dance with the same partner or even show up at the same dance. The challenge, then, as we increasingly perceive it, is to articulate social justice values we believe are worth investing careers in serving, and then to be more creative and more determined in finding sites of practice in which those values can be equitably negotiated.

We are still working on how to address these challenges without making our program a pariah among reputable programs. However, we don't believe we are alone in our desire to make social justice a central value. We hope to spark a conversation on the implications and possibilities for this kind of programmatic commitment.

How Social Justice Commitment Plays with Students

Angela Haas, Illinois State University

One of the difficulties in designing a social justice curriculum in technical communication studies is making it usable and useful to critical stakeholders, including technical communication students and professors, institutional administrators, corporations that hire technical communicators, and other institutions with technical communication programs. This presentation focuses on describing the difficulties and successes associated with designing and employing social justice curricula and pedagogy that simultaneously invites students to discover, reflect, and/or act upon their own diverse social justice concerns *and* prepares them to meet mainstream workplace expectations for technical communication practitioners and scholars. Specifically, Presenter 2 will offer a case study of how she designed a graduate course that engaged and nurtured a variety of perceptions of and approaches to social justice vis-à-vis technical communication and describe some of the activist student projects composed therein. Further, potential promises and perils for technical communication students and professional and community workplaces will be interrogated.

Case Study of One Graduate's Experience in Industry

Chelsea Moats, Michigan State University

Now an alum of ISU, Presenter 3 will discuss how she came to develop a passion for social justice and subsequently apply it to her technical communication workplace practices where she is dedicated to designing culturally sensitive and responsible technical communication. Specifically, this presentation offers a case study of how a student's commitment to disability concerns was nurtured in her technical



communication courses and how that transferred into other social justice concerns and traveled to her undergraduate and graduate technical communication internships at a Fortune 35 corporation. Further, the reception of her technical communication and social justice at this major corporation will be discussed.

Charged with projects pertaining to veteran and disabled community outreach—including OFCCP compliance, usability and accessibility testing, manual and policy writing, and Human Resources survey creation—this intern employed the technical communication, rhetorical, and cultural studies theories and practices she learned in her undergraduate work to engage management and peers in critical conversations about social justice concerns. Some of these include: financial risks related to undue hardship; generalizations of disabled employees' (in)ability to complete required tasks; the rigidity of the female/male gender binary on corporate surveys; importance of TTY technology. Ultimately, this presentation will demonstrate a real-world workplace realization of: the field's desire to bridge the chasm between theory and practice; the personal desire to serve underrepresented users; and ISU's Professional Writing and Rhetorics curricular goal that students and future practitioners understand how exclusionary technical rhetorics shape, prescribe, and limit identities in private and public spheres.