

Research Practice in Technical and Professional Communication

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Scholars in technical and professional communication (TPC) continue to consider the field's approaches to research. To this end, scholars have

- Examined research relationship between practitioners and the academic field (e.g., Blakeslee & Spilka, 2004; Friess & Boettger, 2021; Gonzales et al., 2017; St. Amant & Melonçon, 2016);
- Performed meta-analysis of research from varying perspectives (e.g., Boettger & Lam, 2013; Carliner et al., 2011; Carradini, 2022; Melonçon & St. Amant, 2019; Melonçon, et al., 2020);
- Discussed ways in which members of the field are trained to do research (e.g., Albers, 2017; Campbell, 2000; Pantelides, 2017; Turner, et al., 2017);
- Offered new research methodologies or frameworks (e.g., Agboka, 2014; de Hertogh, 2018; St. Amant & Graham, 2019; Lam & Wolfe, 2022; McNely et al., 2014; Scott & Melonçon, 2018; Moore & Elliot, 2016; Petersen & Walton, 2018; Phelps, 2021; Shivers-McNair et al., 2019;) and
- Worked with communities and/or examined research relationships with communities and community partners (e.g. Agobka, 2013; Amidon et al., 2023; Itchuaqiyag et al., 2023; Rivera, 2024; Rose et al., 2017; Schelly et al., 2024).

However, an area that is noticeably missing from research on research is dedicated work on the “how” of *research practice*, which is the “actual work and implementation of methods and methodology in the process of performing research” (Melonçon & St. Amant, 2019). Explicating the “how” of research practice would involve detailing the problems, tensions, and complications that arise during research or what recent rhetorical scholarship has called “investigative pivots” (Johnson et al., 2021). In TPC, we see these pivots described in only a few works (e.g., Angeli, 2018; Smith et al., 2021; Teston, 2012). To prepare to negotiate complex research sites and research questions, including engagement with communities, TPC needs a deeper and broader understanding of “the beliefs and obligations that shape how one acts as a researcher” (Grabill, 2012, p. 211), and how those same beliefs and obligations affect research practice in the moment.

The goal of this collection is to gather examples and case studies to help others work through their own research practice quandaries. We hope to bring together diverse experiences of research practice that consider (but are not limited to) the following questions:

- How do researchers articulate their goals and methods with/for participants? And how might this articulation capture the process of the same?
- How do researchers negotiate barriers, complications or shifting questions in the midst of a research study?

- What does it look like to pivot or to reshape methods *in situ*?
- How do researchers build reciprocal relationships with study participants? Should they?
- How do researchers locate sites or artifacts for research, and how do sites and/or artifacts shape/inform available methods?
- How might TPC teach research practice to undergraduate researchers vs. graduate students?
- What is the relationship between ethics and practice?
- What approaches to framing and describing methods support reflection and iteration of research practices?
- How do researchers deal with the embodied and affective dimensions of research during (and after) the practice of research?

While this list is not exhaustive, it does point to the overall aims of the volume to focus on the “how” of research practice. The editors seek chapter proposals of **500-750 words (excluding references)** that are written for a primary audience of early career researchers.

Since “how” questions work to describe in what manner, by what means, in what state, or to what extent, chapter proposals should offer insights into research *practice* and lessons learned. We anticipate final contributions will vary in length from shorter (e.g., 4k words) to longer submissions (e.g., 10k words), as well as submissions that may take on a less traditional form and structure.

Timeline:

Proposal due: April 19, 2024

Decisions to authors: May 13, 2024

Full chapters; August 26, 2024

Send queries to any or all editors and **send submissions** to Michelle McMullin at mmcmull@ncsu.edu with a subject line of Research Practices submission.

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