Encouraging Student Advocacy in Social Justice Classrooms

Xiaobo Wang,[1] **Chalice Randazzo,**[2] **Tharon Howard** [3]

1 Sam Houston State University

2 Utah State University

3 Clemson University

Abstract

Although we had not shared ideas before the 2021 ATTW conference, we noticed during our panel that we had considerable overlaps in our pedagogical approaches and goals for encouraging students' social justice advocacy. This reflection discusses those overlaps while acknowledging how our different positionalities affect our approaches. One takeaway of this article is deliverables from our presentations, including citation lists and illustrations that might help other educators. The other takeaway is seven of our overlapping pedagogical approaches (three that affect course structure and four that concern day-to-day interactions) that we hope will provide other TPC educators with ideas on how to adapt to students' positionalities while fostering students' ability to see themselves as social justice advocates.

Introduction

In the early 1990s, when usability was beginning to have an impact on technical communication practice in industry and on technical writing pedagogy in academe, one of the ways nascent usability and technical communication professionals sought to both justify and define our roles on product development teams was as the "user advocate." The user, we argued, needed the same advocacy on a development team as stakeholders such as product support, marketing, manufacturing, engineering, and management. Although technical and professional communication (TPC) has largely adopted the idea of user advocacy, only recently have TPC scholars argued that students, as users of our pedagogy, need similar advocates in our pedagogical designs (e.g., Crane and Cargile Cook in press, De Hertogh and DeVasto 2020, Jones 2018, Shivers-McNair et al. 2018). Even rarer are articles that provide strategies for encouraging our students to recognize themselves as advocates for oppressed groups, although some TPC scholarship in community engagement has discussed it as an aside of community-engaged projects (Grabill 2003, Swacha 2018). And most recently, scholarship from social justice reminds us to be advocates *with* oppressed groups–not speaking for them but building coalitions with them in order to do advocacy work (Itchuaqiyaq 2021; Walton, Moore, and Jones 2019).

Our panel discovered that the three of us were each, in radically different ways, attempting to empower student advocates in our classes. Prior to the ATTW conference, our three presentations weren't coordinated, and none of us had seen each others' papers or even proposals. Yet during the conference, we discovered that all three presentations intersected around encouraging TPC students' awareness of their abilities to become advocates for social justice and change. As we wrote this reflection, we also realized that our strategies for encouraging our students' growth were

based on the idea that we should adapt our pedagogy to our students' needs.

In this reflection, we will first provide a high-level overview of each individual presentation, then we will reflect critically on common themes we discovered despite our diverse perspectives and positionalities, and finally, we will offer specific suggestions that teachers of professional and technical communication courses can use in their classes.

Tharon's Presentation: An Overview and Critical Reflection

Tharon's presentation described an undergraduate course on Content Strategy where students in the Writing and Publication Studies program developed a content strategy for the Department of English and became advocates for students' perspectives on how the department should present its face to the world. The class followed six steps in developing the content strategy plan for the department. First, we met with the client's leadership to set the goals for the plan and get their "buy-in." Second, we conducted a persona research study (using Redish's 2012 approach–see Appendix A below) and built a UX journey map (using Kalbach's 2016 approach–see Appendix B below). Third, we conducted a content audit (using Halvorson and Rach's 2012 approach). Fourth, the data collected was used to determine which types of channels the department needed to develop (e.g., websites, Facebook, Slack, Twitter, blogs, YouTube channels, etc.). Fifth, we researched and recommended content targeted at recruiting more majors. And finally, we produced the branding logos, look-n-feel guidelines, templates, sample content, a content calendar, and a personnel plan.

The ultimate goal of Tharon's presentation was to provide a model which other faculty can use to organize their syllabi around the six steps over the course of a semester. He showed how he had used the same structure successfully with clients such as the Ripple of One (an organization dedicated to helping low-income families learn how to maintain their finances), Bosom Buddies (a breast cancer survivor group), and PFLAG (a support group for "Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays"). In his presentation, he discussed how using this six-phase process with real clients has allowed him to successfully integrate social justice problems into conservative institutions, something we will discuss in more detail in the section below on pedagogical strategies and tactics.

Many of Tharon's classes took place in 1996 before there was much literature on social justice available for classroom use; indeed, Walton and Agboka (2021) locate Scott, Longo, and Willis' *Critical Power Tools* as an early turning point in TPC social justice work, and it came out roughly 10 years after Tharon's classes were working on these projects. If Tharon were to teach the class today, he would likely have the students read "Chapter 6: Coalitional Action" from Walton, Moore, and Jones' (2019) book *Technical Communication After the Social Justice Turn: Building Coalitions for Action*. Walton, Moore, and Jones provide readers with specific steps for creating "coalitional action" that they call the 4Rs: 1) Recognize, 2) Reveal, 3) Reject, and 4) Replace. Another useful reading would be Jones' (2016) "The Technical Communicator as Advocate" because it specifically discusses advocacy with LGBTQ groups. There has also been promising work at the intersection of UX and queer advocacy, such as the interesting idea of "queering consent" in Rose et al.'s (2018) "Social Justice in UX: Centering Marginalized Users" panel presentation from the 2018 SIGDOC conference. Very recently, Ramler (2021) has published on digital spaces and queer usability (in the aptly titled article "Queer Usability"). These would have been fantastic resources at the time of Tharon's classes, and they may help other educators who want

to frame their classes at the intersection of social justice, UX, and queer advocacy.

Xiaobo's Presentation: An Overview and Critical Reflection

Xiaobo presented several cases from the Chinese social media Weibo during the Hong Kong pro-democracy protests, focusing on communication design, intercultural communication, and the ethical and challenges of democratic networks (Colton and Holmes 2018 & 2018, Ding 2007, Getto and St. Amant 2014, Johns and Trice 2020, Vallor 2016). She struggled to teach the case due to her student population and the diplomatic relationship between China and the US. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sino-US relationship went down to the lowest point since they had established official diplomacy, and it was very hard to even mention any Chinese topic due to personal safety concerns within the new bilateral political rhetoric. She then had to change the topic and instead leaned more towards communication design and ethics using photo and video editing apps as a case. In her introductory service course, "Introduction to Technical Writing," she used to invite students to choose the most popular social media platform or mobile app from a culture that is different from US culture or students' home culture(s). They discuss in groups the features of the chosen social media and talk about favorite features and exchange ideas. She also invited them to interview someone from the home culture where the social media app was designed and used most widely, or someone who has been a long-time user of that app. Students were also invited to analyze a Chinese app because they had a ready resource.

Then, after anti-Chinese and anti-Asian violence cases were reported in major Chinese and Asian (non-mainstream) mass and social media, Xiaobo decided to be cautious when choosing social

and/or new media platforms, especially topics on social/new media design. She quickly realized that sensitive political Chinese topics are probably no better choices due to the general ambivalent cultural context. She then turned to Asian beauty standards, a topic that can easily raise students' interests in this era of Instagram and TikTok in the US. She has been using the social justice framework in the teaching of a TPC service course that she has applied for the Academic Community Engagement designation from our PACE (Professional and Academic Center for Excellence). She has also collaborated with an instructor in China in order to make a bigger social justice impact. Her students at Sam Houston State University and her students at the University of International Business and Economics were able to discuss and talk about features of the photo and video apps and their user experience.

At the Q&A, Xiaobo was asked how she managed to teach such topics, and she mentioned her experience teaching intercultural communication design at different institutions. The questions helped her think more about her current student populations and what might be better/interesting topics for them. Her positionality as a scholar from China has both constrained her ability to teach intercultural technical communication and helped her to engage students on topics that would interest them and help them become student advocates who are aware of the impact of communication design on users'/their own behaviors. With this kind of pedagogy, which is a combination of "shifting out of the neutral" approach (Shelton 2019) and the "technical communicator as advocate" (Jones 2016), students have realized the oppressive features of photo/video editing apps and wanted to fight against the intersectional oppressions brought by new media and technology as they continue to use social media using ethical dimensions of communication design.

Chalice's Presentation: An Overview and Critical Reflection

Chalice's 2021 ATTW Conference presentation discussed how "professional English" in U.S. hiring requirements can be a code that excludes people who are perceived to not use White English Vernacular (Greenfield 2011, Walwema and Arzu Carmichael 2021, Young 2007). Using data from interviews with 24 employers, she explored how applicants whose language skills have not been evaluated are still sometimes assumed to not use WEV based on several resume indicators: Asian or Latinx names, Spanish or Asian language skills, or wording that the hirer assumes is bad translation. In addition, one hirer impersonated African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as an example of unprofessional "slang." To provide an introduction to the topic of linguistic racism and hiring, Chalice presented a handout with a (very abbreviated) framework of scholarship that she used to evaluate this data (see Appendix C).

A question during the Q&A, though, evolved her thinking about how this issue applies to TPC classes. Someone asked how educators could implement her findings in classes, because teaching students to resist "professional English" could hurt their job prospects. At the time, she admitted that the best we can do is make students aware of this issue and let them decide what to do with it as they apply for jobs. She recommended that audience members read scholarship that challenges myths about the supremacy of WEV or the demand that students should use it, including Greenfield's (2011) exploration of the racist underpinnings of WEV and Young's (2009) argument against requiring code-switching. Baker-Bell (2019) also provides a lesson plan designed to help educators 1) challenge specifically anti-Black linguistic racism and 2) resist the narrative that students will only be successful if they use WEV.

Since the Q&A, this question of students' ability to resist "professional English" requirements has made Chalice (re)consider that students are not just powerless applicants; one day, some of them will be in positions where they hire other people. Those students need to be aware of the exclusionary potential of the "professional English" requirement so that they can enact social change when they start to hire others. That realization coincided with Chalice's move to a university with a more conservative student body. As she discusses below with Tharon and Xiaobo, this shift meant that she needed to be wary about discussing racism and social justice with her new students. She was concerned that recent Republican attacks on theories that are tied to social justice work (e.g., Critical Race Theory) could mean that students might wholesale reject important concepts of social justice advocacy. So, her contribution to the below strategies/tactics are the result of a confluence of 1) realizing how students will be responsible for social justice in hiring and 2) having to apply that with a more conservative student body.

On Differences and Overlaps: Pedagogical Strategies and Tactics We Use

During our reflection, we discussed two concerns that we often hear from other TPC educators about integrating social justice into courses. First, some educators are concerned about student pushback to social justice ideologies, whether in the classroom or in course evaluations. Second, educators who have not personally experienced oppression sometimes feel that they have no right to discuss it. We noticed both of these issues in our own positionalities. Compared with Xiaobo's intersectional experiences, Chalice and Tharon feel less equipped to discuss oppression. For example, neither Chalice nor Tharon has to be concerned about the very real physical threat of anti-Asian

violence. And all three of us feel vulnerable to students' pushback, but all three of us have actively sought ways to overcome that fear.

We would encourage other educators to overcome these fears because not discussing privilege and oppression allows systems to perpetuate physical, psychological, and material violence on oppressed groups (and, as we mention below, oppressors). In addition, many scholars and educators of color do not have the choice about whether to discuss privilege and oppression: for example, as Xiaobo has pointed out, her Chinese heritage marks her as a potential target of anti-Asian violence. White scholars and educators, like Chalice and Tharon, need to overcome their concerns about "not having the right" to discuss oppression so that they can confront privilege and oppression in coalition with their colleagues of color.

In order to address the above concerns, we noticed seven strategies and tactics that we used in our classrooms to foster students' awareness of their ability to become advocates for social justice. We include them here as suggestions for people who are willing but anxious about integrating social justice into their courses. The first three are about how to integrate social justice issues into the general structure of the class while the last four are strategies/tactics we used for day-to-day interactions with students who might potentially push back against social justice ideologies. Each strategy/tactic has been implemented by at least two of us, so they represent overlaps in our approaches. However, we also found differences in what we can achieve with each approach because of our positionalities (Walton, Moore, and Jones 2019).

Adapt Your Theories to Your Institution

TPC instructors often teach courses based on theories other than antiracism or social justice, and sometimes those other theories can be used to our advantage. For example, Chalice began teaching

business ethics at an institution with students who are amenable to Republican attacks on Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Whiteness Theory (CWT). Although both of these theories are central to her data analysis of WEV and hiring discrimination, she relied on ethical theoretical lenses to demonstrate that "professional English" requirements can lead to unethical hiring decisions. Adapting theoretical lenses to institutional contexts can help broach social justice topics with students who might otherwise resist these discussions.

Use Real Clients

Many of us who teach Technical and Professional Communication courses are accustomed to the idea of working with actual clients in our classrooms; however, we often ignore the ways that we can choose clients who help engage our students in social justice issues. For example, Tharon has had his students work with clients like PFLAG, a group dedicated to the needs of "Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays," and Ripple of One, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to breaking the cycle of systemic poverty by mentoring a generation of low-income families in budgeting and workplace practices that middle-class families take for granted. The upshot is that because students perceive themselves to be engaged in "service learning" projects that support their communities, they often overlook the fact that they're actually working to solve "wicked problems" involving social justice. Students are so pleased to be working on something that matters in the real world, instead of just another "academic exercise," that ideology doesn't matter.

Use Real Products

Our textbooks might have different product examples, but allowing students to play with or use real products can give them a much better understanding of the design principles behind them.

Not until they use and/or compare different products can they really be able to become advocates for social justice causes. For instance, in Xiaobo's session on communication design in her service course, students were asked which U.S. and Asian photo/video-editing apps they use most often or like the most. They then listed features/functions they love the most from their favorite photo/video-editing apps. After negotiating a workable time, students were invited to attend a Zoom discussion session with students from China who were asked the same questions earlier. The two groups of students (from China and the U.S.) introduced each other briefly and were put into different chat rooms with designated photo/video apps.

When Students Push Back, Make Your Response About the Product and Not Them

One of the fears we hear from faculty about integrating social justice themes into their courses is how students will respond and whether they will disrupt the course, complain to administrators about ideological bias, and/or give the class poor course evaluations. They worry that students will make comments during class that are disruptive and potentially inappropriate. For example, in Tharon's class where students were designing a brochure intended to make the public more aware of support for parents and friends of gays and lesbians (PFLAG), one student offered a suggestion that could have been interpreted as potentially homophobic. The student was immediately attacked by others in the course, and the situation had the potential to spiral out of control. However, as the instructor, Tharon was able to diffuse the situation by turning the conversation away from whether the student's comment was inappropriate to a rhetorical question about how the audience would receive the information. Was it appropriate in the context of the brochure we were creating; how would it be received? In this way, the response was about the

product we were working on rather than making it about the student.

In a similar situation, in one of Xiaobo's first-year composition classes at a previous institution, students were discussing a documentary they had watched titled Mardi Gras, Made in China. There were a lot of global issues, but one student stood up amid the discussions and said, "How is this relevant? These are all China's problems." Before Xiaobo was able to start talking about the fact that we are all connected and that this is a global world in global capitalism, another student stood up and asked the previous student, "How are you not seeing the relevance? This is the 21st century and we're all connected." Xiaobo then calmly stated it was understandable to think countries can have their own issues to work on by referring to the interviewees' comments in the documentary, but she reminded the class of some of the discussion topics such as global capitalism, global travels, global labor, and how they were relevant to current world affairs and regular citizens' life.

Juxtapose and Compare Cultural Attitudes/Values (Differential Logics)

Xiaobo has been doing intercultural TPC since she began her BA in translation and interpretation. She finds ways to compare and contrast cultural attitudes/values using an audience-based strategy. The most important thing she has learned in her teaching and research is to focus on commonalities, i.e., shared topics/issues of importance to all human beings, such as beauty standards, psychological well-being, communication style, spirituality, etc. In her classrooms, because of her positionality, she draws students' attention by giving lost in translation or cultural shock examples before she invites them to dive into specific TPC topics. Icebreakers such as terrible translations are essential to her regarding intercultural TPC. One of the examples she used is the "white

elephant" example. A Chinese company couldn't figure out why their batteries branded "White Elephant" could not sell because "white" and "elephant" are such perfect concepts in Chinese and Asian cultures. A company from Western culture, though, would recognize the "white elephant" gifting tradition, which is usually associated with useless, undesirable, or joke gifts.

Show That Socially Unjust Practices Also Affect Majority Groups

Although we strongly emphasize that educators should *not* re-center majority concerns or equate oppressors' trauma with that of oppressed people, scholars have noted that oppression causes trauma to both the oppressed and oppressors (Du Bois 2007, Segrest 2001). We noticed benefits to showing students of majority positionalities how they could also be affected by socially unjust practices. For example, Xiaobo incorporated the topic of "beauty standards and communication design of photo/video apps," which negatively affects white U.S. app users as readily as Chinese app users, especially millennials and Gen Z populations. In her discussion of "professional English," Chalice included articles about how different vernaculars are judged "unprofessional," including Appalachian vernacular as well as AAVE. Showing majority students how they are also affected by oppression helps them understand why dismantling systems of oppression is important (although, ideally, we would like them to internalize the idea that they should fight oppression for more than their own gains).

Foreground Our Positionality by Sharing Our Stories of Systemic Oppression

People (not just students) are better at understanding social justice issues when they can observe how systemic oppression affects

someone they actually know. Some TPC educators might not be comfortable with sharing their experiences, and some educators may not have useful stories of oppression to share. But for Xiaobo and Chalice, sharing personal experiences has been useful for helping students understand why social justice is worth pursuing. Chalice's experiences are admittedly limited, but she shares personal stories of sexism in things like course evaluations or advertisements. She also foregrounds her whiteness and her fumbling attempts at social justice, which (she has been told) has sometimes helped her white students accept their own discomfort when confronting racism and white privilege. Xiaobo has been sharing her stories as a first-gen Chinese immigrant who has to deal with constant ideological conflicts and intercultural misunderstandings between the US and China.

Conclusion

Our advice might not be useful (or acceptable) for other educators, depending on their and their students' positionalities. Indeed, we noticed that our different positionalities affected the strategies/tactics we implemented. For example, of the three of us, Xiaobo has the most insight when juxtaposing and comparing cultural attitudes/values.

Despite these differences, we also noticed commonalities, and in identifying strategies/tactics that overlapped among us, we realized that they stemmed from two values that we hold in common. First, paralleling UX's user advocacy, all of us adopted the idea that we need to be advocates for our students because they are users of our pedagogy (De Hertogh and DeVasto 2020, Jones 2018, Shivers-McNair et al. 2018). This philosophy can be seen in our strategies/tactics, which adapt to students' capacities, values, and beliefs. Second, we align with social justice's goal of pushing the growth edge of students' capacities, values, and beliefs in order to

foster their ability to see themselves as coalitional advocates with oppressed groups. We realize that students are at varying stages of their social justice paths, and any TPC class is just one step in that direction. Hopefully, some of the suggestions we provide in this reflection can give other TPC educators ideas on how to adapt to students' positionalities while fostering their ability to see themselves as social justice advocates.

References

Baker-Bell, April. 2020. "Dismantling Anti-Black Linguistic Racism in English Language Arts Classrooms: Toward an Anti-Racist Black Language Pedagogy." *Theory Into Practice* 59(1): 8–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2019.1665415.

Colton, Jared S. and Steve Holmes. 2018. "The Virtue of Honesty in Social Media in the Age of Trump." Special Symposium on Virtue Ethics and Rhetoric. *Rhetoric Review* 37(4): 346-53.

———. 2018. *Rhetoric, Technology, and the Virtues.* Louisville, CO: University Press of Colorado/Utah State University Press.

Crane, Kate and Kelli Cargile Cook. In press. *User Experience as Innovative Academic Practice.* Fort Collins, CO: WAC Clearinghouse/CSU and UC University Press.

De Hertogh, Lori Beth and Danielle DeVasto. 2020. "User Experience as Participatory Health Communication Pedagogy." In *Proceedings of the 38th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication*, 1–4. SIGDOC '20. New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery. https://doi.org/10.1145/3380851.3416757.

Ding, Huiling. 2007. "Confucius's Virtue-Centered Rhetoric: A Case Study of Mixed Research Methods in Comparative Rhetoric." *Rhetoric Review*. 26(2): 142-59.

Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt. 2007. *The Souls of Black Folk.* Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Getto, Guiseppe, and Kirk St. Amant. 2014. "Designing Globally, Working Locally: Using Personas to Develop Online

Communication Products for International Users." *Communication Design Quarterly* 3(1): 24-46.

Grabill, Jeffrey T. 2003. "Community Computing and Citizen Productivity." *Computers and Composition* 20(2): 131–50. https://doi.org/10.1016/S8755-4615(03)00015-X.

Greenfield, Laura. 2011. "The 'Standard English' Fairy Tale: A Rhetorical Analysis of Racist Pedagogies and Commonplace Assumptions about Language Diversity." In *Writing Centers and the New Racism: A Call for Sustainable Dialogue and Change*, edited by Karen Rowan and Laura Greenfield, 33–60. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press.

Halvorson, Kristina and Melissa Rach. 2012. *Content Strategy for the Web, 2nd Edition*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders.

Itchuaqiyaq, Cana Uluak. 2021. "Iñupiat Iḷitqusiat: An Indigenist Ethics Approach for Working with Marginalized Knowledges in Technical Communication". In *Equipping Technical Communicators for Social Justice Work: Theories, Methodologies, and Pedagogies*, edited by Rebecca Walton and Godwin Y. Agboka. Louisville, CO: University Press of Colorado.

Jones, John and Michael Trice. 2020. *Platforms, Protests, and the Challenge of Networked Democracy*. New York: Palgrave McMillian.

Jones, Natasha N. 2018. "Human Centered Syllabus Design: Positioning Our Students as Expert End-Users." *Computers and Composition*, 49(September): 25–35. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2018.05.002.

Jones, Natasha N. 2016. "The Technical Communicator as Advocate: Integrating a Social Justice Approach in Technical

Communication." *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* 46(3): 342–61. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047281616639472

Kalbach, James. 2016. *Mapping Experiences: A Complete Guide to Creating Value through Journeys, Blueprints, and Diagrams*. Beijing, Boston: O'Reilly Media.

Kreitzer, Rebecca J. and Jennie Sweet-Cushman. 2021. "Evaluating Student Evaluations of Teaching: A Review of Measurement and Equity Bias in SETs and Recommendations for Ethical Reform." *Journal of Academic Ethics* 20: 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-021-09400-w.

Ramler, Mari E. 2021. "Queer Usability." *Technical Communication Quarterly* 30(4): 345–58. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2020.1831614.

Redish, Janice. 2012. *Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content That Works*. 2nd edition. Amsterdam, Boston: Morgan Kaufmann.

Rose, Emma J., Avery Edenfield, Rebecca Walton, Laura Gonzales, Ann Shivers McNair, Tetyana Zhvotovska, Natasha Jones, Genevieve I. Garcia de Mueller, and Kristen Moore. 2018. "Social Justice in UX: Centering Marginalized Users." In *Proceedings of the 36th ACM International Conference on the Design of Communication*, 1–2. SIGDOC '18. Milwaukee, WI, USA: Association for Computing Machinery. https://doi.org/10.1145/3233756.3233931.

Segrest, Mab. 2001. "The Souls of White Folks." In *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*, edited by Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, Irene J. Nexica, and Matt Wray, 43–71. London: Duke University Press.

Shelton, Cecilia. 2019. "Shifting Out of Neutral: Centering Difference, Bias, and Social Justice in a Business Writing Course." *Technical Communication Quarterly* 29(1): 18-32. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2019.1640287

Shivers-McNair, Ann, Joy Phillips, Alyse Campbell, Hanh H. Mai, Alice Yan, John Forrest Macy, James Wenlock, Savannah Fry, and Yishan Guan. 2018. "User-Centered Design in and Beyond the Classroom: Toward an Accountable Practice." *Computers and Composition* 49(September): 36–47. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2018.05.003.

Swacha, Kathryn Yankura. 2018. "'Bridging the Gap between Food Pantries and the Kitchen Table': Teaching Embodied Literacy in the Technical Communication Classroom." *Technical Communication Quarterly* 27(3): 261–82. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2018.1476589.

Walton, Rebecca, Kristen Moore, and Natasha Jones. 2019. *Technical Communication After the Social Justice Turn: Building Coalitions for Action*. New York: Routledge.

Vallor, Shannon. 2016. *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Walwema, Josephine and Felicita Arzu Carmichael. 2021. "'Are You Authorized to Work in the U.S.?' Investigating 'Inclusive' Practices in Rhetoric and Technical Communication Job Descriptions." *Technical Communication Quarterly* 30(2): 107-122. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2020.1829072

Young, Vershawn Ashanti. 2007. *Your Average Nigga: Performing Race, Literacy, and Masculinity*. African American Life Series. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.

Young, Vershawn Ashanti. 2009. "'Nah, We Straight': An Argument Against Code Switching." *JAC* 29(1/2): 49–76. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20866886.

About the Authors

Xiaobo Wang is an Assistant Professor of Technical Communication at Sam Houston State University where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in rhetoric and technical communication. Her research focuses on the intersectional areas of communication design, feminist rhetoric, comparative rhetoric, and intercultural technical and professional communication.

Chalice Randazzo researches the intersection of practical and critical-cultural technical and professional communication, especially missing work and silence. She is an Associate Professor at Utah Tech University.

Dr. Tharon W. Howard served for more than a decade as the graduate program director of the Master of Arts in Professional Communication program at Clemson University. He also helped create and teaches in the Rhetorics, Communication, and Information Design doctoral program. He is a recipient of the STC's J.R. Gould Award for Excellence in Teaching Technical Communication and the STC's Rainey Award for Excellence in Research. As Director of the Clemson University Usability Testing Facility, he conducts sponsored research aimed at improving and creating new software interfaces, online document designs, and information architectures for clients including Pearson Higher Education, IBM, NCR Corp., and AT&T. For his work promoting the importance of usability in both industry and technical communication, Dr. Howard was awarded the Usability Professionals Association's "Extraordinary Service Award." From 2016 to 2022, Howard was the Series Editor for the Routledge-ATTW Series on Technical and Professional Communication. He created Clemson's Center for Electronic and Digital Publishing; he also designed and directed Clemson's Multimedia Authoring Teaching and Research Facility where faculty and graduate

students develop interactive stand-alone multimodal productions and experiment with emerging instructional technologies, augmented reality devices, and interface designs. Howard is the author of *Design to Thrive: Creating Online Communities and Social Networks That Last*; *A Rhetoric of Electronic Communities*, co-author of *Visual Communication: A Writer's Guide*, and co-editor of *Electronic Networks: Crossing Boundaries and Creating Communities*. Howard received his doctoral degree in Rhetoric and Composition from Purdue University in 1992.

Please note that all authors contributed equally to this article; we simply chose to go in reverse alphabetical order.

Appendix A: Sample Persona from Tharon's Content Strategy Class

Major Transfer
Alison Miller

Bio

Allison started out at Clemson as a Chemical Engineering major because she felt pressure from her parents and older brothers to become a STEM major. Although she always felt more passionate about reading and other creative endeavors, she felt as though she would not be successful if she chose a non-STEM major. After realizing that chemical engineering was not the right choice for her, Allison decided to follow her passion and changed her major to english. She still has doubts about the future, but she knows that pursuing a degree in english was the right decision.

Demographics

Age
20

Family
Parents are married, two older brothers, middle class

Hometown
Livingston, NJ

Goals

- Be passionate about her major.
- Take classes that will help her get a job
- Get a job after college

Frustrations

- Justifying her major change to family
- Worrying about graduating on time
- Concerned about decrease in job opportunities

Motivations

Wants to graduate with a degree in English

Wants to gain valuable skills that are directly related to her career goals

Wants to use the skills she learned to get a job after graduation

Preferred Channels

Admissions Website

Clemson Engl. Website

External Research

Quote

"Even though I loved English in high school, I felt pressured to pursue a STEM career. I realized that I didn't have a passion for Chemistry, and I transferred into the English program."

Influences

Parents

Soph. Lit. Professors

College Advisors

Appendix B: Sample Journey Map from Tharon's Content Strategy Class

Declared Major's Journey Map	Consideration				Research							Decision		Confirmation	
	Discuss potential school choice(s) w/ parents	SAT/ACT	Decide on English major	Meet with HS Counselor	Web Search English programs	Arrives at Clemson English Homepage	Visits "About" page	Seeks help via email	Receives Response from Admissions	Visit/tour potential campus	Narrow list of Schools	Begin Application process	Receive acceptance packet	Attend Orientation	Register for Classes
Expectations	Parents will likely care most about the (1) cost, (2) safety, (3) credibility	These scores will help determine what major I choose	I want to stick with a major I feel confident in finishing	I'll get insight into local up-to-date information for university programs	I will be able to get right to the relevant info for prospective students	I should easily find up-to-date information	Maybe I'll be able to learn more about the application process. Maybe I'll be able to find prospective information here	If I speak with someone directly I will be able to learn more about the application process	Response comes quicker than expected	I should be able to find out exactly what I need now my list of choices to apply, and learn about the path through significantly	After visiting the campus, I'll be able to narrow down my list of choices moving forward	The application should be relatively straight forward	Expects to wait a few weeks	I'll love a chance to become better acquainted with the campus	I assume I'll have to learn how to manage my schedule for the first semester
Thinking	Nobody knows me better than my parents, so as they probably have a good idea on what schools I should study	If I match my degree interest to my skillset, I'll better my chances of graduating	Really enjoyed HS, I think I can do this for 4 years	I wonder if they'll have brochures that I can bring to my parents	I should be able to get a feel of the English program through their website; it should offer a glimpse of a day in the life of an English major	Where is the information for prospective students? I would like to see more photos; website lacks energy	Not much content here at all; no information regarding the application process	As big of an investment this is, they would think they would try to schedule a visit in-person. I guess I'll have to email for more help; make the process as transparent as possible	Thankfully admissions was helpful. The information was responsive for more on an English program	The tour guides and advisors were much more helpful than the website. The faculty and advisors made me feel welcome on my visit	I think Clemson is a better fit than college "B", even though Clemson doesn't offer quite as expansive an English program as the other colleges	The application process was relatively easy, for more simple than the other colleges	It seems like other applicants received their packet; very enthusiastic. Should mine take this long?	The campus environment is very open and welcoming, the tour guides one very enthusiastic	I'm surprised at how nice my schedule turned out, it was pretty easy to register for exactly what I needed
Feeling (Negative — Positive)	Pretty surprised parents support what ever path I choose, concerned more with me following passion	Content with my scores, unsure as to what schools to send them to	Nervous about stigma regarding English major	Intrigued; wish I had handouts or brochures that can bring home to my parents	Eager and hopeful that I will find valuable info online	A bit irritated that I cannot find relevant information	Overwhelmed by lack of information, wish I could speak to someone in person	Annoyed that I couldn't apply directly and that I was forced to resort to emailing for help	Relieved that I was able to reach someone that could point me in the right direction	Thankful to have gotten to speak to someone directly. Pleased with the campus environment	Nervous about the limitations of Clemson's English program, no campus environment? WPS or journalism?	Grateful to be almost done with process, eager to receive decision	Relieved that I can start focusing on my first semester	Reassured in my almost decision and excited to start planning my schedule	Thrilled to finally begin my journey towards graduation
Opportunity for Outreach	• Streamline SAT/ACT scores to be sent to Clemson for free • Maintain consistent communication with SC HS advisors with Tri-fold brochures, flyers, etc.				• Create Prospective Student tab • Improve Website aesthetic (update photos, promotional video, use more color, make it more welcoming) • Add an 'Apply Now' option directly to college website				• Revive the WPS program; leverage WPS to emphasize flexibility of English degree, and combat stigma of employability • Maintain strength of communication with Undergraduate Advisor • Regularly update website content, as well as Social Media content			• Implement more transparency regarding application decision (more productive) • Restructure orientation to be more informative, less 'showy'			

Appendix C: Citations for an Antiracist Framework on Language, Race, Hiring, and Pedagogy

Raciolinguistics

Alim, H. Samy, John R. Rickford, & Arnetha F. Ball, Eds. 2016. *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas About Race*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Flores, Nelson & Jonathan Rosa. 2015. "Undoing Appropriateness: Raciolinguistic Ideologies and Language Diversity in Education." *Harvard Educational Review* 85(2): 149–171.

Flowers, Katherine S. 2019. "Resisting and Rewriting English-Only Policies: Navigating Multilingual, Raciolinguistic, and Translingual Approaches to Language Advocacy." *Literacy in Composition Studies* 7(1). https://doi.org/10.21623/1.7.1.5

Language and Race

Delpit, Lisa & Dowdy, Joanne Kilgour, Eds. 2008. *The Skin That We Speak: Thoughts on Language and Culture in the Classroom*. New York: The New Press.

Gilyard, Keith. 1991. *Voices of the Self: A Study of Language Competence*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.

Grogger, Jeffrey. 2011. "Speech Patterns and Racial Wage Inequality." *The Journal of Human Resources* 46(1): 1–25. Retrieved from JSTOR.

Herbst, Philip H. 1997. *The Color of Words: An Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Ethnic Bias in the United States*. Boston, MA: Intercultural Press, Inc.

Lippi-Green, Rosina. 1997. "What We Talk About When We Talk About Ebonics: Why Definitions Matter." *The Black Scholar* 27(2): 7–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/00064246.1997.11430852

Language and Hiring

Stein, Sarah K., Amir Goldberg, & Sameer B. Srivastava. 2018. "Distinguishing Round from Square Pegs: Predicting Hiring Based on Pre-hire Language Use." *Stanford Business*. Retrieved October 22, 2018, from Semanticscholar.org website: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f0db/befd6692429df6d2a53b2 13d5a88f6dd8b80.pdf

Language, Race, and Pedagogy

Gilyard, Keith. 2013. *True to the Language Game: African American Discourse, Cultural Politics, and Pedagogy*. Oxfordshire: Taylor and Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203834619

Greenfield, Laura. 2011. "The 'Standard English' Fairy Tale: A Rhetorical Analysis of Racist Pedagogies and Commonplace Assumptions About Language Diversity." In *Writing Centers and the New Racism: A Call for Sustainable Dialogue and Change*, edited by Karen Rowan and Laura Greenfield, 33–60. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.emich.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.co m/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=392468&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Hinton, Kip Austin. 2016. "Call It What It Is: Monolingual Education in U.S. Schools." *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies* 13(1): 20–45. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2015.1124021

Horner, Bruce, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline Jones Royster, & John Trimbur, J. 2011. "Language Difference in Writing: Toward a Translingual Approach." *College English* 73(3): 303–321.

Horner, Bruce, Samantha NeCamp, & Christiane Donahue. 2011. "Toward a Multilingual Composition Scholarship: From English Only to a Translingual Norm." *College Composition and Communication* 63(2): 269–300.

Inoue, Asao B. 2015. *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: Teaching and Assessing Writing for a Socially Just Future*. Fort Collins, CO: WAC Clearinghouse.

Inoue, Asao B., & Mya Poe. 2012. *Race and Writing Assessment (Studies in Composition and Rhetoric).* Volume 7. New York: Peter Lang New York.

Matsuda, Paul Kei. 2006. "The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity in U.S. College Composition." *College English* 68(6): 637–651. https://doi.org/10.2307/25472180

Matsuda, Paul Kei, Christina Ortmeier-Hooper, & Xiaoye You, Eds. 2006. *The Politics of Second Language Writing: In Search of the Promised Land.* Anderson, SC: Parlor Press.

Perryman-Clark, Staci M. 2018. "Creating a United Front: A Writing Program Administrator's Institutional Investment in Language Rights for Composition Students." In *Academic and Professional Writing in an Age of Accountability*, edited by Shirley Wilson Logan and Wayne H. Slater, 168–184. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Piché, Gene L., Donald L. Rubin, Lona J. Turner, & Michael L. Michlin. 1978. "Teachers' Subjective Evaluations of Standard and Black Nonstandard English Compositions: A Study of Written Language and Attitudes." *Research in the Teaching of English* 12(2): 107–118.

Rubin, Donald L. & Melanie Williams-James. 1997. "The Impact of Writer Nationality on Mainstream Teachers' Judgments of Composition Quality." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 6(2): 139–154. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1060-3743(97)90031-X

Young, Morris. 2002. "Standard English and Student Bodies: Institutionalizing Race and Literacy in Hawai'i." *College English* 64(4): 405–431.

Young, Vershawn Ashanti. 2007. *Your Average Nigga: Performing Race, Literacy, and Masculinity.* Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.

Young, Vershawn Ashanti. 2009. "Nah, We Straight": An Argument Against Code Switching. *JAC* 29(1/2): 49–76.