Tech Comm Pedagogies: A Brief Bibliography

Technical and professional communication has a four-decade history of scholarship on pedagogies and classroom practices. Like any other discipline, this includes different intellectual movements and several significant turns in the field—the most recent being what scholars in this bibliography refer to as the "social justice turn." Any bibliography attempting "completeness" in this field would be of a prohibitive length, especially for new instructors.

What I have attempted to do in this bibliography, then, is provide you with starting points. Like good scholar-teachers, you all know to examine who these sources cite, and that an article's Works Cited page often holds valuable resources. I encourage you to explore beyond what is provided here! If you have any questions about sources in this bibliography, or about technical communication pedagogies more generally, please contact us in the PRC office.

Agboka, Godwin Y. and Natalia Matveeva. *Citizenship and Advocacy in Technical Communication: Scholarly and Pedagogical Perspectives*. Routledge, New York, 2018.
This collection contains "theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and teaching approaches to advocacy and citizenship" in the technical communication classroom. Divided into three sections, the book examines the "core competencies" required for students to do local and global advocacy and citizenship work; how to choose the right approaches to advocacy when working with a real client; and how to introduce advocacy techniques in the tech comm classroom. The book provides a broad overview of recent pedagogical scholarship related to advocacy projects in the classroom, and is centered on what educators call "problem-based learning," in which students pose and solve real problems related to experiences they research.

Bridgeford, Tracy, Karla Saari Kitalong, and Richard Selfe. *Innovative Approaches to Teaching Technical Communication*. Utah State University Press, Logan, UT, 2004.
This edited collection pulls together eighteen chapters, each one considering a different approach to technical communication pedagogy. The collection provides a great deal of variety in terms of how we might think about teaching these courses, and emphasizes how the field is "creative" (p. 1) in its approach to solving technical communication problems. The editors emphasize the ways in which the best tech comm pedagogies are "dynamic and flexible" (p. 7), "highly contextualized" (p. 4) to the circumstances in which instructors teach. Of special interest to our program is Chapter 14, which discusses the concept of "critical reflection" and offers suggestions about how to incorporate opportunities to practice key metacognitive skills during technical communication projects. The collection is 20 years old now, so it's important to take this into account when considering their pedagogical recommendations—you will need to adapt their suggestions to our available resources.

Cargile Cook, Kelly. "Layered Literacies: A Theoretical Frame for Composition Pedagogy."
    Technical Communication Quarterly, vol. 11, no. 1, 2002: 5-29.
Kelly Cargile Cook proposes the idea of "layered literacies" as a theoretical frame for teaching in the technical communication classroom. She argues for "diverse instruction in technical communication" because "technical communicators need to be multiliterate" (Cargile Cook 5). To do this, Cargile Cook proposes a framework for technical writing courses that bridges and mixes six different literacies: basic literacy (reading, writing, and document design); rhetorical literacy (understanding rhetorical situations, creating for specific clients and situations); social literacy (collaborative work); technological literacy (working knowledge of current technical communication technologies, researching how users work with technology); ethical literacy (professional standards and concern for all constituents); and critical literacy (considering how "ideological stances and power structures" seep into our technical communication work, and how we might act to help those most in need). The strength of this frame is its flexibility. In other words, instructors can choose which literacies to emphasize, when, and how in order to emphasize their interrelationship.

Haas, Angela M. "Race, Rhetoric and Technology: A Case Study of Decolonial Technical
    Communication Theory, Methodology, and Pedagogy." *Journal of Business and
    Technical Communication*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2012: 277-310.
This influential piece explores Haas' experience teaching a graduate-level technical communication course that focused specifically on issues of race. Haas' piece is an excellent example of how to think about incorporating race as a lens in technical communication pedagogy. It is also a good model for the thoughtful approach that is necessary to integrate other cultural studies lenses into technical communication. In particular, Haas emphasizes that it is important to use particular readings to scaffold critical discussions–exposing students to thoughtful writing on a topic and giving them the vocabulary to talk through complex, intersectional issues. Haas also emphasizes that transparency about our course design decisions is crucial, particularly in higher-level classes.

Haas, Angela M. and Michelle F. Eble. *Key Theoretical Frameworks: Teaching Technical
    Communication in the Twenty-First Century*. Utah State University Press, Logan, UT,
    2018.
This award-winning essay collection offers varied, theoretically robust approaches to teaching professional and technical communication. Each of the twelve chapters highlights a different pedagogical approach grounded in theory; writers explain their personal experiences using these approaches in the classroom and offer further suggestions. Of particular interest for the work we do in our program are: Chapter 2, "Validating the Consequences of a Social Justice Pedagogy: Explicit Values in Course-Based Grading Contracts" by Cruz Medina and Kenneth Walker; Chapter 3, "The University Required Accommodations Statement: What 'Accommodation' Teaches Technical Communication Students" by Barbi Smyser-Fauble; Chapter 5, "Indigenous Contexts, New Questions: Integrating Human Rights Perspectives in Technical Communication" by Godwin Y. Agboka; Chapter 6, "An Environmental Justice Paradigm for Technical Communication" by Donnie Johnson Sackey; and Chapter 10, "Using

Narratives to Foster Critical Thinking about Diversity and Social Justice" by Natasha N. Jones and Rebecca Walton.

Johnson-Eilola, Johndan and Stuart Selber. "Strange Days: Creating Flexible Pedagogies for Technical Communication." *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2021: 154-159.

Writing in 2021, Johndan Johnson-Eilola and Stuart Selber reflect on a year of pandemic teaching and extrapolate a pedagogical framework for professional and technical writing teachers to consider as they plan their courses. The key components of their framework are scaffolding and flexibility: building students' skills through careful consideration of the outcomes we wish to achieve, the course interactions that will help us achieve those outcomes, the relationships involved in these outcomes and interactions, and finally, the projects that we will compose to express these design needs. According to this design, instructors should begin with the outcomes of the course in mind, then consider what evidence will show that students have achieved those outcomes. Only then can teachers decide what type of activity will best suit the situation. We should design our project and lesson components keeping in mind the interactions that will facilitate our course outcomes and the relationships that we must cultivate in order to help every student participate ethically. This is a short read that provides a very useful framework for thinking through how to plan—I recommend it!

Palmeri, Jason. "Disability Studies, Cultural Analysis, and the Critical Practice of Technical Communication Pedagogy." *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2006: 49-65.

Palmeri's piece connects the discipline of disability studies with technical communication, a move he argues is particularly relevant given technical communication's tendency towards "normativization." Palmeri thinks through how teachers can bring accessible and participatory designs into their technical writing classrooms, so that students can practice both *critique* and *intervention*. He also suggests a key paradigm shift that thinks about *all* technology as assistive technology, not just the technology that people labeled "disabled" use. Aside from showing how disability studies in particular can inform technical and professional writing courses, Palmeri also gives a model for how to apply particular theoretical lenses to tech comm pedagogy, which may be instructive.

Sano-Franchini, Jennifer, André M. Jones, Priyanka Ganguly, Chloe J. Robertson, Luana J. Shafer, Marti Wagnon, Olayemi Awotayo, and Megan Bronson. "Slack, Social Justice, and Online Technical Communication Pedagogy." *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2023: 134-148.

In this piece, Jennifer Sano-Franchini writes with André Jones, Priya Ganguly, Chloe Robertson, Luana Shafer, Marti Wagnon, Olayemi Awotayo, and Megan Bronson about how their course used the platform Slack to enable "critical community building" during the pandemic (136). Building critical community involves thinking both about the pedagogical purposes of community and about accessibility for all members of the community. In particular, they write about the importance of identifying shared goals, then using the affordances of Slack as a platform to meet those goals. Though this piece explores using Slack specifically, the framework the course

members developed is useful for considering any type of course technology, broadly defined, and its applicability to your technical communication course. Their WARM framework involves identifying the workflow of the technology, setting standards for accountability among class members, accounting for the availability of representational tools within the technology, and whether there are multiple modes of expression.

Tham, Jason Chew Kit. "Engaging Design Thinking and Making in Technical and Professional Communication Pedagogy." *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2021: 392-409.

Jason Tham's recent article covers "maker-based learning" in technical and professional communication pedagogy (391). Tham asserts that part of our job as technical writing teachers is to cultivate "a network of innovators" (392). That is to say, training students in technical and professional communication means teaching them a flexible framework for approaching rhetoric and communications projects—teaching them how to think adaptively about audiences, contexts, modes, and media. Tham advocates approaching our pedagogy through design thinking, which he defines as "a solution-driven, human-centered, problem-solving methodology" (392). Tham writes that helping students learn how to structure and define a problem to solve is key to succeeding with this method. He discusses what the phases of such a process might look like through a five part iterative framework of empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. Particularly interesting is Tham's "design challenge" assignment, which can be well-adapted to projects in our courses.

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

This short book offers a clear overview of the social justice turn in technical communication scholarship accompanied by two useful frameworks for identifying and working to remedy oppression: the 3Ps and the 4Rs. In three chapters, Walton, Moore, and Jones lay out Positionality, Privilege, and Power as a socially just analytical framework for technical communication. Once inequalities in these areas are located, technical communicators can attempt to address them with the 4Rs: Recognize, Reveal, Reject, and Replace. I recommend this book as a concise summary of the social justice turn, which also provides a useful, adaptable framework for technical communicators and technical communication teachers alike.