Creating Assignments that Put Programmatic Inclusion and Diversity Work into Practice

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In Technical and Professional Communication (TPC), the service course is an "introductory [course] for nonmajors delivered primarily as a service to other departments and programs on campus" (Melonçon & England, 2011, p. 398), and the course is designed to prepare students to "adap[t] emergent knowledge to specific workplace or community-based contexts" (Scott, 2008, p. 382). The connection between TPC's service course and STEM is long established, with scholarship showing the historical relationship with engineering as early as the 19th century (Kynell, 2000). The first textbook specific to technical and scientific writing was written in 1911 by Samuel Earle and established the rising importance of TPC to technical and scientific fields (Connors, 1982; Cook, 2002). The service course is rooted in late 19th-century courses in writing for engineers (Kynell, 2000). Service courses have advanced since the early emphasis on basic elements of written communication to encompass more nuanced and rhetorical elements of technical and professional writing necessary to succeed in the STEM workplace, which includes issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). As a professional practice, TPC uses writing and communication to move audiences to action, and an emphasis on application and practice is fundamental to the work of TPC. This is not to say that TPC has been devoid of theory. Rather, it has been a field where theory moves into practice more smoothly than other humanistic endeavors (e.g., Melonçon &

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Schreiber, 2018). TPC is uniquely poised to move the conceptual imperative of justice (e.g., Agboka & Matveeva, 2018; Walton & Agboka, 2021; Walton et al., 2019) to actual practice throughout TPC programs that teach large numbers of STEM students every year. In light of ongoing conversations around justice in TPC, we asked: What happens in a large TPC service course program when it creates a programmatic inclusion vision and then sets out to enact it via diversity work?

We used the TPC service course as the site of our work because it provides "rich locations for program administrators, instructors, and researchers to ask and test central questions about TPC as a field and its role in shaping professional communication practices in both the workplace and the public sphere" (Schreiber et al., 2018a, p. 1). While scholars have taken an interest in the service course (e.g., Boettger, 2010; Read & Michaud, 2018; Schreiber et al., 2018b; Newmark & Bartolotta, 2021), TPC has little research that explicitly focuses on assignments that work toward programmatic inclusion. As noted by Rita Kumar and Brenda Refaei (2021), "STEM is often seen as a more challenging area in which to practice equity and inclusion due to the pragmatic nature of the content and the perceived inflexibility of the curriculum" (p. 113). The possible inflexibility of the curriculum in STEM fields makes required courses like the service course even more important to students' futures, and it makes the necessity for grounding TPC and writing curricula in ways where students can see the necessity of inclusive approaches.

In this chapter, we discuss a way to address this collection's emphasis on "actional steps faculty can enact to make their STEM writing spaces more inclusive and challenge assumptions about disciplinary writing" (see Introduction, this collection). We start by describing our theoretical framework that situates programmatic inclusion within STEM services courses. Next, we move to our educational context, followed by an analysis of student documents based on student learning outcomes (SLOs) and their connection to programmatic inclusion. We end with a discussion of what worked well for this assignment and what could be improved in order to facilitate better implementation of programmatic inclusion.

Theoretical Framework

In Sara Ahmed's groundbreaking book, *On being included* (2012), she writes a cautionary tale of what happens when diversity initiatives are not carried out in practice. Ahmed explained that "when diversity work becomes a matter of writing documents, it can participate in the separation of diversity work from institutional work" (p. 87), and those documents end up being "non-performative," meaning that they stand in place of saying the work needs to be done rather than doing the work. While "what is attended to can be thought of as what is valued" (p. 30), it

takes more than documentation because "we have to work on them to make them work" (p. 119). Writing program administrators are taking seriously how issues of "race, accessibility, and assessment" (Voss et al., 2021, p. 14) inform the development of inclusive writing programs and course designs. TPC programs are no exception (Agboka & Dorpenyo, 2021). But how do faculty and program administrators make them work?

From TPC scholarship, we highlight several recent attempts to operationalize the theory of social justice(s) at the course and program level. Chen Chen (2021) and Jennifer Bay (2022) explained the process of developing an undergraduate technical communication introductory course through a socially just pedagogical approach. Cruz Medina and Kenneth Walker (2018) proposed contract grading to disrupt the distributions of power within assessment practices and explained that this framework is "not about mainstreaming shared values" but "making course values explicit" (p. 52). The idea behind "making course values explicit" is also seen in the work of Jennifer Mallette and Amanda Hawks (2020). Using grading contracts, they explained that "instructors can detail what students can expect from instructors and what the instructor expects from students, which can help students see how assessment connects to course outcomes" (Mallette & Hawks, 2020, p. 4). This transparency among instructors and programs can aid in distributing power that would otherwise be hidden.

Connecting assessment to outcomes by aligning course and program outcomes not only provides transparency between student and instructor, but it also allows students to use their previous knowledge and grow over the term. Linda Driskill (2013) argued for the importance of making course outcomes explicit and that "whatever assessment is used must be related to the specific objectives, prior experiences, and long-range plans of the students" (p. 65). Robert Mislevy and Norbert Elliot (2020) discussed the positioning of students and instructors and explained that SLOs as explicit statements of values "advance opportunities to learn for all students" (p. 148). Writing explicit and useful SLOs enables TPC to move toward more equitable assessment practice because the outcomes clearly indicate how students will be assessed, thereby allowing for greater opportunity for all students (Griffith et al., 2024).

In a special issue that foregrounded accessibility, Sushil Oswal (2018) explained the necessity of access, broadly construed to include disabled students, but also as a reminder that focusing on accessibility creates a "rich rhetorical user experience for diverse populations" (Hitt, 2018, p. 62). Pushing this idea further, Lisa Melonçon (2018a) crafted an Ahmed-inspired theory of "orienting access" that asks program administrations and faculty to work toward creating inclusive and diverse learning spaces (p. 46), which expanded previous arguments that called for an "ideology of inclusion" (Oswal & Melonçon, 2017, p. 68). Instantiating Ahmed's concepts of phenomenology, "ideology of inclusion" prioritizes experiences of those who have endured unjust systems and institutions. Holding this ideology means that faculty

and administrators who want to perform programmatic diversity work must "acquire critical orientations to institutions in the process of coming up against them" (Ahmed, 2012, p.174). Putting diversity work into practice means articulating our intent for inclusion in the TPC service course program. Programmatic inclusion is an

> antiracist, intentional programmatic perspective that takes as its central aim access and equity by starting with non-harmful considerations for course and curriculum design; creating learning opportunities to achieve equitable outcomes for all students; teaching skills and knowledges that expand students' writing abilities and processes; demonstrating ways to use communication to advocate for or to affect strategic change. (Melonçon, 2024)

The definition does important work in codifying the work of social justice at the program level by making tacit knowledge explicit. Defining programmatic inclusion affords TPC program administrators and faculty to have a clear direction and approach to make their programs inclusive. Too often, the work of program administration is not explicitly codified and documented, but a hallmark of TPC has been in the field's effort to build, maintain, and sustain knowledge management practices for organizations through writing, communicating, and managing information. In this way, creating a definition of programmatic inclusion achieves the same goal that knowledge management practices do in many workplaces and organizations. The definition creates knowledge sharing, encourages interaction and reflection, demonstrates a process for all stakeholders, and makes internal knowledge external and explicit. Jennifer Mallette (this volume) adds to the goals of programmatic inclusion by arguing students need to "understand what they are being asked to do in the class and how it helps them make progress toward course goals" (this collection).

Programmatic inclusion grounds every decision made, including the creation of assignments. Ahmed (2012) forcefully reminds us that diversity work, what we are calling programmatic inclusion, has to be enacted through performance and an attention to the transformative work the policy reflects. Too often, attention is redirected to the policies themselves as evidence of a commitment to diversity, and those lacking in structure for implementation will only perpetuate the problems identified. In the next section, we describe one part of the program's commitment: an assignment that underscores the imperative for an inclusive approach to curricular design that also enacts the learning outcomes of the program.

Educational Context

Our data comes from an English department housed within an R1 university in the Southeast. The TPC service course program within the department serves some

~4,800 students a year in three courses—engineering, allied health sciences, and business. The courses are differentiated by the content brought in by students. For example, in the engineering version of the course, the readings, data, and other examples are drawn from engineering scenarios, and students are encouraged to use their content knowledge when completing assignments. Our focus in this chapter is on the STEM students in engineering and allied health sciences, which account for ~1,700 students a year. The service courses for engineering and allied health sciences majors are not general education courses, but they are required as part of the different major curricula. The rationale for requiring the service course is the emphasis on providing in-depth writing and communication instruction by experts in writing and communication. In limited conversations with stakeholders in engineering and in allied health science, we have been told that the courses are doing what they need them to do for the students. However, we remain interested in advancing conversations so that we can better align the goals with the course, which include issues of DEI enacted through performance and an attention to the transformative work the inclusivity reflects. The program uses a uniform curriculum with a common textbook and four required assignments. The document series, the first project of the term, asks students to engage in real and meaningful inclusivity work outside of the academy. This assignment presents a problem-based scenario (Melonçon, 2018b) that is similar to what they may encounter in the workplace. The students are asked to write three short documents for three different audiences. For most scenarios, students need to write to an external audience as well as to two different internal audiences. Students can choose from multiple scenarios and in each course, one of the available scenarios explicitly addresses an inclusivity problem.

Allowing students to choose from a selection helps students select a meaningful scenario that aligns with the STEM major and specialization. For example, problem-based scenarios in engineering may focus on a computer or civil engineering problem. The document series assignment represents what Michele Eodice and her collaborators (2016) refer to as meaningful writing assignments. In other words, to achieve learning objectives, assignments must do more than interest students; they must meaningfully engage students through their relevance to the students' lives. Meaningfulness is a crucial characteristic, especially as it relates to programmatic inclusion because for students to meaningfully engage, assignments must consider alternate perspectives and experiences. (See Appendix for assignment description, problem-based scenarios, and rubric.)

The TPC program has asked instructors to keep the following questions in mind throughout the term as a key part of their pedagogy:

- How does this document/deliverable affect existing workplace power dynamics, if at all?
- Who does this project leave out?

- How might the final deliverable address, maintain, or facilitate inequitable or unjust practices and power structures in organizations?

Thoughtful and meaningful assignment design presents instructors and administrators with the opportunity to enact program and course goals. Assignments, such as the document series, demonstrate an overall programmatic inclusion framework goal by helping students and instructors put TPC theory into practice.

In what follows, we present the results of our coding of student work that highlight ways that meaningful assignments can move students toward learning outcomes while demonstrating the integration of programmatic inclusion. Explaining the connections between assignments, outcomes, and programmatic inclusion exemplifies a move toward realizing the assignment as the nexus of all the forces in play in the service course program.

Looking at Student Documents Programmatically

The programmatic inclusion scenarios that include an emphasis on DEI were introduced into the document series assignment in fall 2020. Our analysis looks at student finals from spring 2021 and fall 2021 because it allowed instructors to teach the assignment once before we examined the results. The data presented in this section has been exempted and approved for use under University of South Florida Institutional Review Board, #002887.

Table 6.1 shows the total number of student documents for the semesters under examination. The total number of student samples is 1,695, with our focus on the 28 percent (n = 488) of students selecting the DEI-focused scenario. Table 6.1 highlights a difference between allied health science students and engineering students who selected the programmatic inclusion scenario. Less than 15 percent of the Engineering students selected the scenario, whereas a little over 40 percent of the allied health science students chose it.

Table 6.1: Percentage of Students Who Selected the Programmatic Inclusion Scenario (Total N = 1695; DEI n = 488)

Course	Spring 2021	Fall 2021
Allied Health Sciences	44% (n = 204)	41% (n = 189)
Communication for Engineers	11% (n = 47)	14% (n = 48)

To gain insight into student engagement, students were asked to provide a short, written comment to explain their scenario selection. One allied health science student commented, “Cultural and diverse issues are important to me and I found it interesting to fix internal issues such as this.” An engineering student

remarked, "It struck me the most as I read it. Discrimination is an extremely serious offense for any person or organization to be accused of and I wanted to tackle the most severe and toughest situation." The scenarios require STEM students enrolled in service courses to actively consider meaningful writing outside of the academy and its relevance in workplace settings. While workplace writing may seem far from classroom writing, TPC classroom projects promote connections to "the applicability or relevance of the projects" (Eodice et al., 2016, p. 82) that students may encounter on the job. In other words, the merging of a student's past experiences, acquired skills, and future goals resonates with workplace-centered rhetorical situations of service course writing and student experiences. Students were asked to create three correspondences based on the scenario they selected.

In order to better understand the students' uptake of DEI as it relates to the SLOs of the course, the student examples were coded based on four criteria: empathy, language awareness, power, and point of view (POV).

- Empathy
  - Did the student offer an apology when corresponding to the person who complained? Did the student show an empathic stance (an understanding that the issue was indeed a problem) toward the situation in the documents to their supervisors?
- Language awareness
  - Did the student incorporate appropriate language that shows an awareness of DEI (e.g., including words such as "diversity," "culture/cultural," "inclusion/inclusivity/inclusive," etc.)?
- Power
  - Did the student properly acknowledge the role of organizational power in addressing and solving the problem? For example, establishing the matter was still ongoing, not solved, and/or required stakeholder approval or agreement.
- POV
  - Did the student switch between writing as an individual and as a representative of the organization?

Empathy and language awareness align with the assignment's SLO that asks students to develop an appropriate writing style, while the power and POV align with the SLO for addressing purpose and audience. These four criteria, which became our coding schema, connect the programmatic inclusion framework to SLOs by asking students to work through problem-based scenarios similar to common workplace situations that require students to engage in actions, through writing, that advocate for change to more equitable practices in the workplace.

Beyond aligning with the SLOs, the criteria materialize Ahmed's (2012) diversity work. Empathy and language awareness intentionally engage students in communicating information in an anti-racist and inclusive nature, while power dynamics and POV move students toward practicing critical thinking and problem solving. These ideas connect the vision of programmatic inclusion to the practice of assignment design and SLOs—to engage in a programmatic inclusive framework by doing something about the problem instead of only theorizing. Programmatic inclusion is an extension of the type of action-oriented writing that characterizes TPC and ensures that STEM students have exposure to how change can be enacted within an organization, thereby tying coursework directly to their disciplines and future work. We opted to sample 60 student documents, which is a little more than 10 percent of the student work that focused on the DEI scenarios. Unlike writing analytic models that borrow from quantitative models for a confidence interval or a purely qualitative approach that uses a small sample, we followed our own experiences that suggested results would replicate. We initially coded 30 student samples, then did another 30. When the coding of the second set of 30 aligned with the first set, we felt that this number of student data would achieve a measure of transferability, which suggests that conclusions or processes can be used in other contexts, as well as credibility, which focuses on whether we are accurately describing the thing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

After a normalizing session where we coded a couple of student examples together, two of the researchers independently coded the samples using the coding scheme seen in Table 6.2. This simplicity of the coding scheme works well for program evaluation because it aligns with the rubrics used by students and faculty throughout the course to connect SLOs to student drafts and finals.

After both researchers had finished coding the sample independently, they met and discussed disagreement in the codes in order to reach a consensus on the sample (see Clegg et al., 2021; Smagorinsky, 2008). The discussions helped to ensure the codes were applied consistently across the data set; consistency was further verified by an additional researcher (Clegg et al., 2021). We should note that we coded the student sample based on a holistic interpretation of the entire assignment, which is comprised of three short documents. Table 6.3 displays the summary coding results of the STEM students, and Table 6.4 shows the summary of the coding broken down by the two student populations (allied health sciences and engineering).

Table 6.2: Coding Scheme for Analyzing Student Documents

Numerical Code	Definition of Code
1	No evidence or very little evidence of criteria in student writing
2	Some evidence of criteria in student writing; more than 1, but less than 3
3	Substantial and complex evidence of criteria in student writing

Table 6.3: Summary of Coding Schema (N = 60)

	Empathy	Language	Power	POV
Coded 1	17% (n = 10)	3% (n = 2)	17% (n = 10)	18% (n = 11)
Coded 2	22% (n = 13)	43% (n = 26)	82% (n = 49)	78% (n = 47)
Coded 3	62% (n = 37)	53% (n = 32)	2% (n = 1)	3% (n = 2)

Table 6.4: Summary of Coding Schema Split by Course (Allied Health n = 31; Eng n= 29)

	Empathy		Language		Power		POV	
	Health	Eng.	Health	Eng.	Health	Eng.	Health	Eng.
Coded 1	16% (n = 5)	17% (n = 5)	3% (n = 1)	3% (n = 1)	19% (n = 6)	14% (n = 4)	23% (n = 7)	14% (n = 4)
Coded 2	26% (n = 8)	17% (n = 5)	45% (n = 14)	41% (n = 12)	77% (n = 24)	86% (n = 25)	77% (n = 24)	79% (n = 23)
Coded 3	58% (n = 18)	66% (n = 19)	52% (n = 16)	55% (n = 16)	3% (n = 1)	0% (n = 0)	0% (n = 0)	7% (n = 2)

Table 6.4 shows the summary of the coding schema as it is divided per course. When looking closely at the number of students, there are no significant differences between the students in allied health science and engineering. This similarity suggests that once students engage with the material, they are engaging at equivalent levels, no matter their disciplinary background. This information is important for the learning outcomes of the assignment, as well as for framing the results and discussion of the student data.

Results of Coding Categories

As seen in the empathy category, 62 percent (n = 37) of students offered a full apology to their audience. The apology was a key marker to indicate that students understood that the audience deserved some empathy and goodwill. Students' ability to show empathy relates to the purpose and audience learning outcome, as well. A representative example of an apology (coded as a 3) comes from a student who wrote:

> Greetings Ms. Mudnal, I'm responding to your letter pertaining to Coughyfilters' policy on excessive piercings and/or tattoos. Thank you for reaching out to me about this issue and I sincerely apologize that we did not create an environment where you would feel comfortable discussing this policy during the process of your hire.

The student's apology acknowledged the need for empathy, and the student's clear and direct apology shows the student negotiated the dynamic of balancing the needs of the recipient while fulfilling the responsivity of organizational authority. Here is an example coded as a 2:

> As of January 20, 2021, a request was sent out to our account manager at Expedient HR Solution to [sic] have this rule 'excessive piercings and/or tattoos will not be allowed and could result in termination at any time' revised accordingly. We currently await this pending request and we here at Coughyfilters, LLC apologize if you felt any way disrespected by this rule.

While there was an apology issued, this example was coded a 2 because the apology is not forefronted, and the apology also lacks a clear awareness that the company was wrong or at fault. The two examples illustrate the complexity of the assignment but also show why it is important for TPC service courses to integrate assignments focused on inclusivity that ask students to consider an issue from multiple perspectives, including perspectives that indicate a problem exists.

As seen in the data, the majority of students also engaged with language awareness. Our sample shows that 43 percent (n = 26) of students engaged with language awareness concepts at the 2 level, while 53 percent (n = 32) engaged with it fully at the 3 level. Students were addressing and discussing issues around DEI, including aspects of culture, race, identity, and representation. A representative example coded as a 3 from an engineering student demonstrates this language awareness when they wrote: "We at Heartline pride ourselves on having a qualified and diverse staff. We need to ensure that we don't overlook any candidates due to their ethnicity or racial background." Words such as "diverse," "ethnicity," and "racial background" speak to the nature of how most students write away from traditional white, hegemonic standards. The choices students made in their responses to various audiences arguably point to students' awareness of DEI issues via their language choices in their writing. Alternatively, the following is an example coded as a 2:

> I am emailing you to assign a meeting today to discuss the dishonesty of the first round of interviews done by the HR department in the company and further steps to solve the issue. Attached to the email is the letter of the complaint I got from the manager of Diversity Hiring Help about the issue. We must meet as soon as possible as this affects Heartline's reputation hugely.

In this example, the student implicitly talks about diversity and inclusion, but it could be made more explicit with the use of clear language and intent. Our data provides a traceable throughline to show how programmatic inclusion guides SLOs, which in turn can be seen in student final products.

In the power category, 82 percent (n = 49) of students acknowledged issues of power at the coded level of 2, which shows they attempted to solve the problem by communicating with other stakeholders, including superiors, and offered some indication that the solution would take time and be ongoing. We also coded 17 percent (n =10) of student work at 1, while only a single student was coded as a 3 (see example in 'What Could Be Working Better' section). The student deliverables code at a 2 displayed an awareness of power roles within an organization and the need to acknowledge authority—both theirs and others—in their correspondence. Many students wrote similarly to the following example coded as a 2 from an allied health science student who stated that there was a flaw with the hiring practices in the handbook and the student notes there is a rule:

> that talks about excessive piercings and tattoos not being allowed on women; we don't necessarily have to get rid of this rule, but I will like for you to add an exception to the handbook that states that people with certain religious believes should get a pass.

By interrogating power structures and organization practices each time students produce a deliverable, students will learn the impact of their actions and the roles they can play in promoting DEI in their workplace. This stance is especially important for students because it assists in developing their ability to consider the concerns and perspectives of others, which is often seen as something separate in STEM education. Humanities-based approaches to writing challenge STEM students to engage with critical thinking and problem-solving in relation to empathy and power. In contrast, the following is a student example coded as a 1: "The purpose of this memo is to make you aware that the new hire Purnima Mundal, feels that the employee handbook's policy on excessive piercings should be revised to make an exception for cultural and religious observances." This example misses the SLO because it demands their supervisor do something that misses the nuance of the workplace power dynamic. The internal documents that students write as part of this assignment consistently failed to recognize organizational power dynamics. Giving students the opportunity to consider these sorts of power dynamics is key to the purpose and audience SLO, as well as helping them understand the difficulty of effecting change in the workplace.

As seen in the POV category, 78 percent (n = 47) of students switched to "we" or "our" at some point in at least one document, which resulted in their work being coded as 2. However, only two students in our sample wrote an entire document from their company's perspective by using "we" and "our" consistently. A representative example of the 78 percent comes from an allied health science student who wrote:

> I understand that during the first round of interviews, the HR department were in charge. Since I oversaw the second

> session of interviews, this leads me to believe that the HR department may have practiced biased hiring procedures. Due to this, I have sent a memo to the Board of Directors to see if we can investigate the HR department's hiring procedures to make sure that we are practicing equality during these hiring sessions.

With only one "we" as a representative of the company, this example suggests that students are attempting to write both individually and as part of the company in which the scenario requires them to participate; however, the persistent use of "I" indicates that students do not fully understand how they need to represent their organization in documents that are sent to audiences outside of their organization. In contrast, the following is a student sample coded as a 1:

> My name is [Student Name] and I am the office administrator of Coughyfilters, LLC. It has come to my attention that the Expedient HR Solutions Company are the makers of the employee Handbook at my company. According to your handbook, 'excessive piercings and/or tattoos will not be allowed and could result in termination at any time' and one of my employees have brought this specific line to my attention and informed me that they believe their tattoos and piercings are a representation of their cultural heritage.

In this example, there is no awareness of organizational authority and the necessity to shift POV. Our data showed partial acknowledgment of the organizational author with students switching between "I" and "we." This connects to DEI principles by acknowledging the role of the individual within the organization and the importance of responsibly negotiating the impact of the power an individual has when speaking as part of that organization. Shifts in POV signal engagement with critical thinking, problem-solving, and accountability because it asks students to consider their roles and how they are perceived by others in a critical and self-reflective manner. The shift in POV from "I" to "we/our" shows that students can recognize that sometimes they need to communicate as a representative of the organization in order to affect change.

Discussion of Student Data

From the student data, we have come to two broad discussion points that will be of interest to the interdisciplinary audience of this book: what is working well with this assignment and what could be working better.

What Is Working Well

From our analysis, several aspects of this assignment are working well: empathy and language awareness, power and POV, and positive engagement from the allied health sciences students.

Empathy and Language Awareness

As the data illustrates, students did not gain full competency in these areas, but they did show an awareness that, from a programmatic standpoint, should be taken as a positive. For example, students made an effort to apologize while also incorporating language choices that displayed an awareness of DEI concepts. The assignment moves social justice from an abstract idea to more concrete practices and asks students to engage with and respond to problems with diversity and inclusion that occur in business communication. Students addressed and discussed issues around DEI, including aspects of culture, race, identity, representation, and inclusion. The students' ability to navigate issues around DEI demonstrates a practical association from the assignment to workplace practices. When considering the SLO of writing style, our data provides a traceable throughline to show how our programmatic inclusion guides our learning outcomes, which in turn can be seen in student final products.

Power and POV

Our research allowed us to see that students in both engineering and allied health science are starting to negotiate issues of relative power dynamics and POV when positioned as a company employee in a realistic workplace setting. Issues of power represent that students acknowledge hierarchy and authority within organizations and their implications. While this assignment allows students to address inclusivity in the workplace, the service course overall should help students understand that their writing has consequences and effects change. In this case, students need to choose to uphold or dismantle current policies. When students are asked to consider how to challenge policies, they gain experience with the multiple layers and nuance of how communication, and its related power, works at the organizational level. Insights into power and its influence in upholding or dismantling inequalities is a key aspect of the SLO and goals of the assignment.

For example, issues cannot be resolved without input from superior stakeholders, and those stakeholders must be addressed appropriately based on their role within the organization. Practically, authority in these scenarios often means that the issue cannot be solved by the decisions of the author, and the student must address a superior to make a request for change. The following sample student document illustrates these moves, and it was the only document to do it this effectively and receive a code of 3:

> Dear Alan Critten
>
> It has come to my attention about the employee handbook that it may not be as inclusive as we have thought. One of our new hires, Mrs. Purnima Mudnal, mentioned about the section that involves women getting too many piercings and or tattoos. Mrs. Mudnal explained to me that the piercings she has is a part of her heritage and felt pressured to sign the book to keep her job. Mrs. Mundal brought this up in hopes that she will not be terminated from her job as it is stated in the handbook.
>
> Since we are a growing business, which will entitle more employees, which would mean that more individuals will have different forms of heritage. I propose that we rewrite the handbook to allow for more freedom of individuality and expression of one's culture provided that it will not get in the way of their work. If we show that we care for our employees and show that we hear them and respect them for their individuality, we will be able to maintain loyal employees. This will make them feel respected and included in the environment and less likely to quit.
>
> Please do consider this as soon as possible. We need to make the work environment as inclusive and less problematic for our employees as possible. Without them, we cannot do our business and grow at a rate that is much befitting our product. I am available by text or email. You can reply to this email if you wish or call me at (813)999-1111. Please do consider what I have suggested, the sooner we can resolve this the better it will be for us.
>
> Sincerely, John Doe

In this example, the student acknowledges the authority of the superior while foregrounding the importance of the situation. The student makes a request and then provides supporting reasons for enacting the request that align with organizational goals. The correspondence concludes with a request for a meeting, acknowledging the need for collaboration and negotiation. This student has appealed for change within the power structures inherent in the organization.

We do, however, concede that only one student received a 3 out of 3 in relation to power, as the majority of students did not acknowledge they could not solve the issue themselves, and many assumed that a positive outcome was a foregone conclusion.

Allied Health Science Student Engagement

Roughly 43 percent of the allied health science students chose to write about the programmatic inclusion scenario despite having three other scenarios as options.

Students who chose these scenarios explained their rationale: "I choose this scenario because it had to do with discrimination and that is a topic that I fully support to end" and "I choose this scenario because it is important." Both of these demonstrate a move between the scenario, a classroom activity, and DEI issues that exist in the world outside the classroom. Helping students make the connection between classroom assignments and situations they will encounter in the world illustrates the impact of programmatic inclusion as it leverages outcomes and assignments in the curriculum to make DEI concepts applied. This connection is aided by an exercise given to students prior to the selection of the document series scenario. In this exercise, students are presented with a scenario in which a co-worker has posted an offensive comment in a company Slack™ (business messaging) channel. Students are asked to write a post to their superiors explaining the situation and how they have handled it. This exercise introduces DEI issues in the workplace and prepares students to deal with the more complex issues they will address in the document series.

While students did not get to full competency of the SLOs with this assignment, the data underscore that the assignment is mostly working as intended. The data illustrates that there were more 2's and fewer 1's across all criteria of the student documents we analyzed (n = 60). This improvement suggests that students are understanding the goals of the assignment and are able to produce a series of documents that show engagement and at least a minimal competency with the concepts. The goal is for students to understand the application of writing as it relates to issues of inclusion following calls to promote inclusion in micro- and macro-social contexts (Riedner et al., in this volume). This is an important distinction and one that circles back to ensuring that what we do in our TPC courses will prepare students for the workplaces they will enter and to perform and engage in their civic lives. We acknowledge that things such as workplace documentation, policies, and the projects that TPC practitioners produce have often contributed to the inequity and exclusion that upholds racist systems. We take seriously our commitment to teach students skills they can use to create more equitable and inclusive organizations.

What Could Be Working Better

The purpose of this section is to highlight what is still not working to successfully reflect the goals of programmatic inclusion. We examine how engineering students were far less likely to engage in DEI scenarios. Students are starting to engage with issues of power and POV, and lastly, we explore how professional development for instructors could potentially help improve the assignment outcomes.

Engaging Engineering Students

The engineering students selected the programmatic inclusion scenario at lower rates than the allied health sciences students. An illustration of the disconnect

engineering students experience between DEI issues and their own work is evidenced by how often they select another document series scenario that has DEI overtones but does not foreground them. In this scenario, students are placed in the position of a project manager overseeing wetlands preservation. One of the residents, an important figure in her community, has complained about the noise and mess. In this case, students are working in a community in which a minority population is the majority and must address the concerns to the community's satisfaction. Students selected this scenario in greater numbers than the newer scenarios, highlighting DEI criteria, as it has more of the trappings of an engineering-driven scenario. These students reflect on their reasons for choosing this scenario: "[The wetlands preservation] scenario seemed the most straightforward" and "I chose [the wetlands preservation] scenario because I immediately knew what genres to use for each document." Helping these students to understand that DEI issues will arise in their jobs even when they may not immediately realize it and facilitating connections between the engineering roles they will occupy and the inevitability of white hegemonic values in their workplaces would help them see the relevance of diversity issues in their workplaces.

Aside from the Slack channel exercise discussed previously, the data suggests that engineering students are not seeing the relevance of DEI issues to their jobs. Even among those who selected the programmatic inclusion scenarios, engineering students are not making nuanced connections between their classroom tasks and the work world. Facilitating engagement with DEI issues could be done in the classroom by highlighting that every field and organization will confront issues of diversity and inclusion.

Power in Relation to Audience

We recognize that there are more ways that we can encourage this assignment to work more effectively. In part, this realization is derived from coding the document series assignment materials for the first time in a systematic way with a research team. For example, the fact that only one student received a 3 in the Power and POV categories suggests that this is one area of the assignment that could be improved. Students would benefit from understanding power dynamics and their abuse in organizations. While most students acknowledged that it was necessary to ask for permission to effect change, students often assumed that their superiors would agree without negotiation. In many correspondences, a positive outcome was a foregone conclusion. In preparing to complete the assignment, more in-class discussion of power dynamics and how they manifest in organizations is needed. Adding more direct instruction and engagement could facilitate a more nuanced and realistic approach to workplace communication as students consider how power impacts effect change.

POV as Representative of the Company

An additional area that could be working better is student development of a deeper understanding of the impacts of their personal role on their audience. The majority of students moved from speaking as an individual to a representative of the company—seen through the use of "our" and "we" in at least one document. The exposure to POV signals that students are beginning to understand the complexities of the organizational author and how speaking as the organization complexifies diversity issues.

In order to fully understand purpose and audience as part of this assignment, students should recognize how their role and the way it is signaled in a document impacts their audience and achieves their purpose. The shift in POV speaks to the purpose and audience learning outcome. Personal accountability and critical thought are fundamental to achieving this central outcome and are especially important in a DEI context, in which all aspects of power need to be interrogated.

Professional Development for Instructors

In addition to work in the classroom, which will benefit students, the TPC program used programmatic inclusion as a way to also help sensitize our instructors to issues of diversity and inclusion through professional development opportunities. Aligning with trends in the field, our program is staffed 95 percent by contingent faculty with no TPC background (Mechenbier et al., 2020), and the success of the most well-designed curriculum hinges on how it is taught. Research has shown that contingent faculty desire professional development (Wilson et al., 2020). Because of this, the implementation of programmatic inclusion encompasses how we use professional development to facilitate instructor strategies for approaching DEI principles in the classroom. All the elements of the document series assignment that need improvement could be addressed through professional development, specifically through discussion of power and POV issues, as well as by showing engineering students that DEI issues are relevant to their work. Addressing these issues requires an awareness of organizational culture and applied workplace knowledge.

DEI issues often revolve around issues of power, making the power and POV criteria especially relevant. Students need to understand that power should be acknowledged and integrated in order to attempt to effect change. These power issues are seen in the way that students address their superiors and in the way they adopt organizational authority in reference to their own personas. In professional development, instructors can be sensitized to the role of power in organizational hierarchies and examine the ways in which individuals reinforce or challenge authority through communication. Professional development can empower instructors to leverage the resources included in the curriculum, making DEI relevant and highlighting the necessity for responsibly negotiating DEI issues. Similar to issues of organizational

hierarchy, students need to know that DEI issues will arise in every workplace. For the engineering students, this means understanding that their jobs will encompass far more than technical problems. Professional development affords program administrators the opportunity to share disciplinary knowledge with instructors so that they can more effectively draw explicit connections between SLOs and issues of DEI.

Conclusion

We opened this chapter with the recognition that TPC is a field committed to theory-to-practice connections. Our TPC service course program's commitment to programmatic inclusion engenders a programmatic perspective that drives assignment design, pedagogy, and outcomes in ways that give students the opportunities to apply conceptual premises of inclusion, diversity, and equity in practice. Using programmatic inclusion as a consistent guide for programmatic decisions explicitly enacts Ahmed's (2012) theory of diversity work. Assignments that use problem-based scenarios guide discussions around inclusion and belonging and give students the opportunity to confront inequity in the workplace and respond by effecting change.

However, we acknowledge that there is still much work to do. In this case, we wanted students to use an assignment's SLOs as a way to move the conceptual ideals of equity and inclusion into practice. While our analysis found evidence of effective applications of DEI principles, we also found that students are not fully making connections between the importance of language and the documents needed in the workplace to change embedded and implicit issues of inequity.

Our goal has been to explicate an assignment that applies principles of DEI in a way that is replicable. Assignments such as the document series, created through the vision of programmatic inclusion, lead to using curricular elements such as outcomes and problem-based scenarios as opportunities for advancement toward learning opportunities that address equity and justice. The assignment outlined can be adapted in any service course or other writing courses, such as an introduction to TPC, editing, proposals or instructions, and capstone courses, which are all common courses in TPC degree programs. This example allows programs to put theory into practice by giving students experience with the types of diversity issues they will face in the workplace.

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Appendix: Document Series Project Description

This project asks students to consider how letters, memos, and emails function rhetorically in various scenarios.

Learning Objectives:

- Practice writing various forms of business correspondence and documents (i.e., email, letters, memos)
- Address purpose and audience in business correspondence
- Practice selecting the appropriate correspondence genre (i.e., email, letters, memos) for a specific rhetorical situation
- Develop a professional writing style, paying particular attention to concision (i.e., avoiding wordiness), paragraph construction, and tone

Allied Health Sciences Diversity Scenario:

You are the manager of the Graphics Department at Heartline, Inc., a medium-sized company with three offices and 300 employees that sells a mobile app that monitors customers' heart function. Your department has recently begun hiring to fill up to eight positions from entry-level to middle-manager. As a department manager, you have been sitting in on the second round of interviews. The first round of interviews, consisting of phone interviews, is solely completed by the HR department. The second round of interviews consists of Zoom or Teams online meetings with several members of your organization, including yourself, your boss, an employee specialized in the position, and someone from HR.

A few weeks into interviewing, you receive a letter from someone named Xaviare Roberts. She is connecting with you from a non-profit organization called Diversity Hiring Help. Ms. Roberts informs you that they have had more than a dozen qualified applicants apply to available positions, but not a single person has been contacted by your HR department. Ms. Roberts explains that each applicant has worked closely with a hiring consultant to perfect their resume and cover letter for your firm's specific job listing. Additionally, each applicant meets, or exceeds, the required qualifications in your online job posting. Yet, still, not a single person from her organization was contacted for an interview.

Ms. Roberts explains her company's mission is to help people of color find jobs. She suggests that none of her applicants were contacted because they do not possess Caucasian-sounding names.

While the first round of interviews is determined by HR, you know that Heartline values diversity in the workplace. As a manager, it is your responsibility to encourage equitable hiring practices. Ms. Roberts' allegation merits investigation and revision of hiring practices.

Deliverables

Based on the scenario above, your deliverables will be the following:

- Document to Ms. Roberts at Diversity Hiring Help
- Document to the Board of Directors at Heartline
- Document to Heartline's HR department

Communication for Engineers Diversity Scenario:

As the office administrator of Coughyfilters, LLC, a small mask-making company (less than 50 employees in one office), you are in charge of staffing and training. Your primary job is to oversee daily operations, new employee training, and on-going employee development. Your firm has gotten busier, which has required more hires in a short period of time, so it is imperative that all staff are trained and ready to begin work. Your boss, president and founder, Alan Critten, has approved additional hires for the increase in business. Your newest hire, Purnima Mudnal, who works in Marketing, started work at the beginning of the month.

Two weeks after Ms. Mudnal went through training, you receive a letter from Ms. Mudnal. She explains that, on her first day, she was asked to read through and sign the employee handbook. Upon reading the handbook, she was surprised to read that "excessive piercings and/or tattoos on women will not be allowed and could result in termination at any time." Ms. Mudnal states that her numerous ear and nose piercings are a cultural representation of her heritage. She felt pressured

to sign the handbook in order to keep the job, but she feels strongly that the handbook should be revised.

As you investigate the matter further, you discover that the handbook was written by an outside human-resources consulting firm called Expedient HR Solutions. At Expedient, you work with your assigned account manager, Ms. Linda Fleming.

In order to make revisions to the handbook, you will need to get approval from your boss, Mr. Critten. You also will need to communicate with Ms. Fleming to explain the need for revisions and what revisions are necessary. Finally, you will have to respond to Purnima Mudnal.

Deliverables

Based on the scenario above, your deliverables will be the following:

- Document to your boss, Mr. Critten
- Document to Linda Fleming at Expedient HR Solutions
- Document to Purnima Mudnal