

# Introduction

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Collaboration between academics and practitioners of technical and professional communication (TPC) came into existence because of the needs of businesses and government for a particular set of writing skills (Dicks, 2002). As such, the academic field of TPC historically has maintained a strong connection to workplace writing practices in both our pedagogy and research efforts. Our academic programs speak to this connection with a high value placed on internships, service learning, and pedagogy that emphasizes workplace skills such as multimedia writing and design. This connection is also clearly visible in the research presented in edited collections, single-authored books, and journal articles on workplace writing in the 1990s and early 2000s (e.g., Brumberger, 2007; Dias et al., 1999; Henry, 2000; Lentz, 2013; Leyden, 2008; Schneider & Andre, 2005; Spilka, 1993; Sullivan & Dautermann, 1996).

Despite this sustained scholarly engagement, however, the connection between academic research and workplace practices can be fraught. Challenges in making clear connections between academic and practitioners' work and working as collaborators include academic tenure requirements (i.e., the need for publishing in scholarly venues), difficulty with finding grant funding for projects, and opposing timelines and goals (Mirel & Spilka, 2002). Kirk St. Amant and Lisa Melonçon (2016) add the additional challenge of agreeing on what constitutes research and what questions should be asked. Some have viewed these challenges as so significant that the academic world and the world in which TPC is practiced have been characterized as different cultures (Boettger & Friess, 2016; Dicks, 2002).

In a section devoted to revising the relationships between industry and academic in Barbara Mirel and Rachel Spilka's 2002 edited collection, R. Stanley Dicks outlines the significant challenges he sees as getting in the way of technical communication practitioners and scholars successfully collaborating: 1) the perception of information, 2) writing styles, 3) views on collaboration, 4) assumptions about employment, 5) workload expectations, 6) power issues, 7) trust, 8) philosophical leanings, and 9) reward systems. Such differences have been seen by more recent scholars as so divided that Ryan K. Boettger and Erin Friess (2016) give a nod to the 1992 book *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus: The Classic Guide to Understanding the Opposite Sex*, using the planets to characterize the divide between TPC academia and workplace. Similar to earlier scholars, Boettger and Friess (2016) lay the blame on the publication requirements of academics and say that these fundamental needs for career advancement result in academics and

practitioners seeming to be from different planets. In their analysis of professional and academic publishing forums over a 20-year period, they found evidence that these “cultures” remain as siloed as ever despite efforts to create crossover in publication venues and publication content, such as the Practitioner Takeaways in *Technical Communication*, the journal that published Boettger and Friess’ study.

Perhaps because of these perceptions, much early workplace writing research was conducted as ethnography (e.g., Beaufort, 1999; Dautermann, 1997; Doheny-Farina, 1986; Hannah & Simeone, 2018; Henry, 2000; Katz, 1998; Smart, 2006; Winsor, 2003)—a methodology conducted in specific settings and focused on identity constructions of insiders and outsiders. As such, many of the studies focus on the identity of “newcomer” to the workplace and how they “assimilate” to a specific workplace culture. Representative of this work are Patrick Dias, Aviva Freedman, Peter Medway, and Anthony Par’s (1999) study of academic and professional workplace contexts, Jennie Dautermann’s (1997) *Writing at Good Hope: A Study of Negotiated Composition in a Community of Nurses*, and Jim Henry’s (2000) *Writing Workplace Cultures: An Archaeology of Professional Writing*. In Patrick Dias, Aviva Freedman, Peter Medway, and Anthony Par’s 1999 book *Worlds Apart: Acting and Writing in Academic and Workplace Contexts*, the authors report on an ethnographic seven-year multisite comparative study of writing in different university courses and matched workplaces. They note the difficulty of newcomers to workplace settings mainly due to ideological interests represented in the genres of these workplaces. Jim Henry’s (2000) *Writing Workplace Cultures: An Archaeology of Professional Writing*, also using an ethnographic approach, grew out of a graduate course he was teaching and was targeted to both teachers of TPC and “their workplace colleagues” (pp. xi-xii). His study involves 83 workplace ethnographies spanning a period of seven years. While positioned from a composition perspective, Henry himself spent time as a technical writer in the railroad industry. He uses the metaphor of archaeology to characterize his book: “an archaeology, in which researchers’ findings and researchers’ self-representations figure as so many shards to be scrutinized by readers according to their own theoretical frames and local contexts” (p. 11). Jennie Dautermann (1997) substitutes the notion of cultures with discourse communities in *Writing at Good Hope: A study of Negotiated Composition in a Community of Nurses*; nonetheless, she employs the ethnographic methods of participant observation and interviews. Drawing on Norman Denzin’s (1989) descriptive realism, she sees the writers in the setting she studies as making “attempts to allow the world being interpreted to interpret itself” (p. 25).

Despite the rich history of ethnographic workplace studies, Carl Herndl (1995) firmly states that workplace studies of TPC tended toward the descriptive rather than critical due largely to the research methods we borrowed from anthropology. The result of this methodology, he argues, is the reproduction of the culture’s dominant discourse such as that explored by Joanne Yates’ (1989) foundational text *Control through Communication: The Rise of System in American*

*Management*, which details how management control was established through internal communications in the railroad and manufacturing firms from the mid-1800s to early 1900s, and Dorothy A. Winsor's (2003) examination of power structures between engineers and technicians as represented in writing genres at an engineering center.

Since such critiques of workplace writing research methods, scholars have responded to Bernadette Longo's (2006) call to not limit themselves to working "within the walls of one organization" (p. 113). The response has resulted in workplace studies growing beyond ethnography to using a broad range of methods to study workplace writing and foster the relationships between academics and practitioners. Elisabeth Kramer-Simpson (2018), for example, uses an empirical study on the role of industry mentors and academic internship coordinators in teaching TPC students. In their work with gender and feminism in business, technical, and workplace writing studies, Kate White and colleagues (2016) provide a study based on a metaanalysis of journal issues. Others have undertaken a variety of methods to study workplace writing, as Melonçon and St.Amant (2019) outline.

But place still matters, and myself and the contributors in this volume make the argument that it matters now as much as it did when we largely studied workplace writing through ethnography. Place is important in two ways. First, it has implications for questions of identity that reach beyond the identities of insider or outsider. Second, place has become a critical factor in how we get work accomplished. I echo Claire Lauer and Eva Brumberger's (2019) call for redefining writing so that it works for a "responsive" workplace (p. 635), but here I extend it to workplace writing research, which has a primary goal to understand how groups of people create knowledge and make their worlds functional and coherent through written language. As such, the goal of this collection is to provide research into 21<sup>st</sup>-century workplaces in order to capture some of the evolutions that we've seen in the *workplace*, workplace writing, and writers' identities. To do so, the chapters in this collection address workplace writing largely through two questions: How do we fit in? How do we adapt? These questions have not been applied mutually exclusively because they are, of course, intertwined, but for the purposes of this volume, I approach the question of how we fit in as a question of identity and how our identity shifts as we adapt to changes in technology and changes in the spaces in which work gets done.

## ■ Identities and TPC

Identity issues in TPC are related to both the identity of the field and the identity of individuals working in the area and scholars in the discipline. The identity of TPC as a field can be a slippery concept. Rachel Spilka (2002) and James M. Dubinsky and Kristen Getchell (2021) have argued that this crisis of identity is related to our struggle to define the field in a uniform way. For

Dubinsky and Getchell (2021), this struggle is visible in the various names TPC faculty have used to describe their work:

Since the mid- to late-1980s, English department faculty who teach and research in what has come to be called professional communication (PC), professional and technical communication (PTC), or technical and PC (TPC) have struggled to define its disciplinary boundaries or adequately describe the fields that compose or exist within it. (p. 434)

Lisa Melonçon and Joanna Schreiber (2022), on the other hand, argue that “the field [TPC] is comprised of various components that must be reflected upon from time to time in order to maintain a sustainable and flexible identity” (p. 4). This ability to maintain a flexible identity is critical for workplaces and writing to be responsive.

TPC scholarship has often addressed the need for this flexibility and responsiveness in conversations about defining the role of the technical communicator in the workplace by relating the role to what the future of the field itself looks like (e.g., Albers, 2005; Giammona, 2004; Mehlenbacher, 2013; Pringle & Williams, 2005), the changing nature of our expertise (e.g., Carliner, 2001; Durack, 2003; Hayhoe, 2007; Mogilevsky, 1968), and our status (e.g., Slack et al., 1993; Spilka, 2002; Wilson & Wolford, 2017). Essays concerned with the future of TPC often have the explicitly stated goal of predicting the direction of the field in light of technological changes that impact the work of technical writing and communication. In Michael J. Albers’ introduction to his 2005 *Technical Communication* special issue entitled “The Future of Technical Communication,” for example, he states, “For this special issue, I was looking for forward-looking articles that consider how technology is changing the technical communication field and how those changes will affect the profession” (p. 267). Barbara Mirel and Rachel Spilka’s (2002) edited collection uses the connections and tensions between our academic field and practitioners to forecast the directions of technical communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Many of the technological changes have resulted in a broadening of our definition of what technical writing work is. Miles A. Kimball (2017) notes people generally think of instructions when thinking about what a technical communicator produces. George F. Hayhoe (2007) states that when technical communication first emerged as a profession in the 1940s, the job was solely defined as technical writing, writing that included producing documents such as proposals, and procedures. Over time, Hayhoe (2007) continues, technical communication became referred to as an “umbrella profession because it subsumes a great variety of tasks” (p. 281), including usability expert, content management specialist, and web designer. Hayhoe’s assessment is echoed by David Wright et al. (2011):

Over time, we have predicted that the future technical communicator needs to be skilled as writer, editor, graphic artist, software

specialist, usability specialist, multimedia developer, database manager, information designer, knowledge manager, programmer, corporate executive, and subject matter expert while being versed in a variety of disciplines, including health care, finance, electronics, international business, and foreign language. (pp. 447-448)

This explosion of roles and settings over time also created a need for new ways to talk about individual identities. Historically, our disciplinary identity crisis has fueled research with tenacious ties to ideas about knowledge, agency, and power around the question of who we are as individual writers. Leading such discussions of agency, power, and status is Jennifer Daryl Slack and colleagues' 1993 article "The Technical Communicator as Author: Meaning, Power, Authority," in which the authors link the role of technical communicators to the communication process itself. In the article, they outline three views of the communication process which suggest different "places" for the technical communicator: 1) the transmission view, 2) the translation view, and 3) the articulation view. They characterize these views as follows:

The transmission view can be delimited in terms of a concern, for the most part, with the possibilities and problems involved in message transmission, that is, in conveying meaning from one point to another. The second—what we will call the translation view of communication—can be understood in terms of a primary concern with the constitution of meaning in the interpretation and reinterpretation of messages. The third—what we will call the articulation view of communication—can be grasped as a concern principally with the ongoing struggle to articulate and rearticulate meaning." (Slack et al., 1993, p. 14)

Over a decade later, in the introduction to volume one of the landmark two-volume collection entitled *Power and Legitimacy in Technical Communication*, edited by Teresa Kynell-Hunt and Gerald J. Savage, Savage (2004) states that identity "goes beyond identifying characteristic skills and knowledge of the field" to

prioritizing kinds of knowledge and skills involves defining a set of professional values and beliefs, determining what constitutes knowledge, what methodologies are acceptable for the research that produces knowledge in the fields, and what ethical principles apply to the application of our knowledge. (p. 3)

Discussions about the role of technical communicators have also focused on agency and status. The title of Dorothy Winsor's (2003) book *Writing Power: Communication in an Engineering Center* clearly communicates our interests in power. Winsor addressed her underlying questions of how work gets done and

what orders work at complex organizations through an examination of how power, generic texts, and knowledge interact. Using genre theory, she says that some of the tools organizations use are genre texts, and she argues that the work order is a genre text, which the company she calls AgriCorp uses to get work done by allowing technicians and engineers to work together to realize organizational goals and produce knowledge.

Identity discussions have also focused on the connection to expertise (e.g., Andersen, 2014; Clark & Andersen, 2005; Conklin, 2007; Giammona, 2004; Hart-Davidson, 2013; Kynell-Hunt & Savage, 2003, 2004; Longo, 2000; Wilson & Wolford, 2017; Winsor, 2003). Some of this work is grounded in conversations about the state of research in the field generally (e.g., Albers, 2016; Blakeslee & Spilka, 2004; McNely et al., 2015; Melonçon & St.Amant, 2019; St.Amant & Melonçon, 2016) or professionalization of the field (e.g., Davis, 2004; Savage, 1999, 2004; Spilka, 2002). Most pertinent to this volume is the scholarship that discussed TPC identities as symbolic analysts, knowledge workers, discourse workers, and entrepreneurs. Johndan Johnson-Eilola (1996) initially brought Robert Reich's (1991) concept of the symbolic analyst to the forefront in TPC literature. He uses the role of symbolic analysts to relocate the value of technical communicators' work in the post-industrial age, arguing that symbolic analytic workers rely on skills in abstraction, experimentation, collaboration, and system thinking to work with information across a variety of disciplines and markets. Building on Reich, he elsewhere describes how symbolic analysts "tend to work online, either communicating with peers (they rarely have direct organizational supervision) or manipulating symbols" (Johnson-Eilola, 2005, p. 28).

Greg Wilson (2001) similarly argues for the use of the phrase "symbolic analysts":

Technical communicators who function as symbolic analysts may never fully escape the less glamorous aspects of technical communication, but they will be able to increase their value to the company, their job satisfaction, the efficiency of their company's technical communication, and their power to shift conceptual structures. They must, however, get out of the cubicle and articulate themselves as invaluable to the function of the company, explaining that the company's product is information, in that today the product is secondary to how people understand the product. (p. 84)

In describing networked writing practices, Stacey Pigg (2014) also asserts that many of those working in these environments fit Reich's (1991) definition of the "symbolic analyst" whose work involves creative and critical thinking as well as managing complex information. Other scholars have employed the nomenclature of knowledge worker or discourse worker. Theorizing knowledge work that occurs outside of traditional work/office spaces, Clay Spinuzzi et al. (2019) identify the people working in coworking spaces as "independent knowledge workers"

(p. 112). Pigg (2014) also uses this phrase (as well as the phrase “symbolic analyst”) to describe the distributed work of the informants in her study of social media and digital participatory writing environments. In their discussion of knowledge work, Greg Wilson and Rachel Wolford (2017) situate their re-theorizing of technical communicators as post-postmodern discourse workers through Jim Henry’s (2006) definition of discourse worker as well as Slack et al.’s (1993) technical communicator as author and Michael J. Salvo’s (2006) postmodern expert, an expert with the added responsibilities of “helping educate and prepare those interested and invested in the solution to be able to effectively engage dominant exercises of power” (p. 225). Wilson and Wolford’s proposed post-postmodern discourse workers would similarly understand their economic relationship to institutions in ways that would help them shape discourse within these institutions.

As economic structures and institutions became more fragmented and global in nature, the word “entrepreneur” gained cache as a descriptive term for TPC workers. In his introduction to the special issue of the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* called “Rhetoric of Entrepreneurship: Theories, Methodologies, and Practices”, Spinuzzi (2017) defines entrepreneurship as “roughly, the process of discovering and conceptualizing problems and then solving those problems with innovative solutions” (p. 276). In his own special issue introduction for the same journal, Steven Fraiberg (2021) argues that globalization has shifted toward an entrepreneurial economy, one made up of systems that “comprise a complex and ever shifting array of venture capitalists, start-up entrepreneurs, accelerators, coworking spaces, meetups, conferences, and a range of other actors, activities, events, and spaces” (p. 176). Brenton Faber and Johndan Johnson-Eilola (2002) similarly focus on the global marketplace and assert that to compete in a global marketplace, technical communicators must become knowledge producers rather than merely product producers. Other scholars have used the entrepreneur identity as a way to address specific issues in TPC. Ben Lauren and Stacey Pigg (2016), for example, offer an entrepreneurial model as a way to address the divide between, “describing how TC entrepreneurs access, learn, and disseminate relevant information” (p. 300), and Natasha N. Jones (2017) examines the rhetorical narratives of Black entrepreneurs in work that “legitimizes knowledge making beyond the dominant disciplinary domains” (p. 344).

## ■ How We Adapt: Places of Work

As Henry (2006) notes, the nature of the workplace has changed dramatically since the writing of Lee Odell and Dixie Goswami’s (1985) *Writing in Nonacademic Settings*. Broadly speaking, the greatest change in location is that from agricultural pursuits to “white-collar office workers” (Light, 1988, p. 20). In his characterization of 20<sup>th</sup>-century U.S. economy, Henry (2006) talks about the innovation of the assembly line, which allowed for mass production of goods, and Frederick W. Taylor’s (1911) scientific management principles, principles that had

impacts for workplace writing practices. Yates also says: “Systemic management as it evolved in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was built on an infrastructure of formal communication flows: impersonal policies, procedures, and processes, and orders flowed down the hierarchy” (1989, p. 20). In this introduction’s section on identities, this is clear, especially in the scholarship on distributed work—work that “splices together divergent work activities (separated by time, space, organizations, and objectives) and that enables the transformations of information and texts that characterize such work” (Spinuzzi, 2007, p. 265) and globalization.

By the 1950s, offices were designed for more flexibility, but workers still sat in rows of desks, which were replaced in the 1960s with the “action office,” which “included a variety of work settings for staff, increased freedom of movement, and greater privacy when working with the ability of workers to personalize their space” (Marhamat, 2021, n.p.). The 1970s continued the open-office trend until the cubicle era of the 1980s. As workers became more mobile in the 1990s and the cell phone became ubiquitous, workers began to have flexibility in terms of remote work. This flexibility led to the rise of open plans, lounges, cafés, and other co-working spaces, and employees were no longer tied to their desks beginning in 2000 (Marhamat, 2021).

This trend continued in the next decades, but the preference for remote work solidified under public health measures taken as the COVID-19 pandemic began. As my state (Ohio) went into lockdown due to COVID in March 2020, I Zoomed with coworkers and colleagues who were working in laundry rooms, cars, and dining rooms. I watched the random cat cross a keyboard, heard a dog bark at a mail truck (usually mine), and witnessed kids in all stages of dress in people’s backgrounds. Eventually, we became very good at trying to make these spaces “look” professional, using Zoom virtual backgrounds of bookcases filled with volumes of texts and fake office spaces. In TPC, Jennifer Bay and Patricia Sullivan (2021) specifically look at what the shift to remote work means in terms of researching what home-based workplace writing looks like and argue “the collapse of traditional work–life boundaries might allow for a renaissance of feminist research methods in technical and professional communication” (p. 168).

The way we worked during lockdown and the more long-lasting changes these practices have created attest to the fact that the only real constant is change, and this adage applies to workplace writing practices, definitions of workplace, and, as a result, the way we research and think about our field. This experience reinforced my sense of how important and fluid our definitions for writing workplaces can be in TPC. As such, the very nature of TPC work, both as a discipline and a profession, requires constant re-engagement. Our work experiences during the pandemic and these reflections on them highlight the need to continually engage with, question, and redefine what the work of technical communication is and where it is done so that our pedagogy is relevant and our research is valuable to ourselves, our students, and technical communication practitioners.



## ■ The Chapters

This volume takes up the call to pay attention to *workplace* for the activities of TPC practitioners, acknowledging that the work of these individuals “requires activities such as locating and constructing rhetorical spaces (virtual and physical) to support multiple writing tasks” (Pigg, 2014, p. 69). The chapters in this collection address TPC identities, what places or spaces qualify as writing workplaces, and how they impact identities and ideas about expertise.

Jeremy Rosselot-Merritt and Janel Bloch’s chapter, “Common Thread, Varied Focus: Defining *Workplace* in Technical and Professional Communication,” sets up the work in the later chapters through an analysis of a large sample of published workplace-oriented TPC research from 1980–2019. In this chapter, the authors provide an extended snapshot into how the idea of *workplace* has evolved over time in TPC. Similar to Lisa Melonçon and Joanna Schreiber (2022), the authors establish that, while TPC has historically been tied to engineering, computer science, and scientific fields, the discipline now includes a range of industries, organizations, sites, and locations. Rosselot-Merritt and Bloch acknowledge that one of the challenges of such a diverse field is the risk of diluting its collective identity in ways that might lead to missed opportunities to expand TPC’s practical application and prospects for scholarly research. Their meta-analysis of 150 peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and full-length books draws attention to several challenges for TPC relating to “construct conceptualization, research sustainability, professional identity, and the relationship between academic study and professional practice.”

In “Emphasizing Place in Workplace Research,” Lisa Melonçon argues that TPC work is no longer fixed in terms of place. Grounding her argument in work in cultural geography and rhetorical theory, she offers the concepts of geo-rhetoric and micro-contexts to focus specifically on the material impacts of place on workplace writing to give it a *geography*. The chapter then moves to put these concepts into practice by drawing on data from a two-year ethnographic study that examined the knowledge management and writing practices of a mid-size organization in the Midwest.

Lance Cummings’ chapter, “Understanding 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Workplace Writing Communities: An Ethnomethodological Study of *Phatic* Communication in Large Corporations,” focuses on the nature of several hierarchical shifts of workplace writing to accommodate work that is fast-paced and constantly in flux. Cummings reports on an ethnomethodological study to argue that this shift has created deeper writing communities and networks and that understanding how writers create and maintain networks, both in-house and abroad, is crucial to our understanding of 21<sup>st</sup>-century workplace writing and how to prepare students for the human side of technical communication.

Of course, workplace writing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century goes beyond words, as Brian Fitzpatrick and Jessica McCaughey’s chapter on freelancers suggests. The authors

re-envision the idea of “newcomer” through Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger’s (1991) *Community of Practice* by examining the writing demands placed on freelance and gig workers through two case studies drawn from a larger pool of interviews with full-time freelancers: an illustrator and a television commercial director. Their research questions center around what differentiates the writing and communication of these workers from that of professionals in more traditional full-time employment situations, as well as how these workers navigate the changing contexts of “workplace” and “workplace writing.”

Focusing on TPC identities, in “Writer Identity, Literacy, and Collaboration: 20 Technical Communication Leaders in 2020,” Ann Hill Duin and Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch examine how the TPC workplace has evolved and the literacies TPC practitioners need through interviews with 20 TPC industry leaders—members of their program’s Technical Communication Advisory Board. Their results note a growing importance of writer identity, sociotechnological literacies, and collaboration. Because their study was conducted during the COVID-19 lockdown, their interviewees also had the opportunity to address how TPC practitioners might best prepare for remote work, strategic roles, and building of the profession.

Mark A. Hannah and Chris Lam’s chapter also adds to the TPC scholarship on collaboration (e.g., Debs, 2002; Henry, 2006; Kohn, 2015; Spinuzzi, 2012; Walton et al., 2019). In their chapter, “Melding Expertise: Developing a Relational, Competency Model for Performing Work in Complex Workplace Collaborations,” Hannah and Lam use a case study of a TPC practitioner working on a multi-expertise workplace team of geoscientists to make observations about what kinds of skills, competencies, and training TPC practitioners may need in highly technical, multi-expertise workplace teams. They offer a “model of ‘functional flexibility’ and illustrate its use in an organizational context that involves the features of contemporary workplace contexts.”

The final chapter addresses identity, place, and product through a study on workplace writing skills. In “Entry-Level Professional Communicators in the Workplace: What Job Ads Tell Us,” Kelli Cargile Cook, Bethany Pitchford, and Joni Litsey report on a content analysis of job ads to extend the work of Eva Brumberger and Claire Lauer (2015), Sally Henschel and Lisa Melonçon (2014), and Melonçon and Henschel (2013) and provide insights into the professional communication workplace and illuminate the expectations these employers have for professional communicators.

## Thoughts on Future Directions of Workplace Writing Research

The work in this collection is designed to contribute to the scholarship of workplace writing studies by capturing some of the evolutions that we have seen in workplace writing in the last decades. As technologies and work spaces continue

to change and the TPC practitioner continues to need to adapt, there are many opportunities for more of this research. Although ethnographic studies are more difficult to conduct in contemporary workplaces due largely to time constraints, studies that use contextual inquiry could be a useful method. Spinuzzi (2000) defined contextual inquiry (CI) as a field method oriented to design and “dedicated to divining the underlying work structure of a given workplace and standardizing the work structure in ways that increase the system’s efficiency and the individual’s control and happiness” (p. 424). He continued that CI was designed to promote radical change “because it involves manipulating the underlying work structure rather than the artifact” (p. 425).

Other types of longitudinal studies, such as the one Jeremy Rosselot-Merritt and Janel Bloch offer in this volume, would also be useful. For example, many researchers examine the question of how to best prepare our students for the workplace through some type of skills analysis, such as the one Kelli Cargile Cook, Bethany Pitchford, and Joni Litsey offer in this volume, and work published about visual and design skills TPC practitioners use in the workplace (e.g., Brumberger, 2007; Carliner, 2001). A longitudinal study or one that provides a historical perspective could be of great value to TPC scholars and program administrators alike. As a way to continue to try to better link workplace practices to academic study, more research published by teams of academics and practitioners would also be of value.

All of this is to say that our work in workplace writing research is far from done.

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