Call for Papers for Special Issue of
*Technical Communication Quarterly*

*Professional Development for Online Technical Communication Educators: Continuing the Conversation*

Special Edition Editors: Beth L. Hewett and Tiffany Bourelle

**Description:** With distance education continuing to grow at a rapid pace, composition scholars have increasingly studied and reported on the efficacy of online courses. These studies vary in content, from focusing on student-perceived success in the online classroom (Boyd, 2008) to measuring the comparability of online courses to their face-to-face (f2f) or onsite counterparts (Arbaugh, 2000; Collins & Pascarella, 2003; Neuhauser, 2002; Sapp & Simon, 2005). In this special issue, we extend the conversation by turning the focus to technical communication. Scholars of technical communication have reported on pedagogy, administration, and development of online technical communication classes and programs. In fact, in 2007, Beth L. Hewett and Christa Ehmann dedicated a special issue of *Technical Communication Quarterly* to the teaching of online technical communication. Since then, more programs across the country have added online degrees or have begun to teach aspects of their technical communication degrees in fully online and hybrid settings. Cook et al. (2013) reported that only 22 U.S. colleges and universities offered online degree programs in 2005; however, this number has more than doubled in size, with the authors reporting a total of 56 institutions offering programs or courses online. With this rapid growth, there remains a need to readdress online technical communication. Specifically, the field needs to include more conversations regarding training and successful pedagogical practices.

For this special issue of *Technical Communication Quarterly*, we seek to answer the following types of questions:

◊ What types of educational or professional development opportunities are available at various institutions? How do these impact instructors’ teaching practices? How can they be adapted from the local setting to be useful at a wider variety of institutional settings?

◊ When professional development has not been available, what types of online teaching or educator-focused training practices have worked for educators? How could these be improved on or otherwise changed by focused professional development in this particular discipline?

◊ What are the challenges of implementing both onsite and online training for online educators in technical communication?

◊ What issues arise when teaching technical communication online that are unique to the field of technical communication and our students?

◊ In what ways, if any at all, are the OWI Principles developed and articulated by the Conference on College Composition Communication (CCCC) Committee for Effective Practices in Online Writing Instruction (OWI Committee) applicable to
training and otherwise preparing educators for teaching technical communication in online settings?

Possible Topics: We welcome article proposals that will help practitioners, teachers, and researchers to understand training and development principles specifically geared toward the delivery and conduct of online educational programs; issues of communication among administrators, online trainers, and online trainees; technologies and organizational dynamics as related to preparing for online education at various levels; and research and materials that educators have found successful when teaching students of technical communication. This issue will offer new insights into the training and teaching of online technical communication classes, including what has worked for instructors, what has not, and lessons learned. The issue will also provide administrators with scholarship that can guide them in their online training efforts. We envision some of the articles within the special issue to offer practical, “how-to” guides for instructors where training is not available, preferably framed in overarching principles and more global literature that envelops broader questions beyond one localized institutional setting. We hope to provide administrators and instructors with both theoretical and practical frameworks for which to structure individual online classes or entire online technical communication programs. As online education in technical communication continues to change and evolve, it is important to offer educators substantive professional development framed in current models and practices that they can adapt and adopt at their own institutions.

Topics might include (but are not limited to):

◊ What are the social, economic, legal, and organizational consequences of addressing or ignoring training and development for online educational settings, particularly those focused on technical communication?
◊ What practical concerns arise within organizational structures when the training and development activities occur solely—or mostly—through online and/or distance-based educational technologies?
◊ To what extent and in what ways can administrators develop and offer training practices for online education to instructors of technical communication?
◊ How can technical communication educators best prepare themselves and others for the challenges involved in online education?
◊ What are challenges and approaches to teaching online unique to technical communication?
◊ What does empirical evidence reveal about teaching or preparing to teach technical communication online?
◊ In what ways, if at all, do new technologies influence how educators teach technical communication online? In what ways does new technology impact the training of online educators?
◊ What specific support and experiences do learners who are new to an online environment need for their development, particularly with reference to technical communication curricula?
**Proposal Length:** 500 words

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