#networkedglobe: Making the Connection between Social Media and Intercultural Technical Communication

Laura Anne Ewing
University of South Florida, lhennessey@mail.usf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd

Part of the Higher Education and Teaching Commons, Other Communication Commons, and the Rhetoric Commons

Scholar Commons Citation
Ewing, Laura Anne, "#networkedglobe: Making the Connection between Social Media and Intercultural Technical Communication" (2015). Graduate Theses and Dissertations.
http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/5945

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.
Dedication
For Joe, because the greatest challenges cannot be accomplished without unwavering support, inspiration, and a beer.

For Tom, you are my motivation for all things. May you never stop exploring the world.

わたしは、あなたを愛しています。
Acknowledgments

This project could not have come to fruition without a team of support that stretched 7,000 miles. Dr. Meredith Johnson, thank you for countless hours of advice. Your flexibility with 13+ hour time differences and Skype calls was invaluable, and your pep talks helped me keep things in perspective. Dr. Santos, your insight at the early stages helped mold this project into what it ultimately became. Dr. Staggers, I am thankful for the time and energy you brought to this process. Dr. Nate Johnson, your research advice frequently steered me back in the right direction. Megan McIntyre and Sarah Beth Hopton, I will forever value our conversations during this process. Your feedback and intuition is never short of perfection. Kate Pantelides and Johanna Phelps-Hillen, thank you for the resources and assistance you never hesitated to provide. I thank my family, and those who became my family at Yokota and Kadena Air Bases as we learned to navigate life abroad together. Yumi Shimodate, the insight into Japanese culture offered over tea at your kitchen table were priceless. Hajime-san, our work together showed me the importance of this project to both your students and mine. Finally, I’d like to take a moment and thank the people of Japan. You welcomed my family into your country and your homes. I am forever in awe of your culture, and I there are no words to speak my appreciation for you sharing it with us.
# Table of Contents

List of Tables....................................................................................................................... iv

List of Figures.........................................................................................................................vi

Abstract ................................................................................................................................vii

Chapter 1: Social Media, ITC, and the Technical Communicator ........................................ 1
  Introduction........................................................................................................................... 1
  Key Concepts and Terms ................................................................................................. 11
    Rhetorical exigency........................................................................................................ 12
    High-context vs low-context cultures ......................................................................... 14
    Intercultural vs cross-cultural communication .......................................................... 17
  Ethics................................................................................................................................. 18
  Defining and Solving the Problem .................................................................................. 20
  Research questions.......................................................................................................... 21
  Researcher position.......................................................................................................... 21
  Methodological approach ............................................................................................... 23
  Defining thematic analysis ............................................................................................. 23
  Defining content analysis ............................................................................................... 26
  Compatibility of thematic and content analysis ............................................................ 28
  Selecting research sites .................................................................................................... 29
  Data collection .................................................................................................................. 31
  Chapter Overviews........................................................................................................... 32
  Facing the Shift in Technical Communication Practice ................................................ 36

Chapter 2: Making the Connection between Social Media Writing and
International Technical Communication.............................................................................. 37
  High- and Low-Context Cultures in the Age of Social Media ....................................... 40
  Thematic Analysis of Technical Communication Syllabi ............................................... 42
  Research site ..................................................................................................................... 43
  Thematic analysis............................................................................................................... 45
  Categorizing technical communication topics and applying the engagement scale...... 49
How the Syllabi Engage Students with Social Media ITC ........................................54
  Social media engagement .................................................................54
  ITC engagement ...........................................................................58
  Social media and ITC engagement in relation to one another ........60
Connecting Social Media and ITC in the Classroom ..................................62
  Connecting the classroom to the workplace ...................................62
  Building curriculum to reflect thematic findings ...........................64
Limitations and Future Direction .........................................................67

Chapter 3: Intercultural Social Media Use: A Study in Japanese Professional
  Social Media ..................................................................................70
  Social Media at Work .....................................................................72
  Identity and “Saving Face” ..............................................................75
  Content Analysis of the Online Presence of Japanese Businesses .....82
    Site selection ...............................................................................82
    Content analysis .........................................................................84
    Categorizing and applying the engagement scale .......................88
  Japanese vs American Trends in Social Media .............................93
    Where does this lead? ..................................................................96
  Preparing Writing Students for Work in Global Work ..................98
    Creating student awareness .........................................................101

Chapter 4: Blended Online Service-Learning and its Challenges in an
  Intercultural Environment ............................................................104
  Global Service-Learning ................................................................106
    A blended online approach .........................................................109
    Information behavior ..................................................................112
    Layering literacies ......................................................................114
  Challenges of Service-Learning ...................................................116
    Challenge 1: Situating the program in the context of existing
      technical communication degree programs ...............................116
      Engagement and objectives ......................................................118
    Challenge 2: Finding partnerships .............................................123
    Challenge 3: Maintaining partner relationships ........................127
  The Strategy for an International Service-Learning Program ........132

Chapter 5: A Program for Teaching Social Media ITC ...........................133
  Developing Student Learning Outcomes .......................................135
  Implementing Curriculum Objectives ..........................................137
  Meeting Outcomes and objectives Through Deliverables ............140
List of Tables

Table 2.1-Themed degrees of engagement ................................................................. 466
Table 2.2-Social Media Engagements ranked and categorized ............................... 555
Table 2.3-ITC Engagements ranked and categorized ............................................. 588
Table 2.4-All Engagements ranked and categorized ............................................. 60
Table 3.1-Content references and degrees of engagement via social media ......... 87
Table 3.2-Social Media Use .................................................................................. 89
Table 3.3-Components used when engaging through social media ..................... 91
Table 3.4-Social Media Engagements by Japanese companies ranked and categorized ........................................................................................................... 93
Table 4.1-Curriculum Objectives ......................................................................... 119
Table 4.2-Heuristic for Finding an Organizational Partner in Japan ..................... 1266
Table 4.3-Heuristic for Evaluating Possible Japanese Organizational Partners ......................................................................................................................... 1277
Table 5.1-Student Learning Outcomes .................................................................. 1366
Table 5.2-Itemization of Objectives by Deliverable ............................................. 1388
Table 5.3-Suggested Plan for Meeting Objectives with Varying Program Lengths .......................................................................................................................... 139
Table 5.4-Deliverable 1 Rubric .............................................................................. 1499
Table 5.5  Deliverable 2 Rubric ................................................................. 1555
Table 5.6  Deliverable 3 Rubric ................................................................. 160
Table 5.7  Deliverable 4 Rubric ................................................................. 164
Table 5.8  Deliverable 5 Rubric ................................................................. 170
Table 5.9  Deliverable 6 Rubric ................................................................. 174
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.1</td>
<td>Coca-Cola Japan Twitter Account</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.2</td>
<td>Otsuka Official Facebook</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.4</td>
<td>Hakasui-Sha Official Facebook Page</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.5</td>
<td>Yoga Swell official Facebook Page</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>2012 figures listing the number of active businesses in Japan.</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.2</td>
<td>TEPCO’s Official Twitter Account</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.3</td>
<td>TEPCO’s Twitter Account dedicated to the Fukushima Daiichi Clean-up.</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.4</td>
<td>Sony Japan Facebook Page</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.5</td>
<td>Chubu Electric Company Twitter Account</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.1</td>
<td>Deliverable 1 Worksheet</td>
<td>1477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.2</td>
<td>Deliverable 2 Assignment Sheet</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.3</td>
<td>Deliverable 3 Worksheet</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.4</td>
<td>Deliverable 4 Assignment Sheet</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.5</td>
<td>Deliverable 5 Assignment Sheet</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.6</td>
<td>Deliverable 6 Assignment Sheet</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

Preparing students of technical communication in the twenty-first century means training them to rhetorically utilize a wide variety of online tools. Technical communicators are now required to employ social media applications on a daily basis to communicate with clients, consumers, colleagues, and other organizations. These online modes have also opened the door to global communication wider and continue to present opportunities and challenges to technical communicators worldwide. Using Japan as a model, this dissertation sought to demonstrate a rhetorical exigency for teaching intercultural social media communication strategies to future technical communicators in the United States. The goal of this dissertation was to ultimately answer the research question: How can American technical communication programs prepare students to act as social media experts in Japanese contexts?

To do this, I first conducted a thematic analysis of American technical communication syllabi and found that few engage intercultural social media in a meaningful way in the classroom. This was followed by a content analysis of the online social media presence of Japanese businesses, which demonstrated that evidence exists for the rhetorical exigency of intercultural social media communication in Japan. Calling on these analyses, this dissertation contributes a blended online service-learning
curriculum for teaching intercultural social media in the technical communication classroom. The program described in this project can provide students with the opportunity to interact with Japanese professionals by building a social media presence for a foreign organization, receiving professional feedback on their performance, and adapting their skills as technical communicators for intercultural situations.
Chapter 1: Social Media, ITC, and the Technical Communicator

Introduction

As the countries of a globalized world become increasingly interconnected, companies now compete for customers across international borders. Social media are one of the primary tools for many companies to communicate with customers, both in the home country and throughout the world (Lau, 2013; Heinze, 2013; King, 2009). danah boyd and Nicole Ellison (2007) define social media platforms (or social network sites) as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.” The most common examples of such sites include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, though other popular applications exist outside of the United States (e.g., LINE, which will be addressed in Chapter three). Social media foster social interaction and, as Elise Verzosa Hurley and Amy Kimme Hea (2014) note, allow users to directly interact with content:

social media are shifting users' expectations for how they interact with information, technology, and each other. Loosely defined as media that exploit Web 2.0 technologies to allow for more user interaction, especially
opportunities for user-generated content, social media are often explicitly designed to foster social interactions (p. 57).

Social media platforms and applications offer a new venue for the technical communicator, enabling audiences to have direct access to companies and organizations. Social media coordination has become an important position for organizations seeking to capitalize on this connection to their audience. Audiences are gravitating toward social media with over three billion people maintaining active social media accounts globally. As a result, there has been a recent influx of global social media campaigns worldwide, with the Royal Bank of Canada reporting that 88% of American businesses alone were expected to use these social media marketing in 2014, up from 87% in 2013 (Brown, 2014; Littleton, 2014; eMarketeer, 2013). As with all communication, culture plays a role in how these platforms are used and dictate the manner in which international communication occurs.

Some countries have historically minimized direct links between corporations and their customer base (i.e., Russia, China) by keeping consumer relations superficial and primarily focused on providing a product or service, not with building personal relationships between the consumer and the company (Lawrence, 2011; Crampton, 2011). These companies may face a disadvantage in the international market where many customers from other countries see direct communications as an important element of customer service (Baker, Rapp, Meyer, and Mullins, 2014; Grönroos, 2004;
Powers, 2001). The domestic market is also becoming problematic as those customers are showing preferences to these direct online methods as well (Research and Markets, 2014; Zhou and Wang, 2014; Konrad, 2013). Japan is a prime example of a country where major companies tend to minimize interaction with their domestic customers. This practice has a historical basis and reflects cultural preferences, both of which I will address shortly. However, this places Japanese companies at a disadvantage when competing for customers in international markets. It also makes attracting and maintaining Japanese customers increasingly difficult as preferences for professional communication continue to evolve in Japan, with a renewed focus on individuals (i.e., consumers, shareholders, and employees) (Motoyoshi, 2015).

Figure 1.1 Coca-Cola Japan Twitter Account "Thank you * Which are all together so good! A moment (musical notes) RT @_amatsuki Coke & Coke" (Google translate)

Figure 1.2 Otsuka Official Facebook Page for Pocari Sweat sports drink.
Unlike large American corporations that do business in Japan, large Japanese businesses often use social media platforms sparingly. While Coca-Cola’s Japanese Twitter feed responds and retweets a customer’s picture (see Figure 1.1), Otsuka, a large Japanese soft drink company, uses its Facebook page to only provide product information and link to current advertising campaigns, but does not interact with consumers at all. For example, a post from March 19, 2015 depicting company-sponsored cheerleader training garnered 2,235 “likes” and 10 comments, but received no response from the company (see Figure 1.2).

Foreign companies are also reaching out to consumers through the popular Japanese SMS service, LINE. Companies create “stickers” for their brand, which consumers can download and include in their messages. Like emoticons, stickers allow LINE users to interject emotions into their messages, but with deeper levels of self-expression (e.g., a smiley emoticon may express pleasure at an idea, while a sticker can denote a wider variance of feelings from mild approval to ecstatic agreement) (McCracken, 2015). Dentsu PR’s corporate communication supervisor notes that these stickers are utilized by consumers to not just promote the enjoyment of a product, but their own emotional tie to the product: “Many Japanese people like the brand characters. They can use the stickers to express their feelings when they are talking with friends” (PR Week, 2015). As Japanese consumers continue to use these media they send a message to Japanese businesses that B2C communication is desired. As a result,
Japanese businesses must now consider if avoiding these social media will result in a loss of customers.

These examples demonstrate a discomfort many Japanese companies have with this communication method, and points to a rising difficulty competing with foreign-based businesses in their own domestic market. Aware of this problem, many Japanese companies are beginning to reach out for assistance in developing online identities.

The Japanese government has also acknowledged this disadvantage and is making efforts to take action. The 2014 expansion of work visa permissions for highly skilled foreign workers identified “online identity coordination” as an area most in need of highly skilled foreign workers. These expanded permissions explicitly call for foreign workers in professional and technical fields who have “special knowledge and technical skills and [can] help vitalize Japan’s economy and society” (Ministry of Justice, 2014). The strategy behind this program is to encourage foreign professionals to enter the Japanese economy and thereby contribute to its growth by offering national benefits (Tokyo Immigration Service, 2015). This class of workers is eligible for five-year visas--previously limited to three years--and potentially benefits from eased restrictions on permanent status.

One element of the selection criteria for the enhanced visa program is comprised of awards and recognition in technical communication, not limited to websites, brand identity, and corporate identity. The International Forum (iF) Design Award,
specifically referenced by the visa program, recognizes demonstrated skill in web communication, designating an award for: “Corporate websites, public websites, service websites, online shops, e-Commerce, microsites, promotional sites, brand sites, landing pages, social media, web TV, blogs, etc.” (iF, 2014). For example, their 2014 communication award in social media was granted to a European electronics company that used clips of burglars to address consumers’ concerns about home safety. Using video to answer hundreds of user-generated questions, the company increased web traffic to their site via social media and enhanced their relationships with loyal clients while building relationships with new customers.

The Government of Japan’s loosening of visa regulations connects to a nationwide labor shortage. As the workforce in Japan ages and population numbers drop, with an expected decrease of nearly 40 million by 2050 (Osaki, 2013), the number of skilled workers to take their place is decreasing. Applicants for the new visa program can take advantage of this change in demographics, however, critics point out that few foreign nationals have entered the program, prompting the government to consider even more visa expansions (Cheng, 2014).

Based on the appeals of Japanese consumers for more substantive B2C communication, the receptive climate demonstrated by small businesses and the government’s encouragement of foreign workers, this dissertation presents a way to prepare American technical communicator students looking to enter the Japanese
marketplace. In it, I propose a curriculum for American technical communication students that accounts for Japan’s evolving push towards new forms of social media interaction with the goal of creating a more globalized workforce. I argue that training American technical communication students as social media experts who can bring their expertise to Japanese workplaces is more than a pedagogical imperative or an imposition of Western business practices on non-Western workplaces. Increased dialogue on social media actually calls back to the culture’s traditional business practices of fostering customer loyalty, which were largely lost in post-war Japan but still valued as evidenced by the high rate of loyalty programs (e.g., coupon earning clubs, store points cards, and frequent customer programs) seen everywhere from grocery stores to railways, hospitality to salons (Jenjarrussakul and Matsuura, 2014).

To understand the current exigency, it is necessary to first look back at the historical context of Japan’s economy.

Under the rule of Emperor Meiji, Japan’s pre-industrial, feudalistic government fell in the 1870s, and the country’s economic sector began to embrace modern industrialization. It was during this transition that imperial leaders fostered the development of large corporate conglomerates called zaibatsu, politically powerful monopolies (Benedict, 1967). Customer service was not a critical component for zaibatsu’s survival; in fact, they thrived despite a lack of customer service because of their protected status through the imperial government. As long as the products and
services the zaibatsu provided met the needs of the government, profit and consumer relationships were secondary concerns (Yasuoka, 2002; Imajoh, 2012; Dower, 1999).

Co-existing small businesses, meanwhile, found themselves needing to join cooperatives for survival, with the cooperative’s goal to produce high quality goods and services in support of the imperial government. Small businesses operated outside of the zaibatsu-controlled financial sector, often turning to informal transactions with regular customers. Personal interactions like bartering with customers and offering individual lines of credit to trusted clients were paramount to a business’s reputation and therefore its survival. When Japan entered into war in 1937, small businesses were conscripted to join the larger industrial firms in building weapons and producing munitions for the wartime economy, or be forced to close (Imajoh, 2012)¹. After the war, the zaibatsu retained the bulk of economic control, despite the Japanese government’s attempt to reinstate these small businesses. The zaibatsu of the early twentieth century, with highly recognizable names like Mitsubishi, Kawasaki, and Nissan, were dissolved in an official capacity as political powerhouses and financial monopolies during postwar reconstruction, but some of these large corporations retained their influence (Imajoh, 2012, Dower, 1999).

¹ Prior to the attack on the United States at Pearl Harbor in 1941, Japan was engaged in the Sino-Japanese war with China.
The shape of the Japanese economy continues to evolve. Since the 1960s, small business in Japan has experienced a revival (Motoyoshi, 2015; Honjo and Harada, 2006; Economic Strategy Council of Japan, 1999; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1997). Unlike their larger counterparts, contemporary small businesses in Japan are attracting consumers through online interaction, building the kind of relationships enjoyed before and during the Meiji Era (Whitefield, 2014; Yasonuri, 2013).

For example, small businesses Hakasui-Sha and Yoga Swell use social media to build and communicate with their customer base. Hakasui-Sha, a producer of cocktail mixers, turned to social media to recruit customers and compete with the large beverage businesses like Coca-Cola and Otsuka. The Hakasui-Sha Facebook page links the business to customers by responding to comments and questions quickly, typically within 24 hours (see Figure 1.3). Yoga Swell, a small yoga studio in Hachioji, Tokyo, used its Facebook page to notify clients of schedule changes after Typhoon Phanfone in October, 2014 and addressed questions following about reopening following the storm (see Figure 1.4).

Though the former zaibatsu have been slow to embrace aspects of direct interaction their customers want, small businesses like Hakasui-Sha and Yoga Swell are taking the initiative to build social media identities and creating consumer relationships as a result. Now that Japanese consumers are reporting a desire for more personal referrals, direct communication, and online interaction with companies large and small,
larger corporations can no longer afford to opt out of these types of interactions (Salsberg, 2010). Japanese propensity for additional business to customer (B2C) communication online is reflected in its gravitation toward ecommerce. Japan’s rate of ecommerce growth exceeds all Western nations, including the United States (and only trails China slightly), and 89% of the Japanese population specifically participates in social media-friendly mobile commerce (Cross-Border Ecommerce Report, 2013; Dusto, 2013).
This dissertation builds on the highly effective social media practices embraced by Japanese small business and responds to the apparent desire of large Japanese businesses to foster different types of customer interaction than currently practiced online. This dissertation contributes a means for technical communication educators to provide instruction in social media application in intercultural situations, which will allow American students of technical communication to take advantage of a new door to the global market that is opening. As this business practice changes in Japan, businesses will need to hire social media coordinators who are savvy in both the technology being used as well as the cultural nuances of the specific business-client relationship. Training American technical communication students to integrate social media with intercultural technical communication (ITC) would provide an avenue for Japanese companies to fill these positions. This training would work in conjunction with the Japanese government’s foreign visa expansion plan and offer American students entrance into the global technical communication workforce.

Key Concepts and Terms

There are several key concepts and terms that need to be explicated to fully clarify this shift in practice. First, I define the concept of rhetorical exigency to explain the impetus that is driving shifting social media practices in Japan, a high-context (HC) culture that is very dependent on unspoken cues (unlike a low-context (LC) culture). Next, I differentiate between intercultural communication, which this project calls for,
and cross-cultural communication, which is more common in education. Finally I explain what I mean by ethics and why ethics are critical to this project.

**Rhetorical exigency.** Along with its role and implications, is contested among theorists, and considering it through the lens of ITC further complicates the concept. The notion of rhetorical exigence grew out of decades of debate regarding the rhetorical situation. Lloyd Bitzer (1968) considered exigence as the defect or imperfection of a situation, and met with this imperfection, the rhetor is invited to create discourse – thus rhetoric is born. The audience, meanwhile, is tasked with acting on this exigence and thereby holds responsibility for righting the imperfection. Bitzer’s explanation of exigence, however, is debated depending on what is granted agency in the rhetorical situation. Richard E. Vatz (1972), countered Bitzer’s assertion that rhetoric is created by the situation’s exigence and asserted that exigence is determined by the rhetor based on what he or she makes salient. Vatz claimed that the rhetor has a moral obligation to what he or she makes present or prominent and through this presents the audience with meaning. In this explanation, responsibility to the exigence lies with the rhetor. Scott Consigny (1974), meanwhile, found a midpoint between Bitzer and Vatz, where situation (and its corresponding exigence) is key to the topoi of rhetoric. As such the rhetor must accept that exigence does not stand on its own, but rather finds balance between the situation and the instrument. Furthermore, the rhetor needs to engage the
audience to act on the exigency, while achieving that balance in order to allow the audience to see the rhetor’s relevance.

With due consideration to Bitzer and Vatz’s opposing views, this project calls on the definition of rhetorical exigence set forth by Carolyn Miller (1984) and her assertion that “exigence is a form of social knowledge—a mutual construing of objects, events, interests, and purposes that not only links them but makes them what they are: an objectified social need” (p.157). Miller disagreed that exigence is a “defect” as Bitzer claims, because it can exist in opposition or misrepresentative of the rhetorical situation. She notes that while exigence may provide a basis for rhetorical purpose, “exigence must be seen neither as a cause of rhetorical action, nor as intention, but as social motive. To comprehend an exigence is to have a motive” (Miller, 1984, p.158). Miller’s claim that rhetoric requires an understanding of social need in order act on an exigence, and sharing in that social need creates an audience community. As this project demonstrates, understanding and adhering to community standards and its hierarchies are imperative to practicing intercultural communication.

The rhetorical exigency for expanded approaches to professional social media use in Japan that I identified at the beginning of this chapter is a result of deeply ingrained social and cultural influences. Japanese Nobel Laureate, Shuji Nakamura suggested these influences were impeding Japan’s ability to progress in the 21st Century in 2014. He particularly cited the failure of large businesses to embrace a
skilled global workforce and the nation’s “stifling environment for entrepreneurs” as factors that will hinder Japanese advancement (Japan Times, 2014). Yet a walk through the Sony flagship store in Tokyo’s exclusive Ginza district demonstrates the Japanese embracing advancements, and many politicians outside of the realm of business see the necessity of employing an increasingly international workforce to facilitate this knowledge growth. Social media, as a facet of this advancing technology, should follow a similar path of development. Nakamura’s concerns are increasingly addressed by Japanese small businesses and the country’s top leaders, but are only slowly being solved by large businesses. These influences are clearly seen when examining Japan as a high-context culture, one whose society is deeply rooted in traditional, often communal, practices.

**High-context vs low-context cultures.** High- and low-context culture (HC and LC, respectively) are terms coined by Edward T. Hall in his 1976 work, *Beyond Culture*, and are utilized in anthropology for determining the cultural framework of a given society. HC culture is one that contains many background foundations based on long-standing cultural cues. Within a HC society, most individuals share collectivist cultural beliefs and represent cultural cues intuitively, thereby holding interpersonal relationships in high regard. For example, in Pakistan it is considered rude to jump right to the point of your meeting or discussion. A short conversation about the health and well-being of one’s family precedes business and those in attendance often make it
a point to remember these conversations in order to build strong bonds (i.e., if a businessperson mentions that his or her child is beginning school in the fall, others are able ask about the child’s schooling at a later meeting). Communication within a HC culture relies a great deal on non-verbal messages as well. In Japan, for instance, this is frequently seen when individuals meet and exchange business cards. The card itself is understood to be representative of the individual whose name appears on it and therefore is treated with respect (i.e., card always offered and accepted with both hands, cards are never placed in a back pocket). Such cues based on implied meaning that may be clear to an individual coming from a HC background may not be immediately understood by an individual from a LC culture and vice versa (Hall, 1976). Coming from a LC culture, it may be considered “nosey” to ask about family and personal matters in a business meeting or LC individuals may see business cards as something for later reference and not grasp its indirect meaning.

Contemporary examples of such HC cultures exist in the Middle East and Asia, while LC culture exists in societies that rely on fact and deduction as opposed to intuition and tend to exhibit diversity in cultural beliefs; such cultures can be most often seen in North America and Western Europe. Hall argues that LC cultures value action and output as opposed to the HC valuation of interaction and association. Networking and interpersonal relationships are saved for after-hours events in LC cultures, and sharing personal information in the workplace is often viewed as distracting and
inappropriate. Business emails in a LC organization will likely be concise because people and organizations value efficiency. Such contexts keep personal information at a minimum and draw a line between personal and professional relationships.

To understand the variance between Japanese and American social media use, it is necessary to examine the role of identity in a HC vs a LC culture. Japanese customs hold the tradition of “saving face” in high regard. This need to save face is faithfully connected to the individual’s desire to stay associated to his or her closely-knit community and avoid embarrassment (Ardichvili, Maurer, Li, Wentling and Stuedemann, 2006). In modern contexts, this community extends to an individual’s place of business and the loyalty he or she holds to an employer (Stedham, Yamamura, and Lai, 2008). According to Hall, within a HC culture this community is a lifelong association: “the child moves into the larger and more real world of the adult, but he does not, even under normal circumstances, establish an identity separate from that of his community” (p. 226). Hall continues by stating that identity is determined by boundaries – but a technology like social media breaks down boundaries, and as such has the potential the threaten these community structures. LC cultures, meanwhile, do not adhere to such community associations and their identifying boundaries are limited only by the diverse context of their society. Examining the roles of HC and LC cultural characteristics and effectively communicating between the two is a difficult task. For that reason, I recommend that such practices occur via intercultural communication
(i.e., placing the communication within the culture) as opposed to cross-cultural communication (i.e., external discussion of another culture).

**Intercultural vs cross-cultural communication.** Communication practices are strongly impacted by cultural identification. This identification also influences how individuals communicate with those of differing cultures. To effectively communicate across these differences, technical communicators need to place themselves directly within the foreign cultural environment and approach communication from an intercultural perspective. Intercultural communication (IC) refers to communication between cultures while cross-cultural communication refers to one culture communicating about another (Ristic, 2013). While frequently conflated, these classifications focus on interaction vs. analysis respectively, and are both employed by the intercultural technical communicator when addressing the rhetorical situation of intercultural social media.

A person’s lack of understanding of IC is not an inability for him or her to communicate, but has the tendency to create discomfort due to the speaker’s own identification. Kenneth Burke (1969) states that identification by its nature is created by classifying and dividing groups; such division disconnects the rhetor from the intercultural audience. If we accept the primacy Burke affords identification (i.e., that identification is the first move of human communication), then we can recognize the particularly problematic dimension it would play in intercultural communication. Hall
agrees that such division may be problematic as the “individual may make distinctions that are inconsistent with what is happening” based on her own cultural assumptions (p. 232). In order to address how technical communicators address these concerns, the issue of ethics sits at the forefront of this dissertation project as an opportunity to both address and ease this discomfort.

**Ethics.** Focusing on creating strong intercultural relationships while avoiding ethnocentrism and xenophobia is necessary for successful collaboration across cultures. Ethically, working across cultural boundaries requires the rhetor to be knowledgeable in the value systems, customs, and traditions of international partners and open to resulting variances in practice.

The ethical framework I gravitate toward is that of Emmanuel Levinas as directed in *Ethics and Infinity*, that is, that the technical communicators and client communities need to maintain a responsibility to the ‘other’. As Emmanuel Levinas contends, this responsibility creates our ethical obligation to humanity as a whole: “since the Other looks at me, I am responsible for him, without even having taken on responsibilities in his regard; his responsibility is incumbent on me” (Levinas, 1982, p. 96). Thus, there is an ethical obligation to take the other into account and allow a fruitful partnership to grow which benefits all involved.

The technical communicator cannot distance him/herself from the rhetorical theory because the practice must be grounded in theoretical framework. Like Levinas’
perspective of responsibility, Diane Davis points out that rhetoric does not need to be wholly hermeneutic, but rather deals in reception, “the exposure to the other,” and, I argue, the rhetor’s responsibility to that other (Davis, 2005, p.192). When communicating within our own culture, we can make reasonable assumptions about the other and create practice out of those assumptions. In ITC our assumptions are typically severely limited due to a lack of cultural relatability.

For example, Sam Dragga (1999) explains that a Kellogg’s cereal box marketed in China illustrates the importance of ethics in technical communication as the Chinese culture holds food to a high moral standard. This box used very specific textual and visual content which impacted the level of trust a Chinese consumer would associate with the product. Textually, the box conveyed information to the consumer that will increase the cereal’s enjoyability. First, the description on the box noted that the cereal “retains the delicious flavor of rice,” a diet staple in China that consumers would find familiar (p. 375). Next, the box offers directions on how to serve the cereal since the action of pouring a dry ingredient into a bowl and adding milk with no additional cooking or preparation is uncommon in this culture. Visually, the box uses the color red, culturally associated with luck in Chinese culture, in the logo and other prominent areas of the box’s design. Dragga points out that “buying and using this foreign product thus constitutes for the target audience a moral decision. This cultural artifact

2 Dragga states that permission to display an image of the box was denied by the Kellogg corporation.
has ethical implications that a technical communicator might be oblivious to unless he or she is familiar with the dominant beliefs and practices of China” (p.379). He further calls for a close and careful examination of culture in the technical communication classroom noting that ITC needs to be addressed through the analysis of intercultural case studies and research into culturally specific issues of morality and ethics. Simply providing clear language and visual representation is not enough to create an ethically sound communication. As Dragga demonstrates, understanding values, beliefs, and customs is key to successfully addressing the “other” and creating an intercultural relationship.

Defining and Solving the Problem

Based on the rhetorical exigency of appealing to intercultural communities via social media, and considering the ethical implications of this in practice, this dissertation project establishes the importance of examining the impact that social media ITC, and its implementation in the technical communication (TC) classroom, has on the field of technical communication. In what follows, I present the data analysis methodology used in this project, which affords the field a means to examine ongoing trends in social media ITC. The goal of the mixed methods analysis described here is to develop the problem of social media ITC, its absence from current curricular design and importance for intercultural professional TC, in order to present a feasible solution for educators and practitioners.
**Research questions.** My main research questions is: How can American technical communication programs prepare students to act as social media experts in Japanese contexts? To answer this question I must also ask:

1. Are social media and ITC currently being addressed in technical communication education in the U.S.? If so, how? (Chapter 2)

2. How are large Japanese corporations using social media? In Chapter one, I suggested that this practice is evolving and that this change is indicative of traditional and modern Japanese culture. In Chapter three, I systematically examine the online presence of the 100 largest revenue-producing companies in Japan to determine how social media are currently being used.

3. What are the major challenges of American technical communication programs that wish to better prepare students to work in social media in professional Japanese contexts? How might a blended online service learning alleviate these challenges? (Chapter 4)

4. What might a curricula that addresses ITC and social media in concert look like? (Chapter 5)

**Researcher position.** This project was conducted while I resided in the Tokyo Metropolis. Initially, the project plan included a survey of Japanese professionals working in technical communication to ascertain how these individuals use social
media for professional purposes, but Japanese cultural expectations\(^3\) and IRB restrictions required me to revise the initial plan for this project. Finding participants proved difficult, and the sample size was too limited to generate usable data. This experience is echoed in business relations between the United States and Japan, where organizations seeking to make inroads in the Japanese market find it imperative to work with the business cultural hierarchy and its boundaries through a local employee (Bruning, 2010; Hirano, 2010; TMF Group, 2015). My experience in Japan taught me that my challenges were primarily due to not adhering to this hierarchy, resulting in potential participants lacking a personal relationship with me and therefore not feeling comfortable answering the survey, despite its anonymity. Upon contacting IRB with this predicament, the board noted that it allowed interviews with a certified translator, but unfortunately such translation services were not feasible due to a lack of resources (i.e., cost, translator availability). This research experience is valuable to this project for two reasons:

1. Living in Japan provided me with the cultural familiarity necessary to design and conduct a valid content analysis. Encountering and understanding discrepancies in language translation and use provided the tools for deciphering contextual clues (e.g., the English words “happy” and “good” are frequently used synonymously in Japanese translation to English).

\(^3\) The cultural expectations inherent with relationship building in Japan is explained in chapter two.
2. Daily interactions (e.g., teaching English classes) demonstrated the necessity of building personal relationships and the Japanese custom of saving face (e.g., a business contract regarding teaching responsibilities and pay were not put in writing until specifically requested since verbal agreements are frequently assumed to be sufficient in Japan).

By conducting my research in Japan, I was able to gain first-hand experience with these cultural factors, thereby informing my conclusions.

**Methodological approach.** This dissertation project relies on qualitative methods to collect, interpret, and present its data. For the purposes of this dissertation project, qualitative research methods were used to ensure flexibility within the research plan, a necessity of the subject matter. As Alice Daer and Liza Potts (2014) pointed out, “in the world of measuring social media use, variety is constant” (p.24). Furthermore, as Siegfried Kracauer (1952) points out, approaching studies in international communication from a qualitative perspective, as opposed to quantifying the communication practices, allows the researcher to examine the finer, nuanced characteristics that are lost by solely counting units of data. As such, the two primary collection and interpretation methods used for this project are very flexible yet complement each other in scope and purpose: thematic analysis and content analysis.

**Defining thematic analysis.** Thematic analysis, used mainly in the social and health sciences, seeks to identify themes within qualitative information and encode the
data based on those themes. A theme is a set of patterns that can be viewed throughout the collected data, categorized, and examined (Guest, 2012; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Morphew and Hartley, 2006). Richard E. Guest (2012) explains in *Applied Thematic Analysis* that this method requires more than simply selecting and counting words, as a word-based analysis would do, but rather calls on the researcher to identify ideas in the data and use these ideas to determining thematic patterns. A theme is used to provide a rich description of data and, according to Johnny Saldana’s (2009) *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, is a complex way of coding that utilizes phrases and groups of terms in order to identify “what a unit of data is about and/or what it means” (p. 139). For example, a search for the term “customer” is a unit of data, but looking for “customer assistance via Facebook” is a theme.

A theme’s function is to present what a data unit means as opposed to only presenting the data unit itself. Such themes may be easily observable (i.e., a specific phrase that can be read in a data set) or latent (i.e., a meaning that comes out of the data set) (Boyatzis, 1998; Saldana, 2009). In either case, a theme’s ultimate purpose is to convey the significance of a pattern to unify data sets into a meaningful whole (DeSantis and Ugarriza, 2000; Saldana, 2009). Latent theme, used in this dissertation, may be considered highly interpretive and therefore must be carefully defined by the researcher.
Thematic analysis depends on the proposed research question, the type of data, and the way that data behaves (i.e., interviews vs. written accounts). These variances add flexibility which allow the researcher to utilize as many or as few themes as necessary, focusing on a single theme (i.e., specific statements) or a variety of themes (i.e., different cultural behaviors surrounding an event). Themes can also be fine-tuned throughout the research process, offering the researcher a dominant theme with smaller sub-themes (Saldana, 2009).

Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006) assert in their examination of this method for the social sciences, the key to thematic research is an active researcher. Themes do not passively emerge, they point out, but are identified, selected, and reported by the researcher. To conduct a thorough thematic analysis, the researcher needs to employ multiple cycles of coding not merely adhering to a linear plan of data collection (Saldana, 2009). Using a cyclical strategy allows the researcher to narrowly focus the research question and account for specific nuances (e.g., finding phrases that appear different but share meaning). These multiple cycles require the researcher to continuously return to the data units and reassess their meaning.

The benefits of thematic analysis include the ability to examine intricacies in textual data, consider context and its impact on meaning, and remain flexible for the needs of the researcher (Guest, 2012; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Defining and selecting themes is where thematic analysis requires flexibility on the part of the research since
theme selection is what connects the data to the project’s research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Guest points out, however, that a significant limitation exists as focusing too much on the theme can lead the researcher to “miss some of the more nuanced data” which may fall outside the theme’s parameters (p. 17). To compensate for these limitations, themes must be explicitly defined by the researcher and clearly connected to a stated research question. To avoid losing the nuances of data in favor of the larger picture, analysis should be conducted in multiple cycles with themes stated in simple terms prior to collecting data, and subsequently used to determine meaning as the analysis progresses.

**Defining content analysis.** At its core, content analysis is a systematic analysis of specific informational elements (i.e., individual characteristics within a message that show the way a specific keyword is used). Though sometimes defined as a sub-set of thematic analysis (Guest, 2012; Braun and Clarke, 2006), content analysis is a distinct interpretation method that makes inferences based on the context in which a unit of data is used (Krippendorff, 2013). Klaus Krippendorff (2013), in *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*, argues that while content analysis has its roots in engineering and the sciences, when used to examine textual information it is inherently qualitative. He points out that texts themselves are interpreted by the reader, and it is the burden of the content analyst to be explicitly clear in the coding scheme being used to present replicable data. Moreover, content analysis allows the researcher to
categorize data, but in content analysis categorizations are based on the content (ERSC, 2015). This provides the researcher with a means of interpretation similar to the themes utilized in thematic analysis, but presents a more observable picture of the data unit.

Content analysis is not merely keyword searching, but requires a researcher with a strong comprehension of the content being examined. In order to design a content analysis, Kimberly Neuendorf (2002) asserts that the researcher needs to be familiar with both the style of the research as well as the kind of research being analyzed. She refers to this as being “proficient in the language of the message pools,” (p. 9) stressing that the researcher needs to understand what is being researched before the content analysis can even be designed. She offers the example of researchers coding film content and notes that this analysis cannot take place until they are familiar with production terms and techniques. Without this background knowledge, the researcher is unable to categorize and analyze the data units in their context.

Like thematic analysis, content analysis allows the researcher flexibility and the ability to tie coding back to specific research questions. The benefits and limitations of content analysis lie in its scope. Unlike other methods of interpretation, content analysis looks within data as opposed to across data sets. In other words, content analysis provides the researcher with the ability to drill down to specific details within the content. For the purposes of this dissertation project, that allowed the content data to be examined thoroughly for culturally significant meaning specific to Japanese culture.
(e.g., the analysis can account for vague translations, such as the English word “happy” frequently being synonymous with “good” which would not be the case in an analysis of American communication). In this same vein, however, content analysis limits the researcher to smaller sample sets than other methods, thereby making it difficult to gauge broad trends and issues across the data. Since the data is coded by its context and sample sets are inherently small, the researcher is left with a microcosm of the subject matter (e.g., examining the 100 largest Japanese companies’ domestic business practices offers a general view of trends, but does not allow the researcher to speak to the business practices of next 100 largest companies or any of these companies’ international practices). In order to achieve a high standard of methodological rigor, the researcher needs to employ an analysis that reflects the scope and complexity of the research question (Neuendorf, 2002). Additionally, inter-rater reliability is crucial to the validity of a content analysis, and if two or more coders are not available, the researcher is tasked with carefully defining and describing the search terms used throughout the analysis.

Compatibility of thematic and content analysis. Each of these methods calls on a qualitative approach to research, allowing the researcher to interpret data based on contextual clues. A contextual clue consists of words or phrases surrounding the data unit that provides the researcher with information influencing its meaning. These clues are used to draw conclusions about the message, its background (e.g., social influences,
cultural factors) and the circumstances surrounding its production (White and Marsh, 2006). In the field of ITC this is important since cultural elements differ between groups and these distinctions would be lost in an analysis that does not allow for the social production of language. Additionally, since technology is dynamic, a flexible method is necessary to maintain reliability of findings. Both of these methods provide a way to classify and code findings, resulting in complementary categorizations of academic and professional instances of social media ITC.

Where these methods differ is in their specificity. Thematic analysis lacks the precision of content analysis; content analysis looks for actual keywords in addition to contextual clues. In examining a collection of syllabi, thematic analysis allowed me to consider the manner in which the topics of ITC and social media appeared in the technical communication classroom. Since syllabi tend to be more generalized documents (leaving specific details to lesson plans), this analysis method fit the parameters of my search. The analysis of professional Japanese use of social media, however, was much more specific and carefully reviewed every social media account for each company. This required a more precise and focused examination, which content analysis provided.

**Selecting research sites.** To determine the criteria for the two sites in this analysis I needed to find locations that would provide insight into both American classrooms and Japanese professional (business-to-consumer) practices. While online
access to data was a strong factor, industry-specific resources were central to determining the credibility of sites.

For the site used in the classroom analysis, I chose to examine technical communication syllabi because these documents represent course objectives. Employing convenience sampling, I turned to the Society for Technical Communication’s (STC) Academic Database to acquire the relevant program syllabi. Convenience sampling proved beneficial by enabling me to find a large number of technical communication programs listed in a single location. STC compiles and maintains this list in order to foster academic-practitioner relationships. STC states that this database assists in their work to “guide and inform students and to aid colleges and universities in the establishment of curricula for training in the arts and sciences of technical communication” (STC, 2015). STC, however, does not make a claim to endorse any specific academic program from the database. The disadvantages of convenience sampling included limiting the analysis to schools who choose to register with STC and eliminating the remainder. As such, the sample size may have been larger had a different kind of sampling been conducted.

When selecting a site for my professional analysis, my initial consideration included the following parameters

- A high context culture
• Technologically on par with the United States, or technologically advanced beyond the United States

• Non-isolationist economy

• Have a strong use of English, even if not a native language

Early in the research process, I learned I would have the opportunity to relocate to Japan for other purposes, and as Japan fit these criteria, it became the site of the professional analysis. I then turned to the annual Forbes Global 2000 (2013) list for Japanese business, which ranks businesses in Japan by revenue. While this list contains 246 companies, I limited my scope to the top 100 for a more focused analysis.

**Data collection.** Despite the seemingly different sites examined in this dissertation, I used the same data collection procedure for each site. In both the classroom and professional analyses I used publically available digital, textual content that did not require IRB approval. The content of the syllabi and social media sites were collected via manual thematic and content analysis, searching for codable words and phrases. Collection took place using searches for textual content that demonstrated the following elements:

In syllabi:

• Reference to social media platforms and/or use

• Reference to ITC

• Reference to social media used for ITC purposes
In Japanese websites:

- Links to social media sites
- Social media interactions

**Chapter Overviews**

This dissertation project contributes an empirically justified social media ITC program curriculum to the field. This contribution is necessitated by recent observation on professional technical communication practices, which demonstrate that shifts toward international social media use are occurring. Due to the flexible nature of social media use, there is no single way to prepare future technical communicators to coordinate global social media practices, but it this project proves it is imperative that we offer such preparation. This is no easy task, in part because much as organizational differences exist in traditional memos and letterhead, organizations will continue to differ in how they employ social media, dependent on their own shifting needs and the needs of their consumer groups. But it is integral that technical communication students receive some training to participate in those online discussions if they are to become practitioners who are keenly aware of both their use of media and the cultures wherein they operate.

Chapters two and three of this project empirically justify that technical communication programs are not currently doing this work, while the analysis of Japanese social media use demonstrates the exigency of integrating this curricular
design. Chapters four and five continue this work by proposing a specific program for technical communication educators and practitioners to approach social media ITC. As such, his project has extensive implications for the progression of the field into global communication practices.

This project initially divides into two research sites: the academic and the professional. My objective throughout this project is to demonstrate how these spaces complement and rely upon each other. Chapters two and three explain that research into social media ITC is missing, and that this directly impacts how we practice technical communication. Chapters four and five present a solution to this problem in the form of academic-professional partnerships through a blended online service learning program. Due to the complexity of marrying social media use with ITC, each chapter addresses a sub-question of this project, coming together in the final epilogue to collectively respond to the initial query.

Chapter two addresses the sub-question of how thoroughly social media and ITC are currently being addressed in technical communication. To fully explicate this issue, I considered the following: in what context are social media and ITC are addressed, if and when they are addressed in tandem, and if they are addressed in tandem how is this accomplished? Since the field of technical communication has long relied on workplace research and practice to inform and shape classroom pedagogy, it should now concern itself with the research suggesting that social media writing in
international contexts is a critical but overlooked skill ripe for classroom development. This chapter argues that social media writing and international technical communication need to be integrated into the technical communication curriculum. Supporting this claim are the findings of a thematic analysis of 83 technical communication syllabi from 65 North American universities. This analysis assesses the curricular engagement of social media, ITC, and the connections made between these two sub-fields. Through the use of a taxonomic scale that measures student engagement with pedagogical materials and curricular design, this chapter concludes that a need exists to incorporate global service learning programs to demonstrate to students various methods for achieving effective professional intercultural technical communication.

Chapter three continues this conversation, but situates it in the professional Japanese environment, addressing the question of how large Japanese corporations are using social media. In order to fully answer this question, this chapter further expands on the following: why does the current use of social media need to change, what evidence exists for the exigency of this change, and how does this change keep with traditional Japanese culture? This chapter acknowledges that while social media as a tool for businesses is a practice seen regularly in the United States, using social media in a professional manner is not commonplace throughout the world. This chapter argues that public, business-focused social media use is dependent on the user’s culture and
therefore is not strong in the Japanese market. Employing a content analysis of the online presence of the top 100 business in Japan, I assert that in order to better prepare writing students to write in public online capacities in professional situations, writing classes need to demonstrate the necessity for acknowledging cultural dissimilarities. This chapter provides evidence that preparing students to use situational awareness in social media writing makes them better equipped to conduct global writing practices.

As Chapters two and three provide the evidence of a problem in current technical communication education, chapters four and five offer solutions. Chapter four moves on to exploring a new curriculum approach, and asks the question of what major challenges do American TC programs face when trying to better prepare students to work in social media in Japanese professional contexts. To fully answer this question this chapter proposes that blended online service learning might alleviate these challenges. This chapter sets up the necessity of a blended online service learning program, but notes that many of the cultural nuances described in previous chapters create challenges to this program. My goal in this chapter was to directly identify and address the primary challenges of such a program, making it a feasible option for degree programs and instructors. This chapter calls on research in technical communication education and service-learning to ease the cultural concerns of educators interested in implementing this program. Chapter four also presents the
macro-objectives of a specific service-learning program, demonstrating how it fits into the current design of many technical communication degree programs.

Chapter five moves beyond the challenges of Chapter four, focusing on the question of what a social media ITC curriculum looks like and how objectives are implemented. This chapter provides specific micro-objectives for the program defined in Chapter four, presenting six deliverables, each with its own assessment rubric based on the stated student learning outcomes. I created this program with deliverables that scaffold for a full year-long program, but can be easily pared down for single-semester use, or single-project use depending on the requirements and limitations of various degree programs.

**Facing the Shift in Technical Communication Practice**

Shifts in the practice of technical communication create a number of challenges for educators and practitioners. In the chapters that follow, I address these shifts and present classroom strategies for resolving these issues. The ultimate goal of this project is to offer approaches for managing the educational changes necessitated by developments in the field. This dissertation begins with an analysis of how teachers of technical communication address (or do not address) social media ITC in the classroom. In order to understand how to better equip students to operate in a global communication workplace, we must first see where we currently stand in curricular tactics and strategies.
Chapter 2: Making the Connection between Social Media Writing and International Technical Communication

The ability to operate within international, and notably non-Western, environments has become of great interest for teachers and students of technical communication in recent years. So much so, in fact, that “Global Perspectives in Technical Communication” served as the theme for the 15th annual Conference of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing in 2012. Technical communication has also become increasingly concerned with social media and real-time digital communication platforms that depend on social interaction such as Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr -- transforming business communication practices. The field has approached social media in terms of participatory culture (Shaikh, 2009), professional engagement (Long, 2011; Kaplan and Haenlin, 2010), and its application to traditional modes of technical communication through collaboration (e.g., moving from the press release to the social media release) (Pitt, Parent, Steyn, Berthon, and Money, 2011). But what we have not considered is how social media might impact our understanding of ITC. This chapter asks: are social media and ITC currently being addressed in technical communication education in the U.S.? If so, how?
Social media has already demonstrated its affinity for impacting global landscapes in a more general sense. Events like the Egyptian revolution and subsequent Arab Spring, along with the emergence of restricted interfaces like the highly controlled Iranian internet and proposed Saudi limitations on Skype, remind us that the reach of social media throughout the world is wide and controversial (Reardon, 2012; Kerr, 2012). According to the French analytics firm Semiocast, in 2011 only 28.1% of active Twitter users were located in the United States, and five of the top ten countries for active usage were located outside of North America and Western Europe (Semiocast, 2011). Twitter may have begun as a North American project, but it has become a global enterprise. And as the popularity of digital social networks rises here and abroad, implications for intercultural exchanges in the workplace rise equally.

Kelly Global Workforce (2012), an outsourcing and consulting agency that places technical writers, has observed that a global “explosion” of interactive social media platforms has altered the way businesses communicate, creating challenges and opportunities for business-to-businesses communication and business-to-client communication. The agency points out that a prime challenge exists in these communication platforms since attitudes uses lack uniformity, and they emphasize that “understanding and managing the workplace issues associated with social media is an evolving discipline,” requiring flexibility in practice (Kelly Services, 2012).
This chapter insists that social media and international technical communication should be viewed in direct relation to one another, and examines a small sample of American technical communication course materials available online for evidence of this pairing. By studying the current climate of practice surrounding social media and ITC on campus, the goals of teachers of technical communication might be further clarified to invite curricula that better prepare students to write for and across intercultural contexts. The limitations of the size of study and its sources of data make generalizing observations about social media ITC pedagogy impossible, but it does initiate a larger discussion about how the field might ultimately craft more responsive pedagogical models for global participation in professional uses of social media.

I begin this chapter by explaining how theories of high- and low-context cultures could inform the field’s approach to social media at work in a global economy. I then describe my thematic analysis of 83 undergraduate syllabi from current technical communication courses at 65 universities to better understand the integration of social media and IC into technical communication coursework, or lack thereof, and a general slowness of reaction of curriculum to the workplace. After reflecting on my findings, I suggest how technical communication educators might shape social media ITC curriculum. I close by considering how the field might continue to study IC and social media in association.
High- and Low-Context Cultures in an Age of Social Media

A prominent element in professional social media is with the role of the participant consumer and the impact of remote collaboration. Such collaboration, however, is problematic for practitioners of ITC. In many Eastern cultures, Japan for example, collaboration that does not occur face-to-face breaks from cultural conventions and is therefore typically avoided despite the trends seen in the West.

The Branham Group, a consulting firm focused on technology in marketing, noted that the role of the participant consumer is gaining traction in business and impacting the field of technical communication. Branham addresses the notion that the business-client relationship is shifting and that “no longer are customers passively consuming content assembled by technical communicator” (p.6). Rather, clients are using interactive programs (i.e., review submissions, rating systems, discussion forums) to take an active role in their own customer experience by voicing concerns, offering compliments, and asking questions. “Creative consumer” target groups add to these organizations’ content by sharing information through social networks, sometimes authorized by the organizations themselves, sometimes not (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger and Shapiro, 2012). After all, social media venues are neither easily controlled nor unidirectional. The technical communicator may well be responsible for using social media venues to reach out to consumers and for the management of those consumers’ near-immediate responses. The give and take of information between the organization
and the client or target group is rapid, frequent, and often unwieldy under the best circumstances. Across international borders, these communications are fraught with complications.

A 2012 study out of Hong Kong Polytechnic University found that the tourism and hospitality management industries perceived social media as a critical business challenge because companies must concede control over their online presence to consumers (Ayeh, Leung, Au and Law, 2012). As organizations cross geo-political borders via Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, and other social applications, they become more likely to encounter empowered consumers, targeted demographics, partners, supporters, and detractors across the globe. Responding appropriately to competing social norms as they are defined by all of these groups is critical to doing business internationally (Canagarajah, 2006; Hall, 1976; Wurtz, 2005 Richardson & Smith, 2007).

One way to understand these competing social norms is through the lens of HC and LC cultures, which according to Hall (1976), defines most cultures.

Cultures, though sometimes focused in particular locations, are not exclusive or contained, and people from different backgrounds frequently interact. Communication within a HC culture relies a great deal on non-verbal messages, which creates obstacles in the shift to textual representation seen online on platforms such as Twitter. Meanwhile, visual cues based on implied meaning that may be clear to an individual
coming from an HC background, may not be immediately understood by an individual from a LC culture and vice versa (Hall, 1976).

Current pedagogical trends in face-to-face ITC instruction seem to prioritize basic LC cultural situations (e.g., simple greetings) or seek to impose one culture’s norms on another (e.g., “We run our meetings this way and so should you”) (Cleary, 2011; Lovitt, 1999; Somerville, 2010). As more and more corporate and non-profit institutions move toward international and transnational status, these methods of instruction are proving inadequate for even the most straightforward, in-person exchanges (Cleary, 2011; Melton, 2011). This deficit is further complicated by shifting from face-to-face business interactions to online transactions between HC and LC groups using social platforms developed in LC cultures. So, then, are technical communication instructors preparing their students to negotiate these complications? If so, how? The thematic analysis I describe in the next section looks to the technical communication classroom for evidence of these concerns.

**Thematic Analysis of Technical Communication Syllabi**

The inadequacies of LC focused interactions can be communicated in the technical communication classroom with a goal of improving the efficacy of students’ interactions when placed in online intercultural situations. To do this, teachers of technical communication need to address professional uses of social media, as well as intercultural communication, and then consider the two in relation to one another. The
thematic analysis conducted in this dissertation sought to determine whether or not this was being done in current technical communication classrooms, and to what extent were students being exposed to social media ITC.

**Research site.** To collect an adequate cross sample of materials that might indicate if social media use is or is not addressed in the context of ITC, I began by consulting the Society for Technical Communication’s (STC) Academic Database in April 2013 as a source of relevant undergraduate programs from which to gather syllabi. However, syllabi, as a data source, have two significant limitations. First, with the rise of learning management systems, all course documents, including syllabi, are increasingly locked away behind university firewalls (though syllabi remain among the most likely documents to remain public because they are used sometimes by departments to advertise courses and by staff and faculty in teaching portfolios). Second, syllabi are primarily contractual documents that often focus on course policies over detailed descriptions of course content. I chose syllabi as a data source for my study despite these limitations because these documents often overtly disclose course objectives, learning outcomes, and project descriptions⁴. The syllabus genre is not one for deep descriptions of pedagogical content, but these documents do act as an “operational roadmap” for coursework, and provide a broad starting point for

---
⁴ This information is often expressly stipulated by the institution. For example, see the syllabus guidelines for the University of South Florida at http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/1213/pdf/CourseSyllabus.pdf.
understanding the various roles social media might play in ITC instruction (Fornaciari and Lund Dean, 2013, p. 703).

From the list of 226 programs in STC’s database, I excluded 43 graduate programs as outside the scope of my study of undergraduate education. That exclusion left 143 Bachelor of Arts programs, 1 Associate of Applied Science program, 30 Bachelor of Science programs, 8 undergraduate certificates, and 1 Associate of Arts program for a total of 183 programs as potential data sources. From these 183 programs, I further excluded 22 programs located outside of the United States and Canada in order to gauge typical LC environments as a reference point for technical communication pedagogy and because my own teaching occurs within a LC culture. This narrowing resulted in 161 remaining programs. From this list of 161 programs, I located 83 syllabi by conducting a web search that combined each school’s and/or department’s name with one term from Group A and one term from Group B:

- Group A: technical, professional, business, intercultural, international, cross-cultural, and;

- Group B: communication, writing.

When more than one relevant syllabus appeared in the search results per course listing, I selected the syllabus with the highest ranking from each school. This was done so that the study would not be stacked with a large number of syllabi from a single school, offering a broader look at curricula nationwide. I could not find syllabi available online
for 96 of STC’s original 161. I collected syllabi from 65 different universities, with seven of those 65 universities making more than one course available (e.g., a syllabus from Introduction to Technical Communication and a syllabus from Advanced Technical Communication at the same school). They are not, however, necessarily representative of other sections of the same course at the school or the departments from which they came. Based on these parameters, a total of 83 syllabi were collected.

**Thematic analysis.** I began my first cycle of analysis of the collected syllabi by identifying any mention of social media, ITC, or a combination of the two. Of the 83 syllabi collected, 22 referenced social media and/or ITC. In the second cycle of analysis, I developed latent themes to find data referring to how significantly social media and/or ITC components are used in the classroom (using rough equivalencies are established between both areas of focus). To code, I rated instances of these references according to a five point scale that I developed to rank the themed degrees of engagement with social media and with ITC. My scale is based on the pedagogical framework presented by Mehlenbacher and Dicks’ (2004) study of faculty-student research as well as Bloom’s taxonomy (see Table 2.1).
Table 2.1 Themed degrees of engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social Media Themes</th>
<th>Intercultural Communication Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = mention (lowest</td>
<td>Social media are mentioned but not required for use (e.g., the instructor’s Twitter</td>
<td>ITC is mentioned but not elaborated on in the context of the course (e.g., syllabus definition of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level of engagement)</td>
<td>handle is included as contact information).</td>
<td>technical communication makes note of global communication).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = recall</td>
<td>Social media are referenced in the context of the course's work without any reflection</td>
<td>ITC is included in the course work but not reflected upon directly as a subset of technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on this usage (e.g., class readings include information regarding social media).</td>
<td>communication (e.g., class readings include information regarding ITC but not connected back to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the course objectives).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = apply</td>
<td>Social media are used as a class tool, but its role in technical communication is</td>
<td>ITC strategies are reviewed in the context of a subset of technical communication but not further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not discussed (e.g., student use Google Docs or Wikis to collaborate).</td>
<td>elaborated upon (e.g., students use non-Western progress reports to examine cultural distinctions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = reflect</td>
<td>Social media are used a class tool and reflected upon for its use in technical</td>
<td>ITC strategies are reflected upon and employed in the context of a subset of technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communication (e.g., students use Twitter for class activities and discuss how it may</td>
<td>communication (e.g., students create progress reports for a specific non-Western audience).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be employed in the workplace).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The lowest degree of engagement is achieved with the mention of social media tools (e.g., the instructor includes a class hashtag) and ITC issue (e.g., the course overview notes that professional communication may occur internationally). Requiring students to recall or review a social media application or ITC issue marks the next degree. In most instances, this level of engagement occurs through course readings, however, students are not asked to reflect on these readings or to apply the concepts they have read about to achieve the course objectives. Application, the third degree of engagement, requires students to use a hands-on approach and apply social media and/or ITC in the classroom. Students working at this level will use a social media tool (e.g., participate in class Twitter feed or collaborate via Google Docs) to achieve course objectives, but the tool in question is not discussed in relation to the practice of technical communication. For ITC, students may look to an international document to examine
how cultural differences impact the creation of this document, but they do not create another document on their own based on these findings. The fourth degree of engagement is the **reflective** use of social media and/or ITC. Whereas in degree three the components are merely used, in degree four the components utilized and then considered in relation to the practice of technical communication (e.g., create a LinkedIn profile and then discuss how this network might be utilized by an organization for recruitment purposes; examine a variety of reports from a Korean car manufacturer and then create feasibility reports that would appeal to that company’s board of directors).

Finally, the highest level of engagement requires students to complicate and **integrate** these components in relation to technical communication. For social media, integration may occur as students become familiar and comfortable with microblogging and then utilize Twitter as a tool to manage a real-time presentation and reflect on how that tool might be best used in such situations, for example. A traditional technical communication deliverable, such as a progress report, can be integrated with ITC as students learn about culturally diverse audiences. Students might write progress reports for a transnational company such as Anheuser-Busch InBev with headquarters in Belgium and Brazil, and manufacturing in Western Europe, North America, Latin America, and South America. I applied this coding scheme to all syllabi and then categorized each engagement by topic.
Categorizing technical communication topics and applying the engagement scale. After ranking each themed engagement I found in the syllabi, I grouped them into topics that often define technical communication coursework: presenting, reviewing/evaluating/testing, designing documents, considering ethics and legalities, collaborating, determining audience characteristics, and researching. I further broke down the topics of designing documents, considering ethics and legalities, collaborating, determining audience characteristics, and researching into specific sub-topics commonly reflected in technical communication textbooks (Markel, 2013; Pfeiffer and Adkins, 2013; Lannon and Gurak, 2011).

For the categories of presenting, reviewing/evaluating/testing, and designing documents, I viewed engagements in light of how class presentations were created and conducted using social media or ITC components; how students review/evaluate/test documents for information, purpose, or usability; and how document design features varied based on social media and ITC application (how do visual and linguistic choices change based on the inclusion of social media and/or ITC).

To examine how the syllabi might consider ethics and legalities, each course was first reviewed for themes referring to copyright and intellectual property law. Within the realm of social media, copyright and IP play a pivotal role in the ways students can utilize images, sound and video, while international laws regarding copyright vary between governments. The role of citation was classified on its own due to the distinct
implications of social media and ITC. Concerns abound as to the proper citation of blogs, status posts, Twitter feeds, etc., meanwhile, in ITC citation has important implications as many cultures view citation as optional or unnecessary. Chinese academics, for example, traditionally view their work as open-source and to require citation would seem exploitative (Wang, 2008). In this category, social media and ITC each have specific associations with professional codes of conduct (how does an individual represent him or herself online; how do codes of conduct change between cultural groups) as well as obligations to the employer and the public (what legal obligations must be followed in public online environments; what legal obligations are necessary when dealing with international law). Finally, this category included the issues of liability in regard to social media and ITC. In the area of social media, technical communicators need to be concerned with the quality of information provided online as well as the use of personal information (e.g., safeguarding links to malware and spam, protecting users’ identifying information) (Redmond, 2012). ITC practitioners find themselves concerned with liability as they move to reformat and appropriate information across cultures. An organization can inadvertently misrepresent itself by not adhering to cultural directives. For example, in order to operate according to the laws of Saudi Arabia, IKEA removed female models and references to alcohol from the 2012 catalog disseminated in that region (Molin, 2012).
Syllabi engagements were then categorized for themes of collaboration. Collaboration ranged from managing projects, which included managing of team members and group contributions, to conducting meetings (including faculty-student communication). Most of this was done via collaboration software (e.g., Skype, Google Docs, wikis), which is not necessarily synonymous with social media. However, these technologies follow the Hurley and Kimme Hea definition stated in Chapter one, and therefore achieve the objectives of this analysis\(^5\). Viewing the syllabi in this manner is necessary as collaboration is a workplace tool that has been long-viewed as an essential strategy for effective communication (Thompson, 2001; Burnett and Duin, 1993; Frederickson, 2011; Abbott, 2011). The shift to online, intercultural communication creates the opportunity for such collaboration to occur remotely over large distances. In the area of ITC, these engagements were more focused on the role of collaboration and the ways in which collaboration varies between cultural groups (e.g., how might a project leader approach managing a group of Japanese technical communicators vs. American technical communicators, or how a project leader might act when the team is multicultural). I added the issue of civility and conflict to this section to cover the social media concerns of collaborating with little to no face-to-face contact and the ITC

\(^5\) This definition states that social media are technologies that allow and encourage user interaction and content generation.
concern of cultural disagreements (including conflicts due to politics, religion, and ideology).

In order to understand the backgrounds students brought to the issues of social media and ITC, and to comprehend the networked natures of both areas, it was necessary to examine the syllabi’s attention to determining audience characteristics. Audience characteristics in the sub-fields of social media and ITC are complicated due to the backgrounds of the technical communicator, the organization, and the client, as well as the fluid nature of both social media and ITC as means of communication. As each technical communicator comes to the table with different backgrounds, so does the interpretation of the backgrounds and roles of his or her counterparts (Rice, 2005). This category asked how the networked connections of the technical communicator or the connections he or she holds (to culture, place, prejudices, history, etc.) might come into play when utilizing social media and ITC in the classroom. When considering identity, the engagements were examined for references to audience assumptions of identity, such as assuming an audience has Internet access - a concern of both social media and ITC; and contextual concerns (e.g., social media students focusing on the limitations of using the 140 character Twitter message for consumer feedback, or ITC students researching the role of communication limitations in environments with tight government control like China). Audience characteristics also included engagements with the scope of technical communication (i.e., who is reached by certain
communication practices?) and medium (i.e., how are messages disseminated?). The effect of scope on social media is seen when students consider what tools are used to reach a particular audience (e.g., students question what applications are used by what demographics), and medium translates to the type of media selected for communication (e.g., can a student effectively reach an audience through Flickr vs. Facebook). Scope and medium concerns ITC as technical communicators reflect on regional characteristics, such as how demographics are reached in international communities where educational levels vary from the United States—scope; and how components like surveillance and propaganda are used in countries like North Korea or Iran—medium.

The final category in this analysis was research, which included primary and secondary research as well as the development of tools for research purposes. Social media as a tool itself may be used for primary research (e.g., send a question to an expert via Twitter or LinkedIn) and secondary research (e.g., pull articles and information from the Facebook feeds of news services like NPR or the New York Times). Developing tools for research in social media requires students to use applications for field specific purposes such as setting a specific network search on Google+ or LinkedIn in order to find information and/or connect with experts in the field. ITC research is employed in more traditional means, involving primary and secondary resources through the use of interviews and surveys with ITC practitioners (primary), and finding/reviewing ITC documentation (secondary). Research tool development in ITC
requires students to create research criteria based on their understanding of cultural
distinctions, such as keyword searching based on non-native idiomatic expressions.

Assessment of the pedagogical use of each engagement only exists as far as each
syllabus provided an explanation, and therefore the findings of this study take into
account the understanding that informal engagements (e.g., impromptu class
discussions based on course readings, non-graded activities) could not be evaluated.
While this presents limitations on the study’s findings, the syllabi in question provided
a solid overview of course outcomes and a variety of project goals.

**How the Syllabi Engage Students with Social Media ITC**

Twenty two syllabi made reference to 23 social media engagements and 16
ITC engagements, for a total of 39 specific pedagogical engagements (see Table 2.2). For
social media, only five instances were rated at level four or five, or highly engaged. ITC
references in syllabi included eight highly engaged instances, rated at four or five on the
scale.

**Social media engagement.** The most prominent instance of social media
engagement occurred in the category of collaboration (see Table 2.2). Most of this
activity happened with student work in wikis and Google Docs, and with the mention
of Twitter use and instructor Skype handles. Most of these instances did not exceed
three on the engagement scale, culminating in use but not utilization for course goals
and reflections.
Table 2.2: Social Media Engagements ranked and categorized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engaged in Social Media</th>
<th>Engagement Scale Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing, Evaluating, and Testing Documents</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing Documents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Content (graphics, typography, design)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic Content (planning, drafting, revision)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considering Ethics &amp; Legalities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright &amp; Intellectual Property</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Codes of Conduct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligations to Employer and Public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Projects</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting Meetings</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civility &amp; Conflict</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining Audience Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools/Tool Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High engagement of social media was seen in three syllabi using these tools for presenting and reviewing/evaluating. Two assignments on separate syllabi specifically called for students to work in collaboration online. One project, required at a
Midwestern Research University/Very High (RU/VH)\(^6\) asked students to present a cohesive grant application at the culmination of the semester. Students then communicate outside of the classroom by the online method they deem most useful to their needs. The assignment’s objective includes the necessity to work effectively without face-to-face meetings and maintain quality and management standards while accomplishing the task. The second syllabi, offered at a northeastern RU/VH, presented a project which requires the use of a wiki to collaboratively revise a previous project. In this project, students post a technical description (a deliverable from a previous project) in the class wiki and work collectively to revise their work. The goals of the project are to collaborate effectively, request feedback in a useful manner, and conduct thoughtful revision. While the goals of these two projects – effective collaboration, strong writing abilities, and revision skills - apply to traditional modes and rhetorical goals as well, students need to switch gears to operate in a digital space. Therefore, students practice traditional writing skills, but instructors are able to incorporate progressive strategies for developing new proficiencies.

Three syllabi focused largely on social media and used these instances for students to reflect on how applications like Twitter could be integrated into a presentation and how social media can be applied in particular technical

\(^6\) University classifications are derived from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/
communication situations. A presentation project at a large southeastern RU/VH used Atkinson’s 2009 *The Backchannel: How Audiences are Using Twitter and Social Media and Changing Presentations Forever*, where students are exposed to the real-time impact of participatory culture, which workplace studies frequently note as important when developing and maintaining an organization’s online presence. The backchannel project reflecting Atkinson’s presentation model requires students to work in teams and present feasibility reports while managing live audience response on Twitter. Students act to direct the Twitter conversation by providing a unique hashtag, posting follow-up information, and providing links to detailed explanations throughout their presentation. Members of the team must field questions sent to the Twitter hashtag by audience members while addressing questions in person. The aim of this project is to provide students with an awareness of audience participation and management, while altering their writing style to maintain effectiveness within the 140-character limit of the medium.

Another syllabus, located at a different southeastern RU/VH, further explores the role of consumer participant outside of the classroom through a project examining crowdsourcing. Students examine online responses on consumer review websites and analyze the rhetorical moves taken by the reviewers. Students consider how they would manage such responses and provide traditional reports that offer potential solutions to organizations dealing with crowdsourced responses, both positive and negative.
**ITC engagement.** Examination for engagement with ITC was primarily found in courses using ITC as a major focus, concentrating on identity, scope, medium, and as a source of secondary research (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: ITC Engagements ranked and categorized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Scale Levels</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presenting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing, Evaluating, and Testing Documents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Designing Documents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Content (graphics, typography, design)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic Content (planning, drafting, revision)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Considering Ethics &amp; Legalities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright &amp; Intellectual Property</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Codes of Conduct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligations to Employer and Public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborating</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civility &amp; Conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Determining Audience Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Researching</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools/Tool Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seven different syllabi included readings and videos which discussed the identity and the implications associated with intercultural and multicultural audiences. However, these implications were not translated into student reflection on the discipline or used in hands-on activities.

Among these syllabi, two courses, both sited at the same large four-year northwestern university, focused specifically on ITC as a sub-field and carefully examined the implications of audiences in this area. The first course at this university concentrated on the use of propaganda and information sharing across cultures with the intention of asking students to reflect on contemporary issues impacting technical communication. These issues were then considered in light of document design, asking students to report on the characteristics of global communication processes on local contexts. Additionally, this syllabus listed one course objective as understanding the impact of new technologies on various cultures. Students were therefore required to consider their ethical responsibility to their audiences when considering medium, access, and the reaction of cultures to various technical communication practices.

The second course concentrating on ITC presented the course goal of creating ITC competencies, and noted that students would examine media types (e.g., news outlets, internet) to comprehend apparent patterns of identity and scope of communication. While these syllabi did not detail specific assignments, the course
objectives of each demonstrated high engagement with these topics and thorough student engagement in the area of ITC.

**Social media and ITC engaged in relation to one another.** In reviewing the full collection of syllabi, none of these courses incorporated social media with ITC (see Table 2.4). Rather, the two sub-fields stood alone in all syllabi in this study.

Table 2.4: All Engagements ranked and categorized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagements</th>
<th>Social Media Levels Scaled</th>
<th>ITC Levels Scaled</th>
<th>Social Media with ITC Levels Scaled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presenting</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing, Evaluating, Testing Documents</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing Documents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Content (graphics, typography, design)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic Content (planning, drafting, revision)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considering Ethics &amp; Legalities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright &amp; Intellectual Property</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Codes of Conduct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligations to Employer and Public Liability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This analysis, while in need of a larger sample for a more comprehensive assessment of program features, presents the disconnection between the areas of social media writing and international technical communication - not one syllabi demonstrated a convergence of social media and ITC.
Connecting Social Media and ITC in the Classroom

Current workplace research demonstrates the value of an overt connection between these sub-fields as technical communicators work in increasingly global capacities and utilize social media for professional communication. The themes found in the syllabi reviewed here demonstrate some use of social media applications and ITC resources, but they do not connect the two foci in ways that reflect current trends in technical communication research or practice.

Connecting the classroom to the workplace. Online social networking is still a relatively new, classroom topic emerging as a key facet of technical communication (Pitt, et al, 2011; Kaplan and Haenlin, 2009; Shaikh, 2009). Review of these syllabi demonstrates that while many courses recognize the need to develop skills that can vary across media, only a handful are making the shift to social media writing. Technical communication practitioners are using social media in the workplace and, as explained in Chapter three, there is an exigency for these tools in ITC. The unexpected finding is that social media are not showing up in syllabi at the level of engagement necessary to prepare students for this work. Educators should be reacting more directly to shifts in workplace practice to demonstrate the application of academic concepts to real-world use.

Those that are examining these interfaces are doing so with innovation that parallels the practices seen in the technical communication workplace. Instructors who
incorporate these new skills are doing so typically through the use of supplemental sources outside of traditional textbooks (with the noted exception of Atkinson) and often privileging social media blogs like *Mashable* and *Forbes Tech*. Creating projects that reflect these workplace requires some ingenuity (and may ultimately save employers from providing additional on-the-ground training).

A similar phenomenon occurs in the area of ITC as organizations develop expanded international presences. In light of the recent domestic American economic downturn, the uncertainty of the European Union, and bold new trade legislation like the US and EU’s recent agreements with South Korea, organizations are motivated to increase bilateral international capabilities beyond the Western Hemispheric (Cherry, 2012; Bolle and Jackson, 2011; Cooper, Manyin, Jurenas and Platzer, 2011). As a result, the business sector in Japan, China, South Korea and India are seeing an influx of American activity in their regions (Smith, 2012). This expansion of international practice results in more technical communicators finding themselves in positions that require ITC competencies (Boswood, 1999). Students need to be made aware of how to effectively operate across cultural borders, acknowledging the differences between HC and LC situations and audiences online (as well as off).

The University of Minnesota’s Internationalizing the On-Campus Curriculum (IOCC) program seeks to create a framework for technical communication courses that embraces intercultural variances. Shelly Smith and Victoria Mikelonis (2011) explained
a specific technical communication program that addresses assumptions, goals and exercises in regard to teaching students to use rhetorical skills to describe, interpret, and evaluate (D.I.E.) cultural artifacts with the intention of “understanding…the underlying values, attitudes, and beliefs that resulted in the behaviors exhibited by the members of a different culture” (p.100). This program aspires to prepare technical communicators to write for a wider professional audience, while still accomplishing the goals of their organization. One of their most successful, hands-on exercises presented writing instructors at a teaching workshop with seemingly unrelated items, including an assortment of sticks, shells, and twine. Collaboratively, participants used the D.I.E. method to determine that these items could be used to depict a map in this specific culture (in this example, Micronesian tribes). Exercises such as this one allowed participants to call on their own cultural background and understanding, while using their comprehension of a particular culture as well as HC and LC contexts. The researchers emphasized that the goal of exercises like these in the classroom this is not for students to agree or embrace the distinctions of a particular culture, but to understand it as a relevant force in their activity as technical communicators. It’s an exercise that might translate well to the undergraduate technical writing classroom as we seek to expand students’ competencies for work in global contexts.

**Building curriculum to reflect the thematic findings.** Curricular design needs to be expanded to include global social media in order to prepare students for these
technical communication situations. By examining technical communication practices, as well as perceptions of online communication and social media, in both the United States and non-Western nations, and incorporating multiple cultures into curricular practice, technical communicators can prepare themselves to avoid imposing Western-style communication practices while delving into substantial cultural application that will allow for more fruitful professional relationships. For example, hoteliers in the U.S. and abroad are commonly concerned that they lack the ability to discern false and misleading commentary from constructive and critical user interactions on social media platforms (Ayeh et al, 2012). A social media manager is appointed to determine real from fake commentary (Streitfeld, 2012). By connecting this high level of insight into digital tone with an awareness of HC cultural distinctions, a technical communicator in this role approaches an international social media community in an effective manner. Technical writing programs can tailor curricula to help meet the growing demand for professionalized social media that operates at this high level.

Tools for social media and ITC can be connected in technical communication in a variety of ways. Adding a cultural element to the digital projects seen in these syllabi could offer such opportunities. For example, students can consider how other cultures use and react to Twitter when approaching the backchannel presentation assignment described earlier. The project’s goal (in addition to the collaborative presentation model and real-time response) is for students to develop strategies specific to non-Western
audiences (how would this presentation look/sound/feel if developed for an audience in Mumbai or Tokyo?). This expansion of the backchannel project necessitates student research into how the character limit and directed nature of this medium impacts new audiences. Chapter five of this dissertation project presents a full program with six specific deliverables and assessment rubrics for integrating these concepts. Bringing social media ITC into the classroom does not need to disrupt current institutional degree programs in their entirety, but rather these skills can be added to current objectives to round out an already existing curriculum.

Furthermore, primary research might integrate social media with ITC students’ use of Twitter to connect with governmental agencies, specific businesses, and leaders in the ITC community through strategic tweeting. Such exercises would require students to rhetorically reflect on the selection of appropriate hashtags, and participate current Twitter conversations (Santosh, 2013). In this manner, students have the opportunity to cross geographical borders and open up the potential for research while taking into consideration the context of the microblog tool.

Another potential project in the technical communication classroom could be a demonstration of the role of the global social media release (SMR), which calls on the multidirectional nature of social network communication as well as the management of audience response, and requires the students to consider cultural context in its use (Pitt et al, 2011). Similar to a press release, a SMR is disseminated through various social
media channels, the choice of which is dependent on the goals of the organization supporting the release. Like the service learning social media project, this assignment requires students to consider which social medium best applies to an organization and the target audience. Additionally, a project utilizing global SMR requires students to take into account the cultural context of the organization and audience to ensure that any verbal and visual cues are both understood and appreciated by the target group. This project would work well as a collaborative assignment that incorporates global organizations (i.e. small non-profit groups) seeking to expand their online presence.

Integrating digital social media and ITC into current curricular frameworks does not need to be a daunting task. Many of the traditional lessons used in a technical communication project can be adapted and updated to incorporate digital media and cultural examinations. Students’ ability to operate in a wider professional atmosphere can be explored while the rhetorical analysis required of technical communication students is still utilized, and course outcomes still met.

Limitations and Future Directions

Examining this collection of syllabi is the tip of a very large iceberg. To get a multidimensional picture of ITC/social media pedagogy, a mixed methods study that incorporates interviews with program administrators is necessary. A sample from 65 programs is just that, a sample; it doesn’t speak to larger trends. A larger analysis is needed to present a more complete picture of both the current pedagogical activity
occurring in American universities and the contemporary role of technical communicators in the field of ITC.

Despite its absence from the classroom, the role of social media ITC, should not be underestimated. Since 2005, social media use among American adults has jumped 800%, with Twitter seeing a usage leap of 125% in 2010 to 2013 alone (Olenski, 2013). Taking advantage of these trends to find new ways to reach customers, American businesses are rapidly shifting to communication methods which utilize social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Google+. Adoption of social media among users is not solely seen in the United States; social media applications are seeing exponential growth internationally as well. In Japan, for instance, Facebook grew by 7.5 million users between 2011 and 2012 (Einhorn and Yamaguchi, 2012), while the popular Japanese SMS service Line saw growth to 50 million users in 2013 (Akimoto, 2013). Despite these seemingly parallel trends in individual social media use, Japanese businesses do not seem to embrace these tools as a professional means of communicating with consumers.

Chapter three continues this discussion by demonstrating the rhetorical exigency of social media ITC through the lens of Japanese businesses. I point out that there is evidence to suggest that HC cultures are moving toward online interactions for both domestic and international business, but in many cases lack the skills to employ social media technologies effectively. In situations like this, foreign businesses would benefit
from relationships with Western technical communicators, which we as teachers can implement in our classrooms. Chapters four and five of this project offer insight into what curricular changes are needed in American universities and present a plan for executing these changes. Investigating the ways in which technical communication practitioners in countries like Japan, India, and China use social media to advance their professional objectives can help teachers develop the tools needed to better prepare students to enter the global workforce.

In order to better convey to students how cultural differences affect technical communication practices, instructors might establish a global service learning initiative focused on social media work that partners Western students with non-Western clients (and vice versa). The potential advantages of these pairing are considerable. Like all service learning initiatives, international service learning partnerships would offer experiential benefits. But this pairing would offer the added bonus of positioning writing students in a position of authority as they offer their own expertise in the nuances of social media to overseas organizations new to these digital spaces and grateful for that expertise. These partnerships could also build professional bonds between American students, academics, and our international practitioner colleagues that might be key to a richer understanding of how to best prepare students to work in online global environments.
Chapter 3: Intercultural Social Media Use: A Study in Japanese Professional Social Media

As Chapter two considered the contexts in which social media and ITC currently are addressed in technical communication in the U.S., Chapter three presents evidence that social media ITC is indeed a necessary application of technical communication, and posits the question: how are large Japanese corporations using social media? Is there evidence that this practice is evolving? In this chapter I explore the different ways American and Japanese businesses deploy social media, provide evidence for the rhetorical exigence of social media ITC in technical communication curricula, and explain why this allows educators to better prepare writing students to operate across cultural boundaries as professional communicators.

In what follows, I argue that such differences expose variances in notions of professional identity, consumer roles, and rhetorical implications of social media for professional purposes in Japan. Supporting this claim are the findings of a 2013 content analysis of the 100 largest Japanese companies’ social media presence on one or more of the following applications: Twitter, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Line (a popular Japan-based SMS service). This chapter explores the constraints placed on professional social media use through the paired lens of identity and culture. Burke
(1950) examined the role of identity in shaping how individuals react to one another, claiming that identification in its essence exists as a means to classify groups in order to place them (and divide them) within one’s own worldview – in this case the worldview created through the lens of social media usage. Identification for Burke, however, occurs before communication and is not necessarily a conscious act. Acknowledging and addressing identification classifications brings these factors into the open and creates the opportunity the address the constraints they incur. As described in Chapters one and two, Hall (1976) argues for a theory of HC and LC cultures, asserting that LC cultures value action and output as opposed to the HC valuation of interaction and association. Such cultural cues are placed in flux when entering the public, online sphere of social media, creating the potential for dissimilarity in practice.

To assist American students’ abilities to operate effectively in global writing communities writing studies in the United States must concern itself with the incorporation of communicative practices of non-Western nations. The growing use of social networking tools like Twitter in the American classroom can provide quick access to educational materials and illustrate colloquial language use to non-native English speakers. Furthermore, providing students in the writing classroom with the tools to operate across cultural boundaries allows them the opportunity to hone their writing skills to reach a wider rhetorical audience through a larger set of media.
Social Media at Work

In their four-year study of professional use of social media by American technical communicators, Toni Ferro and Mark Zachry (2014) found that social media was considered a necessity when operating in the field of knowledge work. They noted that social media allowed collaboration between projects as well as provided an ongoing awareness of projects occurring elsewhere. It can be argued, then, that social media enhances collaborative efforts in the workplace. At the same time, however, the public nature of many social media platforms serves to complicate collaboration, making it difficult for some to trust the applications. According to Andrew Feenberg’s (2002) *Transforming Technology: Critical Theory of Technology Revisited*, there are traditionally two distinct ways technology and its use are viewed. According this theory, technology is either Instrumental or Substantive, that is neutral or holding elements of control, respectively. His critical theory of technology came as a result of the need for a third classification, one that “charts the difficult course between resignation and utopia. It analyzes the new forms of oppression associated with modern society and argues that they are subject to new challenges” (loc. 248). Social media brings about this difficult course, and begs the question; do we collaborate through social media because the technology makes it easier or because it genuinely benefits our knowledge-making process (are we resigning ourselves or enjoying a utopia)? After all, we now have the ability to communicate across geopolitical borders, but we also find ourselves having to
manage the legal and cultural issues of intellectual property ownership, copyright infringement, and social hierarchy (and how they play out in different regions) (Boyle, 2012; Lessig, 2004). The more people involved, the larger the perceived threat.

When considering how social media impacts writing, it is key to acknowledge how these media exist as symbolic representation of culture. Kimme Hea (2014) asserts that social media are not defined by the parameters of its platform, but rather “social media are symbolic representations, metaphors, articulations, assemblages of cultural systems of knowledge and power” (p. 2). Knowledge work cannot exist in a vacuum, and the expectations users bring to social media have a direct impact on how these platforms are used and the persona created through these uses. Twitter, for example, through its concise 140 character structure, does not allow for explanations of context. While this certainly allows users to present an idea quickly, it also creates a situation where missteps are easy to make, and individuals or organizations can be easily embarrassed (Bowdon, 2014). In a culture that holds respect in high regard, such as the Japanese, this opens up a Pandora’s Box of possible negative outcomes.

While these considerations are important for individual users, the ante is raised when an organization or business implements social media. A business has a reputation on the line and trusting employees to use social media responsibly becomes a serious issue. American companies frequently create employee policy documents detailing how individuals associated with the company should maintain their presence online.
Network equipment manufacturer Cisco, for example, specifically addresses their connection with individual social media accounts noting that employees must clarify that any information posted outside of Cisco’s own sites be disassociated:

If you identify yourself as a Cisco employee on any Internet posting, refer to the work done by Cisco or provide a link on a Cisco website, you are required to include the following disclaimer in a reasonably prominent place: “the views expressed on this post are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views of Cisco” (Cisco, 2008).

Companies further extend such polices to consumers who use the official social media presence to provide feedback, ask questions, receive information, etc. Bank of America addresses that the role of the social media application is to provide information, not to create a relationship between the consumer and the organization: “Your accessing of our sites in no way shall be deemed to create an agency or employee-employer relationship of any kind between you and Bank of America” (Bank of America Social Media Terms of Use, 2014). Therefore, even the notion that social media can be utilized as a networking tool for creating interpersonal consumer-business relationships is often negated.

So, then, why do American businesses seem to be building their social media presence and integrating such applications into their marketing plans? Social media are not only another avenue for companies to market their goods and services, but, in many
instances, it allows them to engage in “social listening” in order to determine the needs of consumer groups (Smith, 2014). Additionally, when a company appears “human” through their online presence, be it through quick Facebook response turnarounds or consistent positive retweets, consumers are likely to act as “brand ambassadors” and market a brand or product for the company – for free (Chung, 2011). As such, the company benefits from creating a presence users can trust and presenting their organization in a positive light. In order to do this, American businesses are turning to social media coordinators who are skilled in the ability to create an online persona and meet the needs of consumers. These communicators are able to write effectively across social media platforms, balance a variety of applications appropriately, and build an online audience. As markets become ever more global, however, global writers must further expand their expertise to include cross-cultural considerations. Specifically in the case of large Japanese companies, social media creates problems with identity and the concern over embarrassing oneself and one’s organization online.

Identity and “Saving Face”

When an individual interacts with a foreign culture, he or she brings certain expectations with him or her based on past experiences, learned ideas, personal culture and interests. These elements influence reactions to the new foreign culture that will be experienced. How one reacts to these cultural differences are integral concerns for the professional writer practicing in the global marketplace. Considerations of identity and
how culture manifests itself through both individuals and group organizations are necessary for operating within these cultural variances. In the specific instance of American writers working within Japanese cultural paradigms, the phenomenon of “saving face” further complicates communication practices. Adding the element of social media to these practices brings concerns about the inability to control communication and adequately prepare employees to manage online interactions (Higashizawa and Hirai, 2014).

If through identification we come to understand group divisions, a group that is recognized as different is treated as such. If groups are identified as valuable to each other, they will have a better ability to work cohesively. If one group, however, views itself as dominant, the balance is skewed and needs to be reframed in order for a unified, cooperative relationship to exist. It is this requirement for a unified relationship, and a clear understanding of the hierarchy of that relationship that produces the Japanese social norm of “saving face.”

In order for groups to work effectively together, each must understand how and why they identify the other, as well as how the other group identifies itself. The groups do not need to share an identity in order to succeed in a partnership, and coming together on particular points does not devalue one or another’s identity: “…two persons may be identified in terms of some principle they share in common, an ‘identification’ that does not deny their distinctions” (Burke, 1950, p. 21). Furthermore,
it is important to clarify how and why groups identify with and separate from each other. Ambiguous identification leads to conflict. The question then becomes, if we reframe the ways we identify, will we avoid conflict? Burke claims that recognizing different identities within a group leads to strife, and therefore the need to consider the rhetorical situation. He notes: “put identification and division ambiguously together, so that you cannot know for certain just where one ends and the other begins, and you have the characteristic invitation to rhetoric” (Burke, 1950, p. 25). If the two groups placed together, in this case American professional and technical writers and large Japanese businesses, understand each other’s identities, they will be able to work more cohesively. If one or both groups, however, do not have a clear sense of the other’s identity, the partnership may encounter strife. As communication between these groups grows ever more digital, the ability to communicate without direct interpersonal relationships has the capacity to strain the relationship’s growth. In order to create and take part in useful communication, the moral codes of each group need to be examined.

Japanese codes present a view of professional relationships that differs from the West. The ideal business relationship in Japan focuses on the group dynamic and the need to work in harmony with others. In their analysis of Asian organizational behavior, Joo Yup Kim and Sang Hoon Nam (1998) note that the goals of the group supersede the goals of the individual, and “if a conflict arises, it is regarded as more honorable for individuals to give up their personal goals in favor of the collective goals.
In this cultural context, to act in accordance with the expectations of others rather than with private wishes and attributes has a moral component” (Kim and Nam, 1998, p.526). Taking into account that activity (communication) is closely linked to identity, individuals should be expected to react to specialized communication in accordance with their perceived identifications and these reactions to activity vary widely depending on cultural disparities. Identity considerations, therefore, create much of the friction seen in multicultural interactions, but are equally responsible for fruitful relationships.

Hall’s (1976) HC and LC cultural theory factors in such relationships and contends that a HC culture shares similar cultural attitudes and beliefs, while a LC culture is more diverse and less likely to share deeply ingrained traditions. Hall’s theory extends to how individuals and groups interact, and the steps they take within those interactions, which he defines as “action chains.” He notes that actions chains impact the relations within a HC or LC culture based on how dedicated an individual is to those action chains. In a HC culture the more likely the individuals feel invested in the action chain and more likely to adhere to its expectations. Conversely, this investment “makes for great caution and often reluctance to begin something particularly in fields or relationships that are not well known” (Hall, 1976, p. 148). As such, people living in a HC society are more likely to be involved in a variety of activities with multiple individuals at once – concentrating on the benefit of
interpersonal relationships and their impact on the group as a whole. Those in an LC society are more likely to focus on a single relationship at a time, with the emphasis being on completing an action chain as opposed to building a stronger interpersonal relationship.

Social media in its essence confounds this emphasis. By definition, social media are “social,” exists among many individuals and groups, and encourages users to communicate with each other in a public forum. The advent of social media has offered writers a public space to employ their skills in concise communication and public writing. The realm of digital media opens up an effective space for teaching writing studies. Blogs, Facebook pages, and Twitter have become spaces for organizations to release information and reach target audiences quickly and efficiently.

While successful in a LC culture, the use of professional social media applications is not prevalent in Japan’s HC society. Hall’s (1976) examination of relationships points out that LC “action chains are built around human relations” (p.150). Social media, which can be perceived as a fabricated network, does not allow such relations to exist the same way they would in a face-to-face interaction. Moreover, social media changes organizational structure and business hierarchy by changing who is considered a co-worker. Business interactions may now occur via social media and cross traditional office-level boundaries. Therefore, workers find themselves negotiating professional relationships, projects, and plans with partners outside the traditional
company structure including other offices, complementary companies, and contractors (Ferro and Zachry, 2014). Within Japanese business culture, then, there is an inherent distrust of these networks.

Furthermore, social media in its essence breaks down the hierarchy that Japanese culture holds in high esteem. A client can contact a company via Twitter to make a complaint or recommendation, but the company loses the initial opportunity to connect that client with a representative prior to the issue being made public. The traditional customer service route is therefore broken down. Since the notion of saving face does not merely reflect on the individual, but on the group (or organization) as a whole, a business that opens itself up to commentary via social media also opens itself up to losing face (Stedham et al, 2008; Forster, 2000; Kim and Nam, 1998).

The difficulty of engaging in social media across cultures thus becomes two-fold. On one hand, the American writers in professional contexts need to attempt to understand (even generally) the cultural identity and expectations of the foreign organization. On the other hand, the organization unfamiliar with social media uses needs to become comfortable with its nuances. The latter brings up a slew of problems with fundamental changes to identity. Henry Giroux (2005) contends that an outside

---

7 Saving face in business contexts may appear as overt politeness to American professionals. For example, a Japanese individual attempting to save face for her employer may refuse to answer a question by saying “chotto matte, kudasai” (ちょっと待ってください), which literally means “one moment, please.” In professional conversation this response implies “I will not answer your question, let’s not discuss this again” without embarrassing anyone in the conversation.
identity must not be forced upon a group. Rather, identity studies need to offer an avenue whereby these differences can be examined, understood and accepted to allow for fruitful alliance: “initially identity politics offered a powerful challenge to the hegemonic notion that Eurocentric culture is superior to other cultures and traditions by offering political and cultural vocabularies to subordinated groups by which they could reconstruct their own histories and give voice to their individual and collective identities” (p. 149).

In a business setting, in order to save face, the focus for the Japanese professional is to adhere to the accepted hierarchy of the organization. The American focus, alternately, is to adhere to the needs of the organization without such concern for professional hierarchy. (Luthans, McCaul and Dodd, 1985; Kim and Nam, 1998). The Japanese employee, then, is concerned with how he or she may appear in the eyes of both supervisors and peers, and how his or her actions may impact them. Any action taken by the employee reflects directly back on coworkers – for better or worse. For the Japanese individual, then, there is a great risk for shaming not just oneself, but the organization as a whole if the hierarchy is broken down or misused. In the case of real-time communication via social media, the loss of face-to-face cues makes such errors easy and is therefore worrisome to the communicator concerned with his or her “face.” The communication avenue of social media seems to be rising through the growth of small business ventures in Japan (Fackler, 2013; Erasmus, 2012). For the time being,
however, the large, dominant businesses in Japan shy away from the real-time interactivity offered by various social media platforms. In the following content analysis, I examine the social media use of Japan’s largest public businesses and address the shift in technical communication currently emerging in the Japanese market.

**Content Analysis of the Online Presence of Japanese Businesses**

The thematic analysis presented in Chapter two pointed to a deficit in technical communication curriculum design via a lack of social media ITC education. This content analysis sought to demonstrate evidence for the rhetorical exigency of social media ITC, and argues for the necessity of building relationships between American and Japanese technical communicators, as well as creating partnerships between American technical communicators and Japanese businesses.

**Site selection.** To better understand how large Japanese companies are deploying social media, this content analysis focused on the top 100 Japanese companies, according to the Forbes Global 2000 list, “an annual list of the world’s 2000 largest [by revenue] publicly listed corporations” ("Forbes global 2000," 2013). Each company is headquartered and managed in Japan, though many of them conduct business internationally as well.
### Number of Establishments and Persons Engaged \(^1\) (2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Number of establishments</th>
<th>Number of persons engaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,453,835</td>
<td>55,837,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By industry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fisheries</td>
<td>30,717</td>
<td>356,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying of stone and gravel</td>
<td>2,286</td>
<td>21,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>525,457</td>
<td>3,876,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>493,380</td>
<td>9,247,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas, heat supply and water</td>
<td>3,935</td>
<td>201,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and communications</td>
<td>67,204</td>
<td>1,627,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and postal activities</td>
<td>135,468</td>
<td>3,301,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and retail trade</td>
<td>1,405,021</td>
<td>11,746,468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and insurance</td>
<td>88,831</td>
<td>1,589,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate and goods rental and leasing</td>
<td>379,719</td>
<td>1,473,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific research, professional and technical services</td>
<td>219,470</td>
<td>1,663,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodations, eating and drinking services</td>
<td>711,733</td>
<td>5,420,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lent-related and personal services and amusement services</td>
<td>480,617</td>
<td>2,545,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, learning support</td>
<td>161,287</td>
<td>1,721,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical, health care and welfare</td>
<td>358,997</td>
<td>6,178,938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound services</td>
<td>33,357</td>
<td>342,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services, n.e.c.</td>
<td>356,156</td>
<td>4,321,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By type of legal organizations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual proprietorships</td>
<td>2,204,704</td>
<td>6,374,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations</td>
<td>3,218,023</td>
<td>49,327,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companies</td>
<td>2,839,291</td>
<td>41,921,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations other than corporations</td>
<td>30,908</td>
<td>135,731</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Excluding businesses whose operational details are unknown, national government services, or local government services.

Source: Statistics Bureau, MIC; Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

Figure 3.1 2012 figures listing the number of active businesses in Japan. Retrieved from the Statistics Bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication

While this content analysis provides insight into how Japanese businesses are using social media to communicate with customers, it is limited due to the relatively small sample size of 100 companies, all publically traded. According to the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, nearly 5.5 million businesses operated in Japan in 2012, both public and private, covering an array of industries (see Figure 3.1). In comparison, 100 companies seems insignificant, however, their combined
value in the Japanese market is $2.085 trillion, making these companies worth 51% of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE)\(^8\).

I acknowledge that there is an obvious limitation in my site selection. Due to the IRB and cultural constraints explained in Chapter one, I was unable to speak directly with Japanese businesses or Japanese technical communicators. The information garnered from the content analysis of websites, however, demonstrated that evidence exists to support my argument for integrating social media ITC in American classrooms. Additionally, these initial sites provided data that will support future research on this subject.

**Content analysis.** The first cycle of analysis consisted of content references to each company’s social media presence on the homepage. If a social media presence was not indicated, sites that offered a search function were further searched for references to Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, Google+, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Line. The final method of finding a social media presence was to conduct a Google search for the company and its social media account (e.g., Mizuho Financial Japan Twitter). English or global versions of home pages were not used, as many of the pages directed towards other languages also alter page design and information from the Japanese page. Pages in Japanese were skimmed for familiar social media icons, then translated via Google translate. Search

---

\(^8\) The TSE lists 2,292 publically traded companies, with a total market capitalization of $4.09 trillion. Calculations based on the Forbes Global 2000 and the Japan Exchange Group.
functions were conducted using Japanese kana alphabet characters (i.e., a search for Twitter would be searched as ツイッター). Additionally, when examining the Facebook and Twitter accounts for Japanese companies, the research relied on the automatic translation provided by Bing through the social media application.

Of the 100 companies investigated, only 25 have a social media presence through one or more of the following applications: Twitter, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Line. Twitter and Facebook are the most prevalently used. I rated instances of all contextual clues referencing social media use according to a five point scale developed to rank degrees of engagement with consumers and business partners. This scale is based on the pedagogical framework presented by Mehlenbacher and Dick’s (2004) study of faculty-student research as their structure lent themselves well to the degrees I wanted to employ in this analysis, as well as Bloom’s taxonomy which provided an example of degree levels. The degrees of engagement refer to how significantly social media content demonstrated professional communication between each company and its consumers (see Table 3.1).

The lowest degree of engagement is achieved with indication, or using a social media tool (e.g., Twitter, Facebook) available through the company’s homepage or Google search to provide basic information about the company. Companies that use social media tools to inform, providing consumers with updated company information and news, achieve the next degree. This second engagement level differs from level one
in that it consistently and reliably updates information, which may include (but are not limited to) links to new product pages, images of company activities, and retweets from various company departments. **Administer**, the third degree of engagement, dictates that a company uses its social media presence to gain information from consumers. Companies may do this through polling or crowdsourcing of information, but once the companies collect this information, they do not follow-up the conversation with the consumer regarding his or her responses. For example, a company may request feedback on a new logo, but the ways in which that feedback is used is not shared until a final decision is made (and shared, usually via level 2 engagement, inform).

Furthermore, the company does not ask responders why they made a particular selection or choice at this level. The next level of engagement requires the company to **connect** with consumers and business partners directly. This level involves the company responding to consumers’ comments, though often to direct them to a different means of communication (i.e. requesting that a consumer contact the company via phone during business hours). An example of a company connecting also occurs via Twitter when a company quotes a tweet from a specific department or business partner, adding commentary and/or follow-up for its own followers. Finally, the fifth and highest level of engagement involves companies directly **coordinating** with consumers via social media. This level requires the company to respond quickly and accurately to consumer questions and reviews. At this level, consumer concerns are, at least initially,
managed through the social media application itself and provide other consumers the opportunity to coordinate with each other and the company, chiming in with additional feedback and real-time advice. This level of engagement may be seen when a consumer asks a software company for technical support and is met with troubleshooting responses from both the company’s own IT department and other clients who have dealt with the same issue.

Table 3.1: Content references and degrees of engagement via social media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Content References for Social Media Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = indicate (lowest level of engagement)</td>
<td>Social media provides company information only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = inform</td>
<td>Social media disseminated updated company information and/or news. Does not offer a means for consumers to respond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = administer</td>
<td>Social media are used to poll or crowd source information from consumers. Company does not respond to consumers’ responses via social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = connect</td>
<td>Social media are used to communicate directly with consumers regarding company news and/or information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = coordinate (highest level of engagement)</td>
<td>Social media consists of real-time consumer reviews and helplines. Company communicates immediately via social media with consumers regarding updates, products, questions, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Categorizing and applying the engagement scale. After examining each company’s social media use, I examined the number of companies using a particular application, with Twitter and Facebook being the most common (see Table 3.2). Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO), for example, employs two distinct Twitter feeds. The company, which was responsible for maintaining the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant that incurred massive damage following the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami, has one Twitter feed (@OfficialTEPCO) for general TEPCO news (i.e. local outages, updated systems, etc.) and a second (@TEPCO_nuclear) for updates regarding the ongoing efforts to clean up the Fukushima region and stabilize the damaged nuclear facility (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3).

Figure 3.2 TEPCO’s Official Twitter Account
Translation courtesy of Bing Translate: “■ Let ■ Announces Outlook for energy usage for tomorrow (7 / 9). Expected maximum power is 32900000 kW (14-15 pm) the power supply during peak hours is 41850000 kW, is 78% of expected usage for that time period.”

Figure 3.3 TEPCO’s Twitter Account dedicated to Fukushima Daiichi cleanup
Translation courtesy of Bing Translate: “Bypass water temp is about drainage from storage tanks (Gr3) continued. Have carried out the drains to the ocean than today (6/30) 10:22 drainage has finished on 3:06 PM on the same day. About effluent volumes 1165 tons.”

Additionally, some homepage links to various social media sites were broken and unable to be found via Google searches, and Fujitsu Japan’s Twitter account is a global account – not an account specific to Japanese users.
Table 3.2: Social Media Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Application</th>
<th>Number of companies using application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>18**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>2**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>1***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flickr</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Instances of Social Media Usage</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Two Twitter feeds exist for Tokyo Electric Power as a result of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster; the feed for Daiichi Sankyo Corp has no activity; Fujitsu Japan’s homepage only links to global Twitter account.

**Facebook and Google+ accounts for Kao Corp link from homepage, but apply to individual products not the company itself.

***Dentsu PR notes on Twitter that they have a Line account, but it is not accessible through home page or google search.

Each social media instance was further categorized by the kind of component used: image, video, press release, social media release, and RSS feed (see Table 3.3), with each component tied to the type of information typically distributed. The most common components seen in the media use were images and social media releases (SMRs). Images were commonly employed to display new products. Sony’s Facebook

---

9 Instagram was not included in this analysis. While widespread in the United States, the photo-sharing service is not popular in Japan, and is not mentioned in large-scale social media user analyses. (Wong, 2015; Akimoto, 2013).
Eleven companies use their social media presence to present SMRs. Specific information can be sent via a “blend of the traditional press release and digital social media” (Pitt, Parent, Steyn, Berthon and Money, 2011, p. 123). The Chubu Electric Company uses its Twitter account (@Official_Chuden) to share infographics (see Figure 3.5) on the implementation of new technologies as well as links to news releases on recent power supply issues.

Notably, only five companies use video to provide information or display products. Three of these companies use specific YouTube channels to organize video collections, and the other two instances occur with videos uploaded to Facebook.
Subaru’s YouTube channel offers consumers insight into the company’s manufacturing process, videos of new models, and even a series on the company’s highly rigorous driving schools in Japan. Throughout the analysis, a few traditional press releases and RSS feed links were seen via social media. These components were available directly on the companies’ websites, but since they did not appear in the social media presence, they were not included as part of this analysis.

Table 3.3: Components used when engaging through social media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Component</th>
<th>Instances of use in social media application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Images</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press Release</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Release</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSS Feed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the 45 instances of social media seen across the 25 companies using such media, a total of 43 instances were scaled according to the levels of engagement (see Table 3.4). Of these 43 instances, 29 employed a level two engagement. At this level, social media are used to provide updated information to consumers, but does not pursue any further involvement with individuals reading the information. If someone would want to contact the company regarding the material presented, he or she would
have to navigate to the company’s homepage and search for specific contact information.

For example, Canon Japan’s Twitter (@Canon_PSR) feed provides coupons and links to new products on display at the Ginza, Tokyo showroom. The feed explicitly states in its introduction that any messages received via Twitter cannot be answered in this medium, and then links to the showroom’s website, where consumers can find answers to their questions or contact information for interpersonal communication with Canon’s staff. The company’s Facebook marketing page (which is differentiated from its non-product related Facebook accounts, since the company also owned sports teams), provides consumers with detailed information on new products, including a large collection of images and links to the company’s website. Consumers use this forum to comment on the products and discuss the information among themselves, but Canon representatives did not respond to their comments. Alternately, Canon’s American-based corporate Twitter account (@CanonUSA) retweets comments and images regarding their products and asks consumers to respond to polls and questions by using the hashtag #Canon.

In the analysis of the Japanese companies’ social media use, seven companies engaged with the various social media at a level four or five. SECOM, a large private security firm based in Tokyo, uses its Facebook account to provide up-to-date information on security issues, including illness outbreaks and system errors.
Consumers use the medium to ask questions and provide localized updates. For instance, on January 16, 2014, the company provided information regarding a missing child. Comments by followers updated the situation until SECOM was able to note that the child had been safely found. The company thanked its followers for staying on top of the situation and encouraged further comments and conversation regarding future cases.

Table 3.4: Social Media Engagements by Japanese companies ranked and categorized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Application</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google +</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flickr</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Kao Corp Facebook and Google+ sites not scaled.

**Japanese vs. American Trends in Social Media**

The results of this content analysis indicate that while 25% of Japan’s largest corporations are using social media applications, the methods of use are limited. Companies that choose to employ social media do so as a marketing tool, providing
information to consumers, but are not using these applications for further business enhancement (e.g. polling consumer needs, answering questions, requesting feedback). While such methods of attracting and maintaining consumers are common in the United States, a lack of use in Japan may be due to the risk of social media disrupting traditional Japanese organizational hierarchy.

Japanese companies appear aware of the social media preference with their Western audience. Of the 100 companies examined in this chapter, 97 have separate English language (EL) sites. These sites often resemble the Japanese site, but nearly 25% of them include specific social media geared to English speaking audiences (most notably American, British, Australian, and Indian site visitors). Furthermore, of these EL sites with social media, ten do not include it on their Japanese language (JL) page – thereby only connecting on social networks with EL users. Alternately, 14 of the 100 Japanese companies include social media on both the JL and EL sites. Meanwhile, 97 of the top 100 American companies according to Forbes have specific, company-sponsored social media accounts (the remaining three use social media but do not have a single, dedicated corporate account).

A quick examination of the top five Japanese companies from this analysis with websites dedicated specifically to EL consumers (Toyota Motor, Honda Motor, Nissan Motor, Hitachi and Canon) demonstrated a minimum of level 4 engagement with consumers in at least one social media platform. Honda Motors USA explicitly
addresses brand ambassadorship by asking followers of its Facebook page to post their experiences with the company’s cars: “Have a #FirstHonda story to share? Post it on our timeline and claim your spot in Honda history”. In line with these EL examples, *eMarketer*, a digital media marketing trade publication, expected to see growth in businesses using social media in the United States in 2014, with 88% of companies utilizing applications like Twitter and Facebook to connect with consumers (“The Year of Social?” 2014). This differentiation of sites based on audience, as well as the Japanese government’s call for foreign social media expertise explained in Chapter one, shows that Japanese companies see the need to appeal to their English-speaking consumers via social media, yet still avoid doing so with Japanese-speaking clientele.

To address this discrepancy between American and Japanese social media practices, global writing practitioners using social media in this cross-cultural setting need to understand and redefine their roles and the roles of their audiences. As Bernadette Longo (2013) points out (specifically addressing the global technical writing practitioner), in order to operate effectively in an intercultural setting, American writers need to rethink how to operate in a global market, taking into consideration how culture impacts their writing, design, etc. Additionally, Longo notes, aside from just acknowledging the cultural awareness needed to create high quality products, technical communicators also need to adapt to situations calling for intercultural collaboration and interpersonal communication. Situational awareness is necessary for a writer to
understand the complexities of the audience’s identity. In the case of Japan, the American writer who wishes to employ social media must grasp the concept of “saving face” while also acknowledging the framework of the workplace as it differs from that of the United States.

Saving face and relationship building via online communication is already beginning in Japan. Japanese social media users demonstrate that relationships and connections that previously did not exist are being built via platforms like Twitter. For example, in a 2014 analysis of Twitter use following the Fukushima earthquake and subsequent nuclear power plant disaster, researchers found that the act of retweeting created authority in a message and led to increased communication between individuals and groups regarding the event (Lee and Phang, 2015). Additionally, using official hashtags gave users a sense of trust that is commonly associated with cultural hierarchy in Japan (Acar and Muraki, 2011).

**Where does this lead?** As noted in chapter one, small businesses in Japan are increasingly turning to social media to connect with consumers. The growing Japanese microbrew industry is a prime example of this. Minoh Beer, for example, links to Twitter and Facebook, and has a blog that allows customer interaction. The Twitter feed’s (@minohbeer) active management allows for immediate retweeting of consumer comments, directly linking consumers to the brewery. The company’s Facebook page offers company information, but also posts pictures that have been shared of people
enjoying their beer and as such, the brewery creates a relationship with consumers that feels personal. Crafthands is a bar/restaurant in Tokyo specializing in Japanese microbrews and has a similar social media presence to Minoh. Crafthands’s Twitter feed (@Craft_beer_wine) provides information about the different drinks currently on tap while the bar’s Facebook page offers restaurant details and updates. What sets the microbrew industry apart as an example of highly engaged social media use, however, is the development of publications like the Japan Beer Times. This online magazine is linked to Twitter (@JapanBeerTimes) and Google+, and frequently connects directly with consumers, local breweries, and bars specializing in microbrews.

While difficult to quantify, an increase in social media use is evident in startups and small businesses across Japan, and this is likely due to the growing popularity of social media for personal use among younger generations. This is not just a “youth” movement, however, but rather demonstrates a change (though admittedly still slight) in cultural norms throughout Japan. Tomoyaki Okada’s (2005) study of Japanese mobile phone (keitai denwa 携帯電話) use concludes that advances in communications technology are driven by the Japanese youths’ desire to create distance from traditional family hierarchies. Young people in Japan use stickers and other personalization tools in platforms like LINE to create unique personae online and tailor their personal online experience (these stickers saw a large jump in use through LINE and Facebook especially in 2013) (see Figure 3.6). The desire to create a personal experience with the
consumer is one that is embraced in the United States and seen in popular advertising slogans like McDonald’s “I’m lovin it,” or Hallmark’s “When you care enough to send the very best.” As Japanese users increasingly identify with this personal experience-based consumer relationship, the role of social media in professional relationships will follow suit.

**Preparing Writing Students for Work in Global Work**

Our students’ experiences in a transnational world includes more than what is in their town, state and even country. Students are bombarded with information from across the globe which relates to their lives. For example, students looking to enter the job market upon graduation must consider how their prospects are impacted by the economic downturn (or upturn) of a particular region (i.e. how does the relationship of the euro to the dollar influence business), or how certain areas of the world are affected by political upheaval (i.e. how are professional relationships in Turkey influenced by turmoil in Syria).

Existing research in the field of global English (Canagarajah, 2006; Muchiri, Mulamba, Myers, and Ndoloi, 1995) suggests the need to focus on the issue of global education and the impact of global communication practices. On a domestic level, writing teachers have a responsibility to prepare students for working in a globalized world, while training them to share established research and pedagogical models with colleagues in other nations.
Students need to relate to foreign voices and interact with individuals from other cultures after graduation. Just as we consider cultural nuances within the American classroom, so must we consider the diverse cultures existing outside of the United States whose people communicate via online platforms. Social media invites students to cross linguistic and geographical barriers as they communicate (Kostelnick, 2011; Canagarajah, 2006). It is against this ever-globalizing backdrop that we as scholars of writing studies must consider how writing students might cross these cultural and physical borders with the help of social media.

It’s easier to say “teach our students to acknowledge culture in their writing,” than to manage it in our writing classrooms. Achieving the ability to communicate interculturally in a single semester of composition, expository writing, technical communication, or professional writing is simply impossible. Therefore, we need to address what is not possible to achieve in a short 15-week semester, but needs to be integrated across an entire major program of study.

According to Ferro and Zachry (2014), if American students are taught to take cultural variables into account when communicating online, they can evolve that characteristic over time as site use changes and service needs progress. They point out that writing classrooms are already embracing social media communication as a means to demonstrate agency through writing and that “conversations with students might include consideration of content and ownership” (Ferro and Zachry, 2014, p.9).
Furthermore they suggest that writing classrooms shift the pedagogical focus from learning how to use a "site" (the application itself) to learning how to effectively employ a "service" (what the application does). Doing this addresses the issue of the constant changing of social media writing, since this study shows how frequently site use changes: "Students need to learn to communicate effectively through services, not only to operate the sites that are currently most popular in their network" (Ferro and Zachry, 2014, 20). Illustrating for students how a particular mode of communication may be altered depending on its cultural context establishes the necessity of keeping these contexts in mind when writing in such spaces.

For example, a classroom assignment might utilize Twitter to teach concision. Students are responsible for creating Tweets (of the same general message) that are applicable to a variety of audiences (professional, personal, familial, etc.). Once students understand how to effectively communicate in 140 characters across known audiences, the role of the international audience can be introduced. After a discussion of cultural context and viewing the ways in which a particular culture uses this social media, students create new Tweets – again with the same general message. How would they communicate this message via Twitter to a professional colleague in Japan? A friend?

In this way, social media moves beyond a mere instrument that students should learn to use. Rather, it needs to be viewed as a system of communicative devices where
students have agency to cross cultural lines. The technology in use is treated as a cultural object that students need to operate with full understanding of its complexities, “Without a sense of these [culturally nuanced] issues, students cannot see themselves as agents, and they certainly cannot use social media with rhetorical responsibility” (Versoza Hurley and Kimme Hea, 2014, p.58).

Integrating cultural context awareness with writing does not require a complete overhaul of curriculum or course outcomes. Such practices can be added to current social media and public writing lessons being utilized in the classroom – just with an added step. As students progress through a major program of study, the integration becomes more advanced and specific, showing student writers how their rhetorical choices change between cultural situations and demonstrating how to move between these contexts with greater ease.

**Creating student awareness.** Social media writing and public writing are growing in popularity in the writing classroom as writing teachers see the growing avenue for creating student-writer agency and real-world rhetorical awareness. Writing students need to be aware of the role of culture in these public spaces, and this role is expanding to intercultural contexts. Fittingly, pedagogical moves in the writing classroom need to develop students’ situational awareness via social media as well as the expectations and assumptions brought to their own knowledge-work.
When considering the specific context of communication with Japan, the third largest economy in the world according to both the IMF and World Bank (IMF, 2013; World Bank, 2013), cultural considerations of professional and social hierarchy are key factors for students operating effectively as global communicators – a role we set them up for when they leave our classrooms. Scholars of writing studies must therefore be aware of cultural contexts and impart on our students the importance of acknowledging the different ways by which writing occurs across cultural and geopolitical borders.

The conclusions of this analysis assert the need for writing teachers to be aware of varying cultural contexts as expressed through global social media use (Canagarajah, 2006; Hall, 1976; Wurtz, 2005). Such cultural contexts vary greatly between countries that routinely do business together and are easily identified in West to non-West relationships (Richardson and Smith, 2007). Furthermore, globalized writing practices are concerned with the ability to build and maintain strong professional relationships, while being attentive to the differing cultural spaces in which communication occurs. It is therefore the responsibility of the writing teacher to integrate classroom practices in global social media use into curricular plans with the intention of preparing students to more effectively communicate globally and actively participate as social media writers both within and beyond their cultural borders.

This content analysis identified contextual clues that demonstrated the similarities and differences seen across America and Japanese social media business
practices – an arena many of our students may find themselves entering upon graduation. It found a large discrepancy in social media use, but also identifies that the role of social media are changing in the Japanese culture as personalization and consumer-to-business roles evolve. Moving forward, American writing classrooms can integrate intercultural contexts in the social media writing curriculum, demonstrating to students how their own persona differs between these contexts; ultimately providing students with the initial skills necessary to operate effectively in various cultural situations. Such integration, however, is not easy, therefore chapter four proposes a way to undertake this task, and addresses the challenges educators can expect to meet when shifting to an intercultural focus.
Chapter 4: Blended Online Service-Learning and its Challenges in an Intercultural Environment

The previous chapters argued that social media ITC is a necessary element of current technical communication, and that the lack of social media curriculum is problematic. Building on these suppositions, the question now shifts to: how can we remedy this? Technical communication educators need to provide students with the tools necessary for critically engaging with technology while operating from a place of intercultural awareness. To do this, I propose a service-learning program to immerse students in intercultural situations while affording them the availability of faculty mentorship and university resources. This program places technical communication students are in an online service-learning program with a blended classroom approach that pairs American students with Japanese organizations (both for- and non-profit). Chapter four presents the macro-objectives for this program and addresses challenges that instructors may experience while building and maintaining this program. Chapter five follows with a detailed description of the program, its deliverables, and its assessments.

This service-learning program I outline in the conclusion of this dissertation uses a blended approach (i.e., the class meets in physical classroom while conducting
service-learning tasks online) to connect American technical communication students with professional partners abroad. This chapter explains the benefits of this approach and how intercultural influences on information behavior (i.e., the ways humans react to information, specifically in relation to cultural expectations) impact the work students do in the program. Additionally, I explicate the challenges instructors can expect to encounter as well as tactics for managing these challenges.

Service-learning programs are not without complications in their most basic and straightforward incarnations, and branching into international service-learning (ISL) compounds many of these potential obstacles. Traditionally, a service-learning program connects students to their community and provides a service to benefit local economies and initiatives (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996). An internationally focused service-learning program connects students to the global community and shows them how their expertise can be used to benefit future colleagues worldwide. To demonstrate the feasibility of this program, this chapter explains how layering literacies (e.g., using complementary but discursive elements to problem solve) addresses potential content pitfalls, describes why a service-learning program is an effective approach (even in an intercultural environment), examines its inherent challenges, and suggests tactics for its introduction and management.
Global Service-Learning

In order to better convey to students how cultural differences affect technical communication practices, I recommend universities with technical communication curriculum implement a global service-learning initiative focused on social media ITC that partners Western students with non-Western clients (and vice versa).

Defining service-learning is not an easy task. While frequently conflated with community engagement (CE) service-learning is a specific type of CE (Jacoby, 2015). The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (2015) defines CE as community stakeholders and universities “[collaborating] for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.” Catherine Matthews and Beverly B. Zimmerman (1999) assert that a review of the literature points to at least 147 different descriptions of service-learning, but most seem to hone in on a few key aspects: the learning is experiential, the student works in a real-time environment, and the student uses academic skills to provide a service (Soria and Weiner, 2013; Bringle, Hatcher, and Jones, 2010; Bringle and Hatcher, 1996). Barbara Jacoby (2015), in her text on the essentials of service-learning, states that such programs are designed with the specific intention of promoting student awareness of context in relation to the issues they address (e.g., cultural environment, historical background, and/or economic framework of the region), and must include a clear sense of reciprocity (i.e., the program must be mutually beneficial to both the student and the partner.
organization). For the purposes of this dissertation project I referenced Jacoby’s definition of service-learning in conjunction with that of the National Community service Act of 1990:

- Students must learn as they participate in service that meets an actual community need.
- Service and academics must be integrated by reflection.
- Students must have the opportunity to use new skills in real situations in their own community.
- The class must cultivate a sense of caring for others (qtd. in Matthews and Zimmerman, 1999, p.384).

This project also calls on the ISL definitions provided by Robert Bringle, Julie Hatcher, and Steven Jones (2010), where ISL connects service-learning, study abroad, and international education. The authors assert that adding an international component to service-learning allows students to examine the differences between foreign and domestic perspectives. Robbin D. Crabtree (2013) builds on this description, suggesting ISL as a contributor to “productive conversations about meaningful enactments of global relations” (p.53). Conducting ISL as a blended online course will allow more students to connect their academic concepts to real life skills, while addressing the exigence of social media ITC.
A blended online approach (as opposed to a study abroad program) would alleviate student financial concerns – study abroad is prohibitively expensive for many – as well as allow students to continue making progress towards their degree. An average study abroad semester costs $17,785 (Stansbury, 2013) and limits the amount of credit hours a student can transfer back to his or her home institution. A traditional, on the ground ISL project may be shorter in length, but still incurs significant burdens of cost, time, and travel. A blended service-learning course keeps students on their home campus, completing other required coursework, while engaging with organizations overseas.

The potential advantages of pairing American students with Japanese businesses are substantial. Like all service-learning initiatives, ISL partnerships would offer experiential benefits. But this pairing would offer the added bonus of placing writing students in a position of responsibility as they offer their own expertise in the nuances of social media to overseas organizations new to these digital spaces and in need of that expertise. These partnerships could also build professional bonds between American students, academics and our international practitioner colleagues that might be key to a richer understanding of how to best prepare students to work in online global environments.

Sending large numbers of students abroad to experience these practices, however, is not feasible, and such initiatives need to be accessible to all technical
communication students. A potential method of achieving these goals is through what Richard Rice (2013) terms “‘smart’ connect-exchange intercultural study abroad models” (p.106). Rice’s model presents university-to-university partnerships that connect student groups via virtual lessons, which originate in varying locations (in Rice’s case, the United States and India). While this model focuses on direct communication practices and includes a physical study abroad component, a similar program could be established to digitally connect non-Western businesses to American students in a blended classroom.

A blended online approach. Conducting this program with a blended learning approach allows students to benefit from learning on their home campus while working with an international partner. Moving in and out of the classroom and online environments gives students the opportunity to work with each other as well as independently as needed. Blended learning in this way creates student groups who can assist one another even while conducting service-learning projects thousands of miles apart. In this way, students can avoid a sense of alienation from their home university while away and upon returning, common pitfalls of study abroad (Wielkiewicz and Turkowski, 2006; Chamove and Soeterik, 2006), since “one of the most specific advantages of blended learning is the opportunity to quickly establish a sense of community amongst student learners” (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004).
A blended learning approach benefits students and faculty in a variety of ways. Keeping students on campus provides the obvious benefit of maintaining a student-faculty relationship. Faculty members are able to oversee student work and maintain a mentoring relationship. The blended learning model keeps students in the classroom, interacting with instructors and classmates on a regular basis, thereby developing strong classroom associations, which have been tied to better learning outcomes (Strother, 2011). Additionally, classroom meetings foster the student-faculty mentoring relationship, increasing student retention as well as faculty investment (Campbell, 2011; Campbell and Campbell, 1997). Faculty members who personally interact with students and see the fruits of a mentoring relationship are likely to dedicate more time and effort to constructing feedback and ensuring the course evolves as necessitated by changes in student and program needs. Furthermore, a blended learning approach allows the institution to manage the program’s curriculum and keep cohort groups focused on progress toward the degree. Alternately, in a study-abroad setting, students may not have direct contact with their home institution (as in a study-abroad partnership) and may be limited in the number of credit hours they can complete while away.

The other side of the blended learning equation is the experience students gain from working in face-to-face teams while still practicing in an online workplace. Student tasks in a service-learning program are real and students are held accountable to an outside organization. While this sounds similar to an internship (e.g., students are
hired by a company or organization with compensation coming in the form of academic credit) the difference between this and an internship is that class meetings are held in conjunction with the students’ work and course assessments/grades are dependent on projects necessitated by the partner organization.

The program, whose detailed curriculum is outlined in the final chapter, requires a great deal of investment on the part of the instructor, but such a program is arguably necessary in the current market students are expected to enter upon graduation. By connecting class materials directly to the workplace, students are prepared to employ a variety of skills as technical communicators. This differs from a traditional internship in that students are able to discuss a variety of implications for technical communication practices in the classroom while carrying out those practices to the specifications of a single employer. This ability to discuss implications echoes on the program’s reliance on discursive knowledge practices. Students who contemplate their experiences through classroom reflection are more likely to view their work as a collaborative effort with their service-learning counterparts as opposed to that of an ethnographic outsider (Himley, 2004). For example, by examining the specific needs of the partner organization, the cultural differences between the organization and the student, and the student’s own online technical communication capabilities, a student can find common ground between cultural differences and avoid ethnocentric or xenophobic responses.
**Information behavior.** This service-learning program gives students the opportunity to gain a variety of skills, but unlike local partnerships, this Japan-based partnership presents the task of managing intercultural information behavior. The data in chapter two suggests that American technical communication programs may not be meeting the needs of students in regard to social media, international technical communication, or the combination of the two. This program addresses these sub-fields in conjunction with one another while speaking to audience concerns in Japanese business. The HC culture of Japan approaches audience awareness differently from that of an LC culture. Since communicating information is so closely linked to culture, it’s imperative that ITC and social media be emphasized in conjunction. It is simply not possible to discuss ITC and social media and not consider the context of the specific cultures at play.

Ji-Hyun Kim (2013) notes that in order to communicate and share ideas effectively across cultures, we need to be aware of and responsive to information behaviors – how those of differing cultures access information (e.g., where they may first glance at a website; what kinds of gatherings make them the most/least comfortable). The ways an individual from an LC culture uses social media will likely differ from that of an individual in an HC culture. Kim points out that while the common thinking has been that individuals within a culture have a similar way of thinking, modern technology is eroding those inter-cultural connections. It is necessary,
therefore to evolve communication strategies to cover traditional cultural associations as well as those that may be altered as a younger generation experiences more diverse cultures online: "New communication technologies seem to increase cross-cultural fertilization and reduce national cultural differences because they enable web users to make, build and renew connections with people who are geographically dispersed" (Kim, 2013). While this complicates the sharing of information between LC and HC technical communicators, it also opens the door to use social media technology in innovative ways.

In the past, shared online resources were revised to meet the local needs of individual audiences. Companies would take steps to provide international users with materials edited to take into account the nuances of a culture’s communication and the expectations of those users. Internal online marketing firms labeled this revision process “localization,” and made it a standard practice among large firms (Zhu & St, Amant, 2007). Localized resources were often provided as such on a case-by-case basis (e.g., one cultural audience may prefer a document to be highly textual, while another favored visual aids). This works well for routine B2B communication (the audience is always the same), but is highly problematic in social media communication that reaches large, varied groups of people.

Herein lies the conundrum of social media ITC: how does the technical communicator reach a large audience via social media, while adhering to the social
constructs necessary to successfully communicate with a foreign culture? The rhetorical responsibilities are huge and require the technical communicator to comprehend the nuances of both the group and the medium – while also acknowledging that these nuances shift within cultural settings.

The goal of this program is to help students address these distinctions and shifts in communication styles by making them take account of information behaviors. Employing students in a real-world environment, not one merely fabricated by classroom activities, places them in direct contact with these issues. Alternately, the partner organization learns how to manage a social media campaign that effectively appeals to their client base.

Layering literacies. Integrating technology and confronting intercultural situations necessitates reflection and discursive knowledge building in the technical communication classroom. These elements are complicated on their own, and even more so when brought together, therefore managing instruction and allowing for reflective practice is essential for student understanding. Such discursive parts also act to allow students to come to a deeper understanding of the needs of the partner organization, accounting for cultural distinctions.

In considering teaching technology and demonstrating to students how to take a critical approach, Melinda Turnley (2007) states that information cannot be provided in isolated batches. She suggests that students develop “layered literacies that combine
basic, rhetorical, social, technological, ethical, and critical skills” (p. 104). Using these varied skills in conjunction with one another also requires that students employ ethical methods as they are faced with appealing to a multiple stakeholders through these layers. Layering these skills, Turnley argues, allows students to reflect on each stage of their growth as a technical communicator and provides educators with a venue for undertaking the issues of ethnocentrism, xenocentrism and simple discomfort.

I propose in Chapter five that a way to combat the previously mentioned pitfalls of social media and ITC is through reflective practice. Teaching students to employ stasis theory to ask practical questions (e.g., what are the specific concerns of the organization?), addresses this concern. Stasis theory, as H. Allen Brizee (2008) asserts, “gives us a practical heuristic to help teams sort out the issues involved in document development while fostering the development of new ideas” (p.369). Chapter five demonstrates that stasis theory can be utilized in the social media ITC classroom, presenting an opportunity for students to walk through the potential obstacles of working with an intercultural client and audience, while creating options for managing these obstacles. Students using stasis theory think reflexively to identify a problem and manage the options for handling said problem, thereby “assert[ing] their position as workplace knowledge inventors rather than passive translators of technical information” (Brizee, 2008, p. 368). Students are thereby able to view the various parts
of an issue, see how different organizational parts are scaffolded, and develop their own plans to suit the evolving needs of the partner organization.

Implementing elements of blended online learning, information behavior, and layered literacies is a task many instructors already undertake. Placing these elements in the environment of intercultural service-learning poses challenges which may be daunting. This chapter addresses those challenges and offers possible solutions for those wishing to build and maintain this program.

**Challenges of Service-Learning**

Service-learning breaks from the traditional lecture-based classroom model, requires instructors to be constantly tuned into student work and requires a large amount of pre-course legwork on the part of the instructor. Therefore, such programs may be intimidating to some instructors. Compound these concerns with the introduction of international partners, and many educators may be reluctant to take part in the program. The challenges inherent with this program need not be deal breakers; however, and in what follows I present possible solutions to the most likely obstacles to this program: placement within a degree program, finding international partnerships and building and maintaining relationships with partners. For a list of reading resources for both students and teachers, see Appendix A.

**Challenge 1: Situating the program in the context of existing technical communication degree programs.** Before educators can concern themselves with the
necessary relationships of service-learning, the program needs to find a place in the existing degree program. A one-size-fits all program is not practical since degree programs already have specific requirements articulated by institution and department. These requirements vary widely, as demonstrated by Lisa Meloncon and Sally Henschel (2013), with current technical communication majors existing across multiple departments (i.e., English, Communications, Humanities, Language and Literature, etc.) and degree types (i.e., BA and BS). For that reason, this program is intended to be integrated into the current departmental design, with length and requirement options built in\(^\text{10}\).

This program is designed with upper-division (junior and senior standing) technical communication majors in mind. While the program can certainly be altered, or elements revised to meet the needs of non-major courses, this particular program is geared toward students who expect to enter the technical communication workforce upon graduation. Additionally, these students should have already completed intro-level technical communication and have a basic understanding of professional writing and formatting (e.g., how to write a report); however, prior experience with Web 2.0 technologies or social media coordination is not anticipated.

\(^{10}\text{While not designed to be an exclusively online program (this program envisions students meeting in a traditional classroom), the deliverables described in chapter five can be modified to fit a service-elearning course. In an online course, the instructor’s relationship with the partner organization remains paramount, however, additional tactics need to be put in place to adequately observe the student-client interactions and activities (Bourelle, 2014).}\)
The program itself involves students conducting social media writing for foreign audiences. This writing primarily takes place in an online workplace setting via organizational partnerships, and the specific course deliverables depend on the needs of the partner. While ideally working towards long-term relationships, a service-learning program is not one size fits all. Therefore, depending on the amount of time available and the requirements of the degree program, the service-learning program can be conducted in three time frames: a partial semester, a full semester, and a dual semester or full year. Suggestions for how to separate deliverables for differing course length is provided in chapter five. In each incarnation of the program, however, students are assigned to teams and matched with organizational partners by the instructor. Each version of the program uses the same macro objectives, with the micro objectives described in chapter five varying depending on the length of the program selected.

*Engagement and objectives.* In order to build this program, curricular objectives were developed with the intention of informing project deliverables, individual assignments - as well as student assessment. Considering the objectives for the curriculum (e.g., the goals I wanted the curriculum to achieve) helped design the proposed pedagogy, and articulating deliverable outcomes (e.g., the concrete skills I
wanted students to walk away with) clarified how student participants will be assessed. These outcomes are described in detail in the final chapter.

In chapter two, I examined existing syllabi for instances of social media integration and ITC. In this examination, I created and used a five-point taxonomic scale for analyzing degree of engagement. When I designed the curriculum for this program, I returned to that scale - and considered these levels as course objectives - to formulate curriculum objectives: course goals, project goals, and individual pedagogical goals, as seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Curriculum Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxonomic Objectives</th>
<th>Curriculum Objectives</th>
<th>Pedagogical Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = mention (lowest level of engagement)</td>
<td>ITC and social media are mentioned but not required for use.</td>
<td>• Instructor provides a list of foreign social media sites students may visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = recall</td>
<td>ITC and social media are referenced in the context of the course's work.</td>
<td>• Class readings include information regarding intercultural uses of social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = apply</td>
<td>ITC and social media are used as a class tool.</td>
<td>• Instructor provides students with non-Western social media sites to examine cultural distinctions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

11 This is a great deal of disagreement in the definitions of “outcomes” and “objectives” in education, and frequently the two terms are conflated. For the purposes of this project, I used the definitions adhered to by scholars of Outcome Based Education Theory (OBE) with “outcomes” referring to the big goals of a course in its entirety, and “objectives” referring to the assessable skills students should gain from each assignment (Spady, 1994; Malan, 2000).
As with the analysis of syllabi, the lowest degree of engagement is achieved with the mention of intercultural social media. To do this, an instructor may provide a list of social media sites used by foreign organizations for the students to peruse at their leisure. The distinction of this level is that class discussion is not spent examining this list or weighing its implications for the technical communicator. While this level of engagement is not recommended for this program, it may be useful as a resource for introductory courses in technical communication.

**Recalling** or reviewing applications of intercultural social media composes the next degree. This level of engagement, which often occurs through course readings,
may be a pitfall of the blended classroom. Students doing a large portion, if not all, of
the foundational work for a course may fall back on regurgitating information for
quizzes and other low-stakes assessments, and therefore not be able to connect
concepts they have read about to the course objectives. Opting for a lower level of
engagement may be best suited for the early stages of a program when the groundwork
is being laid for developing intercultural technical communication partnerships.

**Application**, the third degree of engagement, is where the proposed program
begins. Before the relationship with the partner organization can be built, the student
must examine the fundamental differences between cultures and how these exhibit
themselves via social media. To accomplish this, the instructor may provide students
with non-Western social media sites. As an introductory step, this should not be done
with any social media presence currently utilized by the partner organization.
Comparing this presence with that of similar American organizations may offer
students an opportunity to discuss the potential expectations of both the foreign
organization and its audience while still in a low-stakes environment. The goal of this
level is to demonstrate cultural affinities and prepare students for their role as technical
communicators with the partner organizations.

The fourth degree of reflection is employed when the students begin to build a
relationship with the partner organization. The curriculum outcome is for students to
see how intercultural social media are used as a tool and reflect on its implications. The
pedagogical goal for this outcome is to exhibit to the partner organization how the students will benefit their online presence. This is accomplished through a feasibility report which will act as both a graded deliverable and a catalyst for managing the organization’s needs. To do this, students need to reflect on the role of social media for intercultural audiences in general as well as the current clientele of the organization. This curricular goal touches each aspect of the service-learning relationship and is incorporated into the entire course.

At the highest level of engagement, students integrate and reflect upon intercultural social media in relation to technical communication. At this level, students use discursive practices in consideration of how tactics may change depending on situation and the changing needs of the client. Students may create social media releases and presentations for their specific partner organization, but in addition to this, will complicate these actions by evaluating how they may change depending on the specific non-Western audience. For example, a student can create a social media release for the partner organization that integrates technical communication concepts discussed in class with the needs of the organization and the student’s understanding of the intended audience. Upon completing this task, students may be asked to reflect on how this release would be revised if the organization’s audience were to expand to another culture (e.g., a Japanese non-profit opens an office in Thailand).
Challenge 2: Finding partnerships. Internationally, language barriers and lack of contacts makes finding partner organizations intimidating. Since one of the elements of service-learning is to address a community need, this concern does not need to be daunting. It is possible to find organizations that recognize their lack of social media coordination and have a desire to increase their intercultural communication abilities.¹²

The heuristic in Table 4.2 provides steps to finding a partner organization, starting with current institutional partnerships. University partnerships offer a potential avenue for overcoming language barriers. For a number of universities, an academic partnership in a foreign country already exists; Temple University, for example, has a branch campus in the Minato-ku neighborhood of Tokyo where students can experience study abroad, and faculty can conduct research. In these situations, professional relationships likely already exist and instructors merely need to tap into this resource. In the event that such a university partnership is not already in place, reaching out to foreign universities is a possibility. Rich Rice (2012) and his team at Texas Tech University searched for a foreign university and eventually partnered with the India-based Central University of Kerala to open a co-located study abroad program. The partnership offered faculty at both locations the opportunity to work with international

¹² I acknowledge that among service-learning scholars there is controversy regarding relationships with corporate entities as opposed to non-profit or community-based organizations. Recent scholarship points to corporate citizenship and the often beneficial role of businesses on university campuses (Jacoby, 2015). For the purposes of this program, I suggest considering both for- and non-profit organizations, provided the arrangement is mutually beneficial and does not exploit student work.
students and provided students at both schools with tangible practice in intercultural communication.

If there is no current university relationship, building one is not feasible, or current relationships do not lend themselves to work on technical communication, the instructor needs to rely on professional organizations, both home and abroad, for assistance. Professional organizations like the Society for Technical Communication (STC) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Communication Society (IEEE ComSoc) include chapters outside of North America. STC has five chapters in four countries (two located in India) while IEEE ComSoc counts over 120 chapters abroad. These organizations exist to link technical communicators to each other and as such are a starting point for discovering international partners. In addition to reaching out to American-based professional societies, organizations located in the desired country are often open to networking opportunities with foreign groups. A list of American schools in Japan and Japanese technical communication organizations is provided in Appendix B.

My own experience, after some initial challenges building professional networks, is that email networking worked well as an initial step for building relationships in Japan. After contacting the Japan chapter of STC, I was directed to the University of Aizu and the Japan Technical Communicators Association (JTCA). Faculty at the University of Aizu were willing to connect me with their own contacts and the JTCA
put me in direct contact with individual technical communicators. Such organizations have a far reach, making it possible to find partners willing to participate and build relationships based on shared professional backgrounds and objectives.

Once a partner organization is identified, instructors can use the heuristic in Table 4.3 to determine if the partnership meets the needs of the service-learning course. Instructors need to be cognizant that not all organizations are open to building a social media presence while others may require more expertise than the students can provide. This heuristic allows the instructor to gain a familiarity with the organization (based on its website, past business, etc.) prior to making contact.

American educators should not shy away from reaching out to professional organizations. Utilizing these networks allows educators to build partnerships and remove what is likely to be the most daunting challenge of this program. From a pedagogical perspective, using these networks also shows students how networking through professional organizations opens doors to international communities, which expands their own professional ethos.
Table 4.2 Heuristic for Finding an Organizational Partner in Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Partial</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does your institution currently have a presence (i.e., a remote campus) in Japan?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. If yes: does the campus or other presence currently engage in community relations with possible partners?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. If no: Is there another American institution that has a local campus that partners with your institution for study abroad purposes? Does this campus currently engage in community relations with possible partners?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. If no: Is there an American campus for another institution that may have possible partners?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do colleagues at your institution have professional connections to possible partners in Japan?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do your regional chapters of professional organizations (e.g., STC, IEEE, etc.) have connections in Japan?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do the Japanese chapters of American professional organizations (e.g., STC, IEEE, etc.) or the local professional chapters (e.g., Japan Technical Communicators Association) have connections?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3 Heuristic for Evaluating Possible Japanese Organizational Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Partial</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the organization currently have a social media presence?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. If yes: is it meeting the higher levels of engagement discussed in Chapter three?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. If no: Is the organization’s mission amenable to a social media presence?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does the organization have English-speaking employees?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is the organization’s framework (e.g., structure, business model, history) appropriate for a service-learning program?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Has the organization voiced an interest in building intercultural and/or international relationships?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Challenge 3: Maintaining partner relationships.** An obstacle to any service-learning program lies in forming and then maintaining relationships with organizations willing to take on the role of service-learning partner. The benefit of the program needs to be clearly apparent to the partner since concerns are bound to arise regarding their responsibility and time commitment with students. The International Partnership for Service-Learning states that the time commitment of the organization needs to be carefully weighed with the service being provided by the student, so that organization does not feel exploited (IPSL, 2015). To clarify student roles, the differences between a

---

13 Organizations with questionable ethics histories (e.g., hiring practices, business partners, etc.) or unstable structures (i.e., frequent overturn of board members) may not be suitable for a service-learning project.
service-learning program and a student internship need to be defined up front. In this service-learning program, students meet with and report directly to an instructor, and the organization has access to the instructor should problems arise. The organization is at no time responsible for assigning course credit to the student – a factor that should appeal to organizations concerned with the time commitment of university paperwork. In regard to the actual work conducted, students will create a social media presence that the organization can either support on its own after the student’s term is complete without additional student involvement, continue with next group of students, or hire a student to continue.

In order to engage professional stakeholders in the service-learning program, educators need to consider themselves to be equal stakeholders. It is not enough to be an observer or grader, the partner organization needs to know the instructor is as invested in the process, if not more so, than the student. In this way, the instructor and the organization become equal partners who create a relationship upon which the program is built. To do this instructors need to treat service-learning as an on-going relationship that informs their research as well as their teaching. As Cushman (2002) points out, ignoring the instructor element puts the program in danger of being unsustainable. Service-learning cannot be viewed as simply another course deliverable, even if the program itself is limited in time, and it requires a concerted effort on the part of the educator to develop goals that complement the professional partner. Cushman
notes that "scholars become both experts and novices in service-learning courses and, thus, they must continually revise their roles as researchers, teachers, and servants according to the zone of proximal development that they encounter" (p. 42). Actively engaging in a clearly defined but evolving role within the service-learning program allows instructors to more fully discern program objectives and work in conjunction with the needs of the partner organization.

Even with complete instructor engagement, there remains risk for the partner organization: How reliable are the students? Will the instructor be approachable and accessible? Are the goals of the course in accordance with the goals of the organization? This risk makes many organizations wary and is doubly problematic in a foreign setting. One way of managing this concern is to place the instructor in the fray with the students. In this role, conversations addressing student-partner challenges can occur frequently, allowing the instructor to establish a rapport with the partner organization and thereby maintain a relationship (Jacoby, 2015). If the instructor is viewed as a colleague of the organization, then he or she is also expected to act in a manner that benefits the organization itself. For the Japanese business, maintaining this relationship means that the instructor is as interested in saving face for the company as the employees who arrive at the office every day.

To demonstrate a tangible connection between classroom and business, the instructor can turn to student assessment. Cushman (2002) points out a frequent
problem of disconnect between tasks/deliverables and the on-site work being done by students. She suggests that teachers be on-site as well to see what work is being done and how graded activities can best benefit the mutual needs of the organization and the course objectives: "When the service-learning teacher is on site with students, the kinds of tasks assigned and integrated into the classroom can be carefully weighed, mutually informative, appropriately demanding, and responsive to community needs" (p. 49-50). In a blended online program, this means that the instructor is located in the classroom while students communicate with their partner organization (e.g., attending Skype meetings, overseeing production of professional materials). The relationship created in this partnership thereby informs assessment and both the business and classroom may achieve their goals.

The role of the organization in this relationship is to coach the student in how to appeal to their specific audience. In this case, the audience will predominately exist in a country foreign to the student and will therefore require different cultural applications than the student is typically used to. For this reason, the organization must make explicitly clear its expectations and work in conjunction with the student as the online presence is employed. On the local level, this is often done through orientation sessions, and a similar goal can be met through initial reflection and proposal writing early in the course (Jacoby, 2015). Some organizations may find this work daunting, and even frightening, for their reputation, and be wary of critiquing student work due to the
desire to save face. It falls to the instructor to build a trusting relationship that allows the organization to be comfortable offering critique and stress that the organization has ultimate approval over anything published in their name. Public writing in an online space reflects the relationships and goals of the organization, and student missteps could be damaging: “online materials that provide information on products must meet the communication expectations of various cultural groups. Failure to meet such expectations could result in a particular cultural audience responding negatively to a product or its related company” (Zhu & St, Amant, 2007, p338).

I assert, however, that the potential drawbacks of this program are outweighed by the benefits to the organization. As the research in chapters two and three shows, many consumers are moving toward more personal relationships with businesses, and a growing number of small businesses in Japan are leading this movement. As this form of professional communication continues to grow, more organizations will be tasked with creating interactive online identities to meet the needs of their customer base. This program allows these organizations to build these identities without committing to hiring a full-time social media coordinator or feeling permanently attached to the identity itself, as the project can always be terminated if it is not what the organization wants. In this way, the organization can ‘test the water’ and see if an online persona is in the best interests of its consumers and meets its professional goals. Once the program
is complete, the organization has no obligation to maintain the online presence or hire the student to do so, though that is certainly an available option.

**The Strategy for an International Service-Learning Program**

This program is not a cure-all for the myriad of concerns held by the intercultural technical communicator, nor is it the golden ticket to social media prowess for the partner organization. Rather, it is intended to develop an educational strategy for what is becoming an area of high rhetorical exigency in Japan. Any service-learning initiative comes with risks for the instructors, students, and partner organizations. This program aims to limit those risks as much as possible by making the instructor an active participant and engaging students directly with the partner organization online. By employing a blended classroom experience with online service, the instructor can accomplish course objectives. Chapter five outlines three options for employing this service-learning program with the hope that technical communication programs in a variety of institutions can find an appropriate fit.
Chapter 5: A Program for Teaching Social Media ITC

Chapter one presented evidence that points to Japanese businesses acknowledging the benefits of social media for communication with consumers, and their desire to find ways to integrate this method of online communication. Chapters two and three presented the argument that a rhetorical exigency exists for social media ITC curricular development. Taking into account the challenges addressed in chapter four, this final chapter addresses in detail what a social media ITC curriculum could look like. In what follows, I provide a specific plan for integrating a bended online international service-learning course for technical communication majors. Student learning outcomes are based on the curricular objectives presented in chapter four. I provide six deliverables, a specialized assessment rubric for each deliverable, and post-program options for both educators and partner organizations. Students of technical communication can expect intercultural elements to enter the workplace, and this program aims to offer real-world experience that students can call upon after graduation.

The aim of this approach is to marry theory with practice and demonstrate to students how they can expect to operate with intercultural clients as technical communicators. In the process of constructing workplace writing assignments this
program aims to explain to students Burkean identity theory and Levinasian theory of justice and the other while calling upon Hall’s anthropological theory of cultural context. Students will:

- recognize cultural expectations and divisions;
- distinguish the ethical responsibility they have as technical communicators to their audience, both client and consumer;
- directly address problems inherent in cultural classifications.

While focusing on social media ITC, the program calls on Darina Slattery and Yvonne Cleary’s (2014) mission for encouraging student adaption at the University of Limerick, which requires students to “reflect on their design decisions and to explain how they have put theory into practice” (p. 64). The purpose of this approach, they state, is to demonstrate to students how to adapt their skills for varying situations, technologies, and needs. Furthermore, this program seeks to create a student-driven classroom where students work in teams and are responsible for the foundational work required outside of class meetings. Theoretical readings, video lectures, and outside research are conducted on the students’ own time with class periods dedicated to strategizing and executing plans with and for the partner organization, which is referred to as the “client” to encourage students to integrate workplace verbiage.
Developing Student Learning Outcomes

With curriculum objectives and levels of engagement from chapter four in mind, the assessable skills of student learning outcomes can be applied to this program. To do so, I called on K. Alex Ilyasova’s (2013) profile for the technical writing program at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs due to the program’s linking of theory to technical communication practice. To make these linkages Ilyasova breaks student learning outcomes into three categories: core practices, technological literacy skills, and advanced practices and theory. Taking this approach, I used the same categories for the program described in this chapter and categorized student learning outcomes as seen in Table 5.1.

Starting with core practices, students need to understand not just the basic principles of rhetorical analysis, but how the elements of audience, purpose and context interweave to create rhetorically aware technical communication. While certainly addressed in introductory courses, revisiting these principles layers prior knowledge into the intercultural social media expectations of this program. Students will also leave the course knowing how to conduct research applicable to intercultural social media, which may differ from traditional academic research (e.g., examining tech blogs, using reliable translation software). Finally, at its core, this program anticipates students
walking away with the ability to use technical communication conventions, including ethical language use and appropriate language style.

Table 5.1 Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Practices</th>
<th>Technological Literacy Skills</th>
<th>Advanced Practices and Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Conduct rhetorical analysis (recognize audience, purpose, context, and how these elements are employed reflexively)</td>
<td>• “Critically and ethically choose from a variety of [social media applications] to address specific rhetorical situations and a range of audience needs [...]”</td>
<td>• Shows how to distinguish between intercultural and cross-cultural communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Apply necessary procedures for primary and secondary research</td>
<td>• Engage in a critical perspective of technology, its uses and contexts” by explaining the selection of appropriate technologies (Ilyasova, 2013, p. 103)</td>
<td>• Create and maintain a professional organization-specific social media identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exhibit an understanding of technical communication conventions</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Strategize effective communication practices online for cross-cultural audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrates the ability to recognize cultural differences in relation to the production of professional materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In considering the outcomes for technological literacy skills, I turned to Ilyasova’s language as it soundly applies to this program, especially as it pertains to critical and ethical intercultural social media use. Social media are an ever-growing arena of applications, and its sheer size makes it helpful and hindering at the same time. Navigating these applications to achieve the best result for clients and their audience is key to coordinating intercultural social media responses. To reach this outcome,
students must also be able to engage with the technology critically, meaning that once
the social media application is selected it is used in a way that meets the needs of the
client and its audience.

The student learning outcomes of advanced practices and theory address the
specific discussions of technical communication’s connection to intercultural social
media. First, students learn how to distinguish between intercultural communication
(communication between two differing cultures) and cross-cultural communication
(comparison of communication styles across two cultures) (Ristic, 2013). As pointed out
in chapter one, these terms are frequently conflated, but these classifications differ in
focus: interaction versus analysis, and this outcome requires students employ each at
the appropriate time. Students also take away from this program the ability to create an
online presence for a foreign client, communicating with that client to establish this
presence via social media. Audience analysis is applied when students strategize
effective means of communication with the client’s intended audience, and all of these
elements are engaged when students account for the cultural differences they need to
recognize as they produce professional materials (e.g., SMRs, presentations, reports).

Implementing Curriculum Objectives

To create the pedagogical deliverables for this program, I referenced the
curriculum outcomes described in the previous chapter. Beginning with the third level
of engagement, application, classroom activities and projects can be detailed and
connected directly to the primary goals of the course. The itemization of objectives by deliverable is illustrated in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Itemization of Objectives by Deliverable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ITC and social media are applied as a class tool.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC and social media are reflected upon for their use in technical communication.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC and social media are integral to a course project or focus, analyzed for alternate purposes, and complicated to enhance their usage in the intercultural workplace.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Depending on the length of the program, two to five deliverables can be taught, though they are designed to be deployed in the order listed. When shortening the course length and using fewer deliverables, instructors can use Table 5.3 to meet the objectives. For all program lengths, a partner organization is required. The final review by a partner organization is used in each length to offer students direct feedback on their performance in the eyes of the client. For the half semester or less option, this review would be tailored to provide feedback on the students’ feasibility report and general interactions with the partner. For full semester and full year (two semester) options, this review would allow students the opportunity to see the partner organization’s reaction to the social media presence created through the program.

Table 5.3 Suggested Plan for Meeting Objectives with Varying Program Lengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Length of Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>½ Semester or Less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deliverable 1: Examining Social Media</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deliverable 2: Feasibility Report</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deliverable 3: Plan for addressing expected intercultural obstacles</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deliverable 4: Weekly Project Update Reports</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deliverable 5: Team Portfolio</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deliverable 6: Concluding Report</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review by a supervisor at the partner organization</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meeting Outcomes and Objectives through Deliverables

When building this program, I wanted to provide instructors with a concrete example of what this course could look like, not simply list outcomes and objectives. To meet the goals of this course, I created six deliverables that build upon each other. The following descriptions present the deliverables as they apply to the curricular goals.

**Deliverable 1: Examining social media.** All program lengths, varying from one course unit to a full year, will include an examination of social media across various cultures. In this activity, students are either provided with a list of intercultural social media sites or required to find such sites on their own. Class discussion focuses on the varying technical communication conventions used in each instance and the divergent approaches to the rhetorical situation. The purpose of this activity is to apply the understanding of intercultural social media as a tool and to gauge its variances across cultures.

**Deliverable 2: Feasibility report.** Once students are familiar with the expectations of social media in different cultures, they will be assigned a partner organization for the service-learning element of the program. Assignments should be based on the needs of both the client and the student (e.g., what size team does the organization need? What applicable skills or expertise do the students already have?), and how student teams can contribute to the long-terms goals of the organization (Jacoby, 2015). Working in teams, students will discuss the needs of the organization
with the client and their own capabilities working remotely. To open up a relationship between the students and the organization, student teams will create a social media plan and provide the client with a feasibility report.

In a single unit approach, the instructor and client may choose to simply provide feedback to the team, or ask the team to begin implementation of the plan or its parts. Deliverables one and two, however, are the most basic forms of this program, opening students up to intercultural relationships and the expectations of real-world technical communication with social media. In a semester-long or full year approach, the feasibility report acts as the baseline to establish the client’s needs and may be revisited and revised with the input of the client as the program progresses.

This deliverable requires students to reflect on the role of intercultural social media and the use of various applications, the needs of the partner organization, and the expectations of the intended audience. As detailed in chapter four, this is also the stage where the instructor needs to be in full communication with the partner organization and aware of the suggested action of the student teams. If there is a concern from the client regarding the student team and its work at any point in the program, the instructor is available to intervene, beginning with the proposed feasibility report.
Deliverable 3: Plan for addressing expected intercultural obstacles. Providing further insight to the implications of intercultural social media is a statement acknowledging the intercultural obstacles students anticipate encountering during this service-learning program. At this stage, students will have opened up a relationship with the partner organization, been made aware of its needs and examined the organization’s audience. Before moving forward with the social media, students provide the instructor with an estimation of areas where they may run into difficulty stemming from intercultural issues. For example, students may note something as direct as difficulty understanding the client’s accent or they may have concerns over more difficult aspects of the culture such as uncertainty over client suggestions and the use of non-Western social media applications. Students should be encouraged to discuss these obstacles via identity theory (e.g., what classifications are students making that may be exacerbating these problems?) and cultural context theory (e.g., how might coming from an HC culture be impacting challenges in communicating with a LC culture?).

Reflecting on these issues in the classroom can prepare students to launch the social media plan or assist students in discussing concerns with the client. Additionally, this statement requires that students reflect on the use of intercultural social media after

---

14 In this assignment I anticipate encountering ethnocentrism and xenophobia in student responses. This presents an opportunity to discuss management of these issues and I provided a list of resources to help facilitate this discussion in Appendix A, List 2.
meeting the client, thereby taking the notion of intercultural social media out of the theoretical realm and placing it into a real-world situation.

**Deliverable 4: Weekly project update reports.** The fourth deliverable employs the fifth level of engagement defined in chapter two by integrating the theory and classroom discussion of intercultural social media into practice. Student teams provide weekly project updates to both the instructor and the client to determine effectiveness of the team’s work. This deliverable is ongoing throughout the program and offers the instructor and the client the opportunity to evaluate progress and redirect the team if necessary.

Weekly project update reports are not merely an overview of what the team has accomplished, but, for the purposes of the instructor, should tie back to classroom theory. For example, if the team created a social media release to inform the audience of a new product, the weekly report must illustrate the technical communication principles utilized in its development. A report will also be submitted to the client, but may require revision depending on the client’s specifications (e.g., the client wants a one-page summary of the team’s actions, the client prefers bi-weekly reports). The student team is expected to shift between the instructor and client as needed, providing both reports for classroom assessment.

**Deliverable 5: Team portfolio.** The fifth deliverable requires students to create a portfolio that presents the culmination of their work. At the program’s completion,
teams write a reflection which discusses their role at an intercultural communicator, their relationship with the client, and the impact they see the social media presence having. The purpose of the portfolio is twofold: First, offer the students an opportunity to view this work comprehensively and thereby gauge their progress throughout the program, and second, to provide students completing the program with a compilation of achievements they may take with them to demonstrate their skills to future employers.

**Deliverable 6: Concluding report.** A concluding report will be submitted to the instructor detailing the social media activity and any obstacles encountered. This final deliverable seeks to complicate the role of intercultural social media in the workplace by asking students to consider the long-term implications of the project, their relationship with the client, the reaction of the audience, and how this project may change if the client shifted audiences or required additional actions. A second concluding report will be submitted to the client detailing the actions taken by the team throughout the program.

**Assessing Deliverables**

Student assessment in this program refers back to the student learning outcomes outlined earlier in Figure 5.1. Each of the deliverables, plus a review by the student team’s organizational supervisor, are assessed based on the outcomes. In what follows, I provide an assignment sheet or worksheet and a rubric for each deliverable. When
assessing the performance of the students for each deliverable, the instructor uses the corresponding rubric to ascertain the quality of the work and the level at which the outcomes were achieved. Additionally, the students take feedback from the partner organization into consideration for the deliverables as applicable. Students receive feedback at regular intervals throughout the course to help them determine low-performing areas and meet the requirements of the course while fulfilling the needs of the partner organization.

Each deliverable is accompanied by a rubric based on the program’s student-learning outcomes. The rubrics are intended to demonstrate reflexive practice and as such are not created in terms of points or grades, but in expectations (e.g., “Below Expectations,” “Meets Expectations,” and “Exceeds Expectations”). Students can take the rubric assessments and ascertain their current performance and where they need improvement. When moving from assessment to evaluation and assigning a final score for the course, instructors consider how well the students achieved the expectations of the student-learning outcomes. Additionally, the final course evaluation includes a review of the student team by the partner organization, which offers the students and instructor insight into the team’s workplace performance. In what follows, each deliverable is provided with an assignment sheet or worksheet and an assessment rubric.
**Deliverable 1: Examining social media.** In the initial course activity, students ascertain the difference between “intercultural” and “cross-cultural” communication. In order to discuss various social media applications and their roles in different cultures, students use cross-cultural communication. However, the purpose of this assignment is to stress the use of intercultural communication while in an intercultural workplace, which requires a deep knowledge of the rhetorical situation. The worksheet in Figure 5.1 breaks down the actual analysis conducted in this activity, while the rubric in Table 5.4 presents the assessment of this deliverable.

**Assignment.** For this deliverable, students work individually and select three non-American examples of professional organizations that employ social media. While any non-American organizations may be examined, it is recommended that at least one example be a non-Western organization to expand the opportunity for more varied intercultural discussion. Students are encouraged to elaborate on their answers to best explain the ways each organization uses its social media platform. Following the completion of the worksheet, the class should compare organizations, regions and specific countries. As a group, it is useful at this stage to identify industry-specific, regional, or national trends.
Figure 5.1 Deliverable 1 Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Examining Social Media</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructions: Find three non-American examples of organizations using social media. Complete the following worksheet for all three examples.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site URL</th>
<th>Name of social media application/site</th>
<th>Name of organization and country</th>
<th>Description of organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review the social media application/site and address the following questions:

1. Who is the organization’s audience for this social media?
2. What content is included?
3. What is the organization’s purpose for using this social media?
4. Is this particular social media application or site effective for this organization?
5. If you worked for this organization, how would you improve its social media presence?

**Assessment.** The rubric assessment of this deliverable (see Table 5.4), evaluates how well each student achieved the specific student learning outcomes. To “Meet Expectations” for this activity, students must demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situations and an ability to tease out how the rhetorical elements of audience, purpose and context are used in each example. Further requirements to meet
expectations include students demonstrating a critical perspective of technology by
explaining how and why the organization’s choice of media impacts its audience,
purpose, and overall effectiveness. Finally, students are expected to explain how they
would improve the social media presence and in answering this question demonstrate
their ability to shift between the roles of cross-cultural observer to intercultural
participant.

Continuing along the rubric, students may perform “Above Expectations” on
this deliverable by elaborating on worksheet answers in ways that further explicate the
function of the technical communicator as an expert in intercultural social media. In
addressing the rhetorical situation, students exceed the minimum requirements by
placing the audience, purpose and context in relation to one another and drawing
connections to the significance of culture for each element and/or each organization. To
perform above expectations with reference to technology, the student attempts to
describe how culture impacts social media choices and explains how the selection and
use of social media for the particular organization is influenced by cultural factors.
Acknowledging these factors also moves the student toward performing above
expectations in reference to the last rubric criterion. When distinguishing between
cross-cultural and intercultural communication, the student is able to shift smoothly
and explain why this shift occurs as well as how it influences the choices made as a
technical communicator.
Table 5.4 Deliverable 1 Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion15</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifies audience</td>
<td>Audience is not identified or is incorrectly identified</td>
<td>Audience is identified and matches the partner organization, but is not elaborated upon</td>
<td>Audience is identified and explained in relation to this organization and/or its culture. Student determines how the rhetorical element of audience is connected to and/or dependent on purpose and context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies purpose</td>
<td>Purpose is not identified or is incorrectly identified</td>
<td>Purpose is correctly identified in full</td>
<td>Purpose is identified and explained in relation to this organization and/or its culture. Student determines how the rhetorical element of purpose is connected to and/or dependent on audience and context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates an understanding of context</td>
<td>Context of the partner organization’s needs for social media is unclear</td>
<td>Context is clear from description of content and effectiveness of social media</td>
<td>Context is clear and answer elaborates on how the content, audience, and purpose impact the effectiveness of the site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 The criteria for all rubrics in this chapter is explained in Figure 5.1.
Table 5.4 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhibits a critical perspective of technology</td>
<td>A critical perspective of technology is not shown. Social media site may be identified but it is not linked to the effectives of the site or potential areas for improvement. Answers on worksheet may demonstrate an ethnocentric approach</td>
<td>A critical perspective of technology is exhibited through the identification of the social media and the explanations of how and why this choice of media impacts the organization’s audience, purpose, and overall effectiveness</td>
<td>The identification and critique of media choice and impact is further examined in terms of cultural significance. Student considers how cultural nuances shape the selection and use of social media for the particular organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiates between intercultural and cross-cultural communication</td>
<td>Intercultural and cross-cultural communication is not clearly differentiated or not addressed</td>
<td>Intercultural and cross-cultural communication is distinguished from one another through the consideration of how the social media presence could be made more effective. Student shifts from perspective of outside examiner (cross-cultural) to in-house employee (intercultural)</td>
<td>Student clearly shifts from cross-cultural to intercultural perspective and explains why this shift occurred and how it influences the choices made as a technical communicator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Deliverable 2: Feasibility report.** The second program deliverable requires students to begin working in teams and opens up a relationship with the partner organization through a report detailing their understanding of the organization’s needs, their own role as intercultural technical communicators, and their proposed plan for the organization’s social media presence (see Figure 5.2). As such, it is assessed based on a large portion of the student-learning outcomes (see Table 5.5).

**Assignment.** This assignment asks students to begin their work as a team, communicate with their partner organization, and call on the research conducted in deliverable one. The report should combine the needs of the partner with the students’ assessment of the state of intercultural social media use. Chapter four states that this is an advanced technical communication course, so it might be assumed that most students have familiarity with report writing. A brief overview of the genre may be necessary, however, to ensure that all students understand the parameters of report writing and the purpose of a feasibility report (e.g., to observe a problem, examine a variety of answers, and propose a solution).

**Figure 5.2 Deliverable 2 Assignment Sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feasibility Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructions:</strong> For this assignment your team will construct a formal feasibility report acknowledging your client’s needs for a social media presence and propose an appropriate course of action. You will describe the reasons for your planned actions, how you will conduct these actions, and what outcomes you expect. You will also address the challenges you expect and how your identity as foreign colleagues operating from a remote location will impact your work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feasibility Report

In this report, you will consider the following points:

**Background**
What problem has the client brought to your attention? Define and explain why this is an issue to the client to demonstrate your understanding of their organizational structure and needs.

**Audience and Purpose**
Who are you addressing and why? Who will you work with at the organization and who do they report to?

**Qualifications**
Explain why your team qualified to conduct this research. Address the “elephant in the room” – how your team is qualified despite being non-Japanese and not working on site. Present background information about each team member that will aid this project (education, work experience, etc.).

**Research Plan**
What research is expected to be conducted to complete this project? Tell the audience where you plan on going for research and what kind of research you expect to use, you may use primary research, secondary research or a combination of both (primary research: studies, data, etc.; secondary research: work written about studies by other experts).

**Proposed Plan of Action**
This section should take up the bulk of your report. Be specific and detailed about what actions you plan to take and why. For example, don’t say “we’ll build a Facebook page.” Explain why you selected Facebook, how often you will post, what you will post, where you will find information/images/videos/etc. to post. If translation is needed, how will that need be met (i.e., will you rely on an internet translator like Google translate, or is there an employee at the organization who you can use as a resource)? If you select some social media platforms and not others, explain that decision.

Use the examination of social media assignment to inform your choices.

**Conclusion**
End with a request for permission to begin your plan for action.
Assessment. In order to meet expectations, students create a feasibility report that addresses the foundational expectation of a technical communication report and then expand it to meet the needs of an intercultural client. Students must first demonstrate their ability to apply the necessary procedures for primary and secondary research, and combine academic and popular sources depending on the needs of the partner. In constructing the feasibility report itself, students are expected to adhere to basic report structures within the conventions of technical writing (e.g., correct use of headings, coherent language, relevant tables or charts). Within the content of the report, teams will select a social media application based on the guidelines set by the partner organization. This requires students to be aware of ethical issues in order to determine the specific rhetorical situation of the client and its audience. Once an application is selected, student teams are expected to consider strategies for effectively communicating online with intercultural audiences, and each team will lay out its specific strategy (e.g., the report would explain how the student team will take the organization’s Facebook page from level 1 – providing business hours – to level 4 – interacting with customers, while adhering to the organization’s goals and maintaining professional decorum). Finally, the report should detail how cultural differences apply to the production of professional materials and how those differences will be managed.

Exceeding expectations in this deliverable occurs primarily in making the leap into innovative strategies and focused intercultural design. Performing above
expectations in research and conventions requires students to think of innovative research processes and combinations while paying strong attention within the report to document design and rhetorically sound language use. These elements work together to make the report engaging and inventive for the reader. When selecting a social media application for the client, a team that exceeds the expectations of the deliverable takes into consideration the ethical implications of various social media platforms and addresses anticipated client questions about why certain social media applications were discarded for this program.

Further performing above expectations includes students moving beyond basic strategy and production for the partner organization. In addition to a well-focused strategy, the team describes their plan for intercultural communication and its foundation in their ethical framework as technical communicators. As a final point of this deliverable, the team that performs above expectations has a clear strategy for developing and employing professional materials for content in the organization’s social media presence and predicts the cultural variances in producing these materials.
## Table 5.5 Deliverable 2 Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apply necessary procedures for primary and secondary research</td>
<td>Research is inadequate or not conducted</td>
<td>Procedures for conducting and applying primary and secondary research are met</td>
<td>Students meet necessary procedures for research and address areas needing further research and/or areas where outside research could not be found. Students use unique an innovative means for collecting research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibit an understanding of technical communication conventions</td>
<td>Report does not meet the parameters of the assignment and/or does not adhere to the conventions of technical communication, including formatting, and coherent language</td>
<td>Report is formatted appropriately and proofread</td>
<td>In addition to consistently adhering to the conventions of technical communication, the report is structured with strong attention to document design and rhetorically sound language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critically and ethically choose from a variety of [social media applications] to address specific rhetorical situations and a range of audience needs</td>
<td>A social media application is not chosen ethically or based on the rhetorical situation of the client. A critical understanding of the social media application is not demonstrated</td>
<td>Team selects a social media application that addresses the needs of the client, the client’s specific rhetorical situation, and the intended audience</td>
<td>In addition to selecting a social media application that meets the needs of the client, the team addresses the ethical implications for discarding alternate applications as options for this particular instance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.5 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategize effective communication practices online for intercultural audiences</td>
<td>A clear strategy for communicating online is not addressed</td>
<td>The strategy the team will use to communicate interculturally is explained and its effectiveness clarified</td>
<td>In addition to proposing a sound strategy, the team describes the ethical consideration for communicating interculturally and acknowledges how that plays into this plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize cultural differences in relation to the production of professional materials</td>
<td>Team offers a vague or incomplete explanation regarding how professional material will meet the needs of this culture</td>
<td>Explanation of processional materials and their production clearly ties to cultural nuances. Team is aware of how the materials differ from those of their own culture</td>
<td>In addition to a clear explanation of cultural differences, the team has a proposed strategy for addressing cultural differences in the production of professional materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deliverable 3: Plan for addressing expected intercultural obstacles.** For the third deliverable students utilize stasis theory to reflect on their role with the client and what challenges they anticipate (see Figure 5.3). Using stasis to guide students demonstrates how the traditional method can be rethought as a “flexible and analytical tool” (Brizee, 2008, p. 371). This deliverable requires students to reflect on the feedback received from the partner organization for the feasibility report and articulate obstacles that may arise from working with a Japanese organization (i.e., language, social customs, workplace expectations, etc.).
**Assignment.** Students identify a problem or expected problem, what is it and how it began. Next students articulate the definition of the problem, explaining it in detail. Students analyze the quality, or seriousness, of the problem, as well as its impact on their role as technical communicators. Finally, students review and assert the policy, what action should be taken, who should be involved, and what is needed to resolve this issue. Reflexively, then, students return to the problem. Was it identified correctly in the beginning? Is there an impact on their intercultural relationship that was not previously considered? As the project progresses, students routinely return to this analysis and revisit their identifications, definitions, quality assertions and policy suggestions.

Figure 5.3 Deliverable 3 Worksheet

| Stasis Worksheet: Plan for addressing expected intercultural obstacles |
|---|---|
| After submitting the feasibility report to the client, consider the feedback received on the proposed plan as well as the intercultural relationship you are developing to address the following points. |
| Fact (Conjecture) | Definition |
| Is there currently a problem? | Explain the problem in detail. |
| Is there potential for a problem? | |
| How will these problems begin and what are the causes? | |
| Did anything change to create this problem? If so, what? | |

---

16 Students would benefit from using the social media engagement scale to determine the “problem”. This scale provides students with an appropriate expectation of what they can accomplish in the time frame of the course. For example, it may not be feasible to move an organization’s Twitter presence from a level 1 to a level 5, but increasing a level 1 to a level 3 may be doable.
Figure 5.3 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Stasis Worksheet: Plan for addressing expected intercultural obstacles</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After submitting the feasibility report to the client, consider the feedback received on the proposed plan as well as the intercultural relationship you are developing to address the following points.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How serious is this problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the “costs” of this problem (take into account financial, time, and manpower costs)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Who should be involved in helping to solve this problem? Why should these people be involved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What should be done about this problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could this problem lead to additional problems?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Brizee (2008).

**Assessment.** The most important factors for this assignment are the students’ ability to view the impact of rhetorical analysis and critique of technology on their response to the anticipated obstacles. Additionally, students need to reflect on how their use of research and their method of communication impact the client and target audience. Teams performing below expectations will not demonstrate these criteria and, in the area of communication, may only show an ability to observe issues from a cross-cultural perspective. Teams who meet the deliverable’s expectations demonstrate their comprehension of the rhetorical elements and how these elements operate reflexively to address the obstacles laid out in the deliverable worksheet. Additionally, these teams
apply necessary research and carefully evaluate how their use of technology will be used to find solutions to these obstacles. In terms of communication, a team whose work meets expectations uses the worksheet to show an understanding of cross-cultural and intercultural communication, and shifts between the two to communicate effectively with their intercultural partner.

Exceeding expectations in this deliverable requires students to use the stasis worksheet recursively, considering how their decisions at the beginning of the project potentially impact their strategy in the project’s later stages. At this level, student teams discuss how the rhetorical elements may change over the period of the project, how changes to the proposed plan and reactions to obstacles may impact research procedures, and how their choices in communication may affect future obstacles. In relation to the critique of technology, exceeding expectations in this deliverable requires students to contemplate not just how their technology choices impact their proposed plan, but how technology may be needed to confront further issues, what problems may arise from the use of technology, and how these issues influence the development of strategy needed to overcome future obstacles (see Table 5.6).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 5.6 Deliverable 3 Rubric</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Criterion</strong></th>
<th><strong>Below Expectations</strong></th>
<th><strong>Meets Expectations</strong></th>
<th><strong>Above Expectations</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conduct rhetorical analysis (recognize audience, purpose, context, and how these elements are employed reflexively)</strong></td>
<td>Worksheet answers do not demonstrate rhetorical analysis or only shows a vague understanding of the rhetorical elements involved</td>
<td>Worksheet demonstrates the team’s consideration of the rhetorical elements and their operation reflexively</td>
<td>In addition to clearly addressing the rhetorical elements in the worksheet, the team also considers the fluid nature of these elements and how they may change over the period of this project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apply necessary procedures for primary and secondary research</strong></td>
<td>Team does not apply necessary research</td>
<td>Team applies research as necessary for the worksheet</td>
<td>Team applies research and accounts for potential changes to their research plan as the project progresses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engage in a critical perspective of technology, its uses and contexts</strong></td>
<td>Team may provide options for employing technology, but do not elaborate on how this technology fits the partner organization</td>
<td>Team thinks critically about their use of technology and how it will be utilized to find solutions to their obstacles</td>
<td>In addition to thinking critically about the immediate use of technology and its impact on obstacles, the team also considers how technology may be needed to address further issues and what problems may arise from the use of technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.6 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinguish between intercultural and cross-cultural communication</td>
<td>Team uses only a cross-cultural response to obstacles</td>
<td>Team addresses the cross-cultural response to obstacles and translates that into an intercultural response</td>
<td>Team distinguishes between the cross-cultural and intercultural responses and gauges how the translation of this communication impacts the anticipated obstacles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deliverable 4: Weekly project update reports.** In this deliverable, students must use the technology they proposed in the feasibility report while addressing the obstacles they identified in the stasis worksheet. Doing this requires the teams to conduct an ongoing rhetorical analysis of the social media platform, the requirements of the client, the needs of the audience and the content they post.

**Assignment.** In many ways, the weekly report looks like the feasibility report (see Figure 5.4). Students must demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of technical communication in order to produce a report that is both detailed and easy to read. These weekly reports, however, move into the realm of real-world application as they explain the work being conducted by the team and determine the successes and failures of their social media strategy. Providing these reports on a weekly basis allows the student teams to reflexively engage with the client’s online presence, while also
acting as a quality control gauge by pointing out areas of improvement that the instructor may indicate before a larger issue arises.

Figure 5.4 Deliverable 4 Assignment Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructions: For the weekly reports your team will construct brief reports, submitted on a weekly basis for the duration of the project, explaining the tasks you are conducting and evaluating the successes and failures of your social media strategy. Consider what tasks need to be changed, the client’s reaction to various updates, and how you plan on moving forward the following week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In these reports, you will consider the following points:

**Recap**
What tasks have you begun this week?
What tasks have you completed?
Have you veered from the original plan in the feasibility report at all? If so, how and why?

**Client Reactions**
How has the client reacted to your performance thus far?
How does the client’s reaction impact your project?

**Obstacles**
Referring back to the “Plan for Addressing Expected Intercultural Obstacles” assignment, what obstacles have you encountered and how have you dealt with them?

**Moving Forward**
What is the plan for the following week?

*Assessment.* Assessment based on the student learning outcomes is seen in the rubric in Table 5.7. To achieve “Above Expectations” students recognize and discuss how their choices impact the client’s overall online presence. In the criterion of critically
engaging technology, students must demonstrate that they are making careful choices in technology based on the needs of the client (e.g., should a video be posted, is an image’s meaning clear to the audience). This plays closely in to the team’s performance as they work to create and maintain a social media identity for their specified organization. The choices they make as they critically engage technology act to enhance or detract from the client’s online presence, and therefore, the long-term impacts of each decision need to be carefully weighed. The final criterion brings students back to the issue of developing professional materials that are suitable for the context of this program. Students need to report on how they are developing and producing professional materials to post on the social media platform, and a performance that “Meets Expectations” requires that the team acknowledges how the materials differ from those of their own culture and offers an explanation of how production ties to cultural nuances.

Performing “Above Expectations” in each of these criteria ties the activities of the group to the larger concepts and theories discussed in class. When engaging in a critical perspective of technology, a team exceeds the base expectations by employing rhetorical analysis to the specific technologies they select instead of looking at the technology (or the rhetorical analysis) in more general terms. Similarly, as the teams maintain social media identity, they employ a reflective, recursive approach and revise their work as needed. This recursive approach applies to the production of professional materials as
well, as the students apply a strategy, but recognize the cultural differences found in the materials and demonstrate an ongoing grasp of required cultural elements.

The Weekly Report is an ongoing deliverable. As these reports are frequent, a team may exceed expectations on a specific element one week and focus on another the following week (i.e., detailing rhetorical analysis one week and moving into the production of professional materials the next). The overarching goal of this deliverable is for students to recognize the need to be reflective and recursive in their work, taking into account their role as technical communicator and the fluid nature of social media.

Table 5.7 Deliverable 4 Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct rhetorical analysis</td>
<td>Report does not mention, or mentions in vague language, how audience, purpose and context are being employed reflexively.</td>
<td>Report mentions rhetorical analysis, but does not elaborate on its implications for the team and/or the client.</td>
<td>Report discusses the rhetorical choices made by the team and examines how audience, purpose, and context work with each other to produce a strong online presence for the client.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion</td>
<td>Below Expectations</td>
<td>Meets Expectations</td>
<td>Above Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibit an understanding of technical</td>
<td>Report does not meet the parameters of the assignment and/or does not adhere to the</td>
<td>Report is structured according to conventions of technical communication.</td>
<td>In addition to consistently adhering to the conventions of technical communication, the report is structured with strong attention to document design and rhetorically sound language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication conventions</td>
<td>conventions of technical communication.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in a critical perspective of technology, its uses and contexts</td>
<td>Team does not apply a critical perspective when utilizing technology.</td>
<td>Team is critical of their use of technology and makes careful choices based on the needs of the client.</td>
<td>Team is highly critical of the technology they are using and employ rhetorical analysis to make appropriate selections for building the client’s online presence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create and maintain a professional organization-specific social media identity</td>
<td>Team did not fully create a social media identity for the client. Team is inadequately maintaining the client’s social media identity.</td>
<td>Team created a social media identity that meets the basic needs of the client and is adequately maintaining that online presence.</td>
<td>The social media identity is consistent with the needs of the client and its audience. The team is maintaining the online presence fully, reflecting on their decisions and revising as needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.7 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognize cultural differences in relation to the production of professional materials</td>
<td>Team offers a vague or incomplete explanation regarding how they are managing the production of professional material and how it meets the needs of this culture/client/audience.</td>
<td>Explanation of processional materials and their production clearly ties to cultural nuances. Team is aware of how the materials differ from those of their own culture.</td>
<td>The team is employing a focused strategy for addressing cultural differences in the production of professional materials, thereby demonstrating a strong grasp of the cultural elements required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deliverable 5: Team portfolio.** The team portfolio offers students the opportunity to reflect on their work while viewing it as a cohesive unit. This deliverable takes into account all prior deliverables and requires students to explain how each one led to their choices for the partner organization. Portfolios give students a platform for articulating their decisions for the partner organization’s social media presence. In addition to reflection, the portfolio is also a way for students to showcase their experience and demonstrate concrete skills while on the job market (Lauer, 2013; Brady and Schreiber, 2013). Han Yu (2010) specifically calls out portfolios for projects involving partner organizations, noting that this deliverable can be utilized to show students through “authentic assessment” how they may be assessed in the workplace (p. 47). For this
reason, if the partner organization is agreeable, the portfolio can be shared and the organizational supervisor can offer feedback to the student team\textsuperscript{17}.

**Assignment.** The portfolio itself is an ongoing project throughout the program, with students updating it after each client meeting and weekly report. Its intention is to offer students the ability to assess themselves and adapt the tactics for accomplishing the strategies of their social media plan. The final portfolio (see Figure 5.5) should be collected and assessed prior to the concluding report to allow students time to consider their choices and what future implications their project has for the partner organization’s social media presence.

Figure 5.5 Deliverable 5 Assignment Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Portfolio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructions: For this assignment your team will construct a portfolio demonstrating how you created/built/maintained a social media presence for your client. In addition to including copies of all previous assignments, your team must articulate the tasks you completed and offer explanations for the decisions you made. Finally, you will look ahead to future actions you think the client should take upon the completion of this project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this portfolio, you will consider the following points:

**Previous Assignments**
1. Examination of social media: what observations were made that informed your decisions when writing the feasibility report? How so?

\textsuperscript{17} I stress that sharing portfolios with the partner organization must be done with the students’ knowledge and must be optional for the partner organization. As noted in chapter four, it is imperative for the instructor-partner relationship that the organization not feel as though they are required to do more work than they feel they receive in return. Therefore, this feedback may be done on a case-by-case basis dependent on the willingness of the partner and the tasks being completed by the students.
Figure 5.5 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Portfolio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous Assignments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Feasibility report: how did your team execute the plan laid out in the report? What obstacles were encountered? Was anything proposed in the report changed once the project began?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Plan for addressing intercultural obstacles: what obstacles did you ultimately encounter and how were they managed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Weekly reports: how did writing and reflecting on your weekly reports impact your team’s performance?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Information**
What information, if any, was not included above but helps explain the decisions you made during this project. This may include team planning notes, emails to/from the client, etc.

**Future Actions**
At the completion of this project, what suggestions for ongoing and/or future action would you suggest to the client? Why?

**Assessment.** As illustrated in the rubric seen in Table 5.8, a portfolio that performs “Below Expectations” would lack a complete reflection on how the team conducted rhetorical analysis, and adhered to critical technology and intercultural communication conventions. Additionally, a poor portfolio may not demonstrate the students’ comprehension of how the role of the technical communicator changes when placed in an intercultural environment or online space. To “Meet Expectations” the team would demonstrate how rhetorical analysis was both conducted and then used to adapt the strategies of the social media plan, displaying the flexibility in the execution of the plan. The portfolio would further demonstrate the team’s critical technology
choices based on the needs of the client, addressing the continuous nature of this critique throughout the program. In addition to an ongoing critique of technology, the team would also articulate their critiques of the differences in intercultural and cross-cultural communication and how this factor influenced their choices in the client’s social media presence as well as their relationship with the partner organization.

A portfolio that is “Above Expectations” more fully illustrates the students’ roles as intercultural technical communicators. When engaging with rhetorical analysis the team addresses the long-term implications of rhetorical elements on the client’s social media presence, considering how these elements evolve as the client takes the plan to a different or more varied audience, adds content, etc. A portfolio that exceeds expectations would examine the long-term implications for the strategy employed by the team and how that strategy may be altered if the client expands to other cultures. The team may reflect on how the technology may change if the audience shifts to include a new culture (i.e., would a single Twitter account be appropriate if the organization opens offices in Thailand and Australia) and how the approach of intercultural communication influences long-term achievements of the client’s online identity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct rhetorical analysis (recognize audience, purpose, context, and how these elements are employed reflexively)</td>
<td>Portfolio does not mention, or mentions in vague language, how audience, purpose and context were employed reflexively</td>
<td>Portfolio explains the rhetorical analysis conducted by the team to execute social media plan. Team demonstrates a willingness and ability to alter plan based on rhetorical analysis.</td>
<td>Portfolio discusses the rhetorical choices made by the team, examines how audience, purpose, and context work reflexively, exhibit an ability to alter plan based on rhetorical analysis, and address long-term implications of rhetorical elements on the client’s social media presence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in a critical perspective of technology, its uses and contexts</td>
<td>Portfolio does not demonstrate a critical perspective when utilizing technology. Team does not demonstrate critique to choices with technology. Team does not explain their choices</td>
<td>Portfolio demonstrates and explains the critical technology choices taken by the team based on the needs of the client. Team shows that this critique was continuous throughout the program.</td>
<td>Portfolio demonstrates a high level of critique taken by the team regarding the technology they used and explains how ongoing critique would be used to evolve the client’s social media presence beyond the length of the program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.8 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinguish between intercultural and cross-cultural communication</td>
<td>Portfolio does not exhibit the team’s ability to distinguish between intercultural and cross-cultural communication. Team may confuse intercultural and cross-cultural communication.</td>
<td>Portfolio addresses the difference in intercultural and cross-cultural communication and explains how this influenced choices in the client’s social media presence and their relationship with the client.</td>
<td>In addition to exhibiting the team’s ability to distinguish between intercultural and cross-cultural communication the portfolio explains how choices during the program were influenced by these differences and how this differentiation is necessary for the long-term success of the client’s online identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deliverable 6: Concluding report.** For the final program deliverable, students present a concise report to the partner organization that offers closure to the relationship and suggestions for the continued and increased success of their social media presence after the team hands it back to the partner. A key expectation of this report, like the feasibility report, is the team’s ability to shift from an academic context to a professional one.

**Assignment.** While the weekly reports were written with the instructor as audience, the concluding report is written for the partner organization (see Figure 5.6). This report should provide the partner with an overview of the strategy used by the student team and the tasks conducted to execute the social media plan. Students should
refer back to the portfolio prior to completing this report since this deliverable requires students to reflect on how social media was/is used by the client, the original plan proposed in the feasibility report, the obstacles expected and encountered, and the tasks detailed in the weekly reports.

Figure 5.6 Deliverable 6 Assignment Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concluding Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Instructions: For this assignment your team will construct a formal report concluding your project for the client. The report should acknowledging your client’s prior needs for a social media presence and explain how your team met these needs. Keep in mind that this report will be submitted to the client.

In this report, you will consider the following points:

**Recap**
What problem did the client brought to your attention? What plan of action did your team propose?

**Obstacles**
What obstacles were encountered and how did your team manage them?

**Plan of Action**
This section should take up the bulk of your report. Be specific and detailed about what actions took and why. For example, don’t say “We created a Twitter account.” Explain why twitter was the appropriate choice for this particular client, how you used this platform, how often you posted, what kind of information was posted, etc. Describe why, where, and when you chose to divert from your original plan, if at all.

**Future Steps**
What should the client do with their social media presence after this project is complete? Offer suggestions for how and why to maintain the project your team began.

**Conclusion**
End by thanking the client for the opportunity to learn from this experience.
Assessment. Students not meeting expectations for this deliverable are not addressing their partner organization as a clear audience, not adhering to the accepted conventions of report writing, and not distinguishing between intercultural and cross-cultural communication (see Table 5.9). It is likely that a team submitting a report below expectations is not taking into account the purpose of this deliverable, which is to provide the client with future steps and offer closure to their time working together. This report may also mark the end of the team’s professional relationship with the partner organization and a poor report would lack a concluding tone.

A report that “Meets Expectations” addresses the client and offers closure to the relationship. The context of the report is professional and the writing is concise. A report at this level demonstrates how choices during the program were influenced by the team’s understanding of intercultural and cross-cultural communication and considers how their choices as technical communicators were influenced by these differences. In essence, this report asks students to comment on how they immersed themselves in this program as opposed to being outsiders looking in.

Taking this a step further, the team whose report exceeds expectations is aware of the reflexivity of their audience, purpose and context, for both this report as well as the program experience as a whole. The report is well-written and structured, following the conventions of technical communication. A strong deliverable also demonstrates the ability to distinguish between intercultural and cross-cultural communication while
also acknowledging and discussing the implications of cultural obstacles (those expected and encountered) on the team’s social media strategy.

Table 5.9 Deliverable 6 Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct rhetorical analysis (recognize audience, purpose, context, and how these elements are employed reflexively)</td>
<td>Report does not take into account the partner organization’s purpose as audience, and/or does not consider the context to be professional as opposed to academic</td>
<td>Report addresses the client as audience and demonstrates an understanding of purpose and context. Report is clearly intended for a professional context</td>
<td>In addition to acknowledging appropriate rhetorical elements, the report illustrates an understanding of the reflexivity of the rhetorical elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibit an understanding of technical communication conventions</td>
<td>Report does not meet the parameters of the assignment and/or does not adhere to the conventions of technical communication including formatting and coherent language</td>
<td>Report has been formatted appropriately and proofread</td>
<td>In addition to consistently adhering to the conventions of technical communication, the report is structured with strong attention to document design and rhetorically sound language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Above Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinguish between intercultural and cross-cultural communication</td>
<td>Report does not exhibit the ability to distinguish between intercultural and cross-cultural communication and may confuse intercultural and cross-cultural communication</td>
<td>Report demonstrates the difference between intercultural and cross-cultural communication and explains how choices during the program were influenced by these differences</td>
<td>In addition to exhibiting the ability to distinguish between intercultural and cross-cultural communication the report acknowledges the cultural obstacles encountered and the implications of these obstacles on the team’s social media strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Review by a supervisor at the partner organization.** The final assessment is based on a review of the team by the partner organization. The individual (or individuals) who acted as supervisors during the program are asked to complete a short survey addressing the team’s overall performance (see Figure 5.7). Instructors use this survey in conjunction with the student portfolio reflections to gauge the quality of the student-client relationship. At this stage, any concerns from the partner organization should have been brought to the instructor’s attention, but this survey allows the partner to reflect on the overall condition of work produced and the professionalism of the students. Since this survey is not direct student work, there is no accompanying rubric, but the survey should be shared with students so that they can see how their work was perceived.
**Supervisor Review**

**Dear [Partner Organization],**

Thank you for offering your expertise and partnership during our intercultural technical communication service-learning program. As we conclude our program, I would like to hear from you regarding your experience with the student teams. The following survey will be used to assess the student work during their partnership with your organization.

**I. Please rate your level of satisfaction in the following areas according to your experience with the student team:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication with the student team was easy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student team created a social media plan that met my organization’s needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student team executed the social media plan as agreed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student team was open to my ideas and feedback.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of work was high.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student team was respectful of our cultural differences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**II. What was the most difficult aspect of this program for you?**

**III. What was the most enjoyable aspect of this program for you?**

**IV. Do you plan to continue working with this program in the future?**

**V. Do you have any other comments regarding your participation in this program?**
Rubrics for intercultural work. To facilitate discursive knowledge making, I created deliverable-specific rubric as opposed to a single course-side rubric. The rubric is a reflexive tool and is therefore intended to help the instructor and students see where improvements may be made to both instruction and student performance (Yancey, 1999). The scale of “Below Expectations” means that students need to improve and instruction may need to be further elaborated. One concern resulting from the rubrics is the student interpretation of the phrase “Meets Expectations,” which may lead some students to think that a bare minimum is adequate for the program, while “Above Expectations” could seem to relate to overachievers. While this may be appropriate for grading purposes (a student needs a passing grade), it must be made clear to the students that this not enough to make a positive impression on the partner organization.

In working with a Japanese partner organization, the scale of “Above Expectations” is the final anticipated outcome. Students need to be made aware of this distinction in cultural expectations. Though an American student may be pleased with a C, a Japanese organization will often not settle for “C work,” which will negatively impact the final assessment from the organization.

Post-Program

When the program concludes, students will have a strong understanding of how to work on an intercultural technical communication team. The program seeks to show
students the kind of obstacles they can expect in the online intercultural workplace, and how to manage those obstacles as they arise. While the focus of most program conclusions is on the student, the instructor-partner relationship is very important for the program’s sustainability. Therefore, the options for the partner organizations need to be discussed as well.

There are four evident options for the partner organization when the student team concludes their work in the program: employ students as social media coordinators to continue the project, continue with the program through a new term and a new set of students, continue social media coordination in-house or with their own hire, or discard the social media project completely. My hope is that option four is not desirable upon the program’s completion.

Each of the first three options offers various benefits to the partner organization. First, by choosing to keep students on as social media coordinators, the organization gains continuity on the project. A successful student team will have conducted extensive analysis of the organization, its goals, and the needs of their target audience. The organization’s social media identity would be fully maintained and able to grow as the relationship between the team (or parts thereof) develops over time. The drawback to this option includes potential hiring issues faced by the organization. As employees or contractors, the organization would be responsible for addressing all concerns with foreign workers abroad, which may be a deterrent to smaller organizations.
Choosing to continue with the program and bring in another student team offers the organization the option of continuing the program, having their online presence maintained, and avoiding labor issues. While this option may be logistically easier for the organization, the drawback includes spinning up a new team on the organization’s requirements. However, if the organization can maintain the online platforms in the interim, students would gain insight into how to take on and manage an already existing project.

The third option for organizations is to continue their social media coordination in-house or with their own hire. This option benefits an organization that is ready to maintain a social media presence. This option would likely end the organization’s direct relationship with the program. In order to maintain the relationship between the instructor and the partner, I suggest the instructor revisit the organization’s online presence in each new term as a teaching tool for new students.

**Conclusion**

This program’s intention is immersion with the safety net of direct faculty mentorship. By keeping students grounded at their home institution, I anticipate more students being able to participate and benefit from the development of intercultural relationships and real-world experience. My goal with this program is not to discard the traditional technical communication teaching practices, but to add to them and show students how technical communication is an evolving and global practice.
The contribution of this project, presented in chapters four and five, rests on the data presented in chapters two and three. By examining technical communication course syllabi, we see that social media and ITC, while taught in some course individually, are not explored in tandem through current classroom models. Social media ITC is a necessary element of technical communication, however, as evidenced in chapter three. While social media use for client-consumer communication is still a growing enterprise in Japan, a rhetorical exigency exists and needs to be acknowledged by the academic technical communication community.

This project demonstrates that such acknowledgment and integration is not as simple as employing a discussion or two, but benefits extensively from real-world relationships built with Japanese professional partnerships. These partnerships are wrought with challenges, as discussed in chapter four, but none of these challenges lack doable solutions. Tackling these challenges opens the door for a blended online service-learning program, which places our students directly into the world of social media ITC, and provides them with opportunities to become global, digital technical communicators. As the field of technical communication continues to use social media as a means of professional communication, and as the global marketplace takes ever-increasing steps to cross geographical borders, this project aims to place American students at the forefront.
Limitations and future directions. The scope of this project gave me a broad sense of the current climate of social media ITC in American classrooms and Japanese businesses, but was hampered by limitations. Accessing a larger sample syllabi and discussing curriculum choices with American educators would provide a more comprehensive look at the teaching of technical communication. Additionally, after three years in Japan, I now have relationships that I could not tap into when this project began. I still lack strong enough Japanese language skills to conduct additional research on my own, but my relationships now also include reliable certified translators. Surveying and interviewing Japanese technical communicators would provide insight into how professional social media ITC is used and what goals organizations have for the future of their online presences. Should the opportunity arise, I would like to continue this work while in Japan.

I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to immerse myself in Japanese culture since late 2012. My research benefited from my own struggles and successes navigating a foreign HC culture. Moving forward, I have two goals coming out of this project: 1) to implement the proposed program at an American university; and 2) to create a similar program for international students who need to communicate with American organizations. While in Japan I hope to execute these goals either through teaching on remote American university campuses (i.e., University of Maryland) or
teaming up with local universities (i.e., Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology) to develop course work that will parallel the program proposed in this dissertation.

The exigency of social media ITC does not exist solely on American soil. It is a communication evolution that crosses borders and influences audiences worldwide. Addressing this issue through international partnerships opens future technical communicators up to the opportunities of connecting with others beyond their native worldview.

ありがとうございます。
Works Cited


Bouchard, S. (2014) Big In Japan: Social Media Insights from the Streets of Tokyo


doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x


“Technical Writers” Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

http://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/technical-writers.htm


Rice, R. (2012, March) Research and Teaching in India Using “Glocalized” New Media Approaches. Paper presented at the conference for the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing, Atlanta, GA.


Semiocast (2011). Brazil becomes 2nd country on Twitter, Japan 3rd, Netherlands most active country: Geolocation analysis of Twitter accounts. Retrieved from http://semiocast.com/publications/2012_01_31_Brazil_becomes_2nd_country_on_Twitter superseds_Japan


STC Academic Database. (2013). Retrieved from
http://www.stc.org/education/academic-database


Thrush, E., & Thevenot, A. (2011). Globalizing the technical communication classroom:
Killing two birds with one stone. In Teaching Intercultural rhetoric and technical
communication: Theories, curriculum, and practices. Amityville, NY: Baywood
Publishing Company.

Communication, 44(3), 161-173.


Retrieved November 6, 2015, from
http://www.tokyoimmigration.jp/eng/point.html

Projects, Technical Communication Quarterly, 16:1, 103-123.


Appendix A

Reading Resource Lists

List 1: Students and Instructors. The following list of readings is intended for use by both students and instructors. Due to the dynamic nature of social media and international technical communication, readings for class work should be revisited each term to ensure information is up to date and appropriate for the current service-learning environment.


List 2: Instructors. The following list focuses on preparing individuals for work abroad and students for study abroad. These readings are applicable to the blended online service-learning program in their acknowledgment and management of ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and cultural anxiety. These resources are intended to help instructors manage challenges as they build partner relationships and those faced by American students in intercultural service-learning situations.


Appendix B

Contact Resources

The following are contacts for use in Heuristic 1 when finding Japanese partner organizations.

American Universities in Tokyo

- Temple University Japan Campus: https://www.tuj.ac.jp/
- Lakeland College Japan Campus: http://lcj.lakeland.edu/

Technical communication Professional Organizations in Japan

- Society for Technical Communication Tokyo Chapter: http://www.stc-tokyo.org/
- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Communication Society:
  
  http://www.ieice.org/eng/index.html