

Call for Papers

Special Issue of *Technical Communication* (November 2020)

Identifying Dimensions of Artistic Creativity in Technical Communication

Guest Editors

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In the last five decades, technical communication (TC) scholars have been participating in conversations about infusing technical communication with artistic creativity such as art and film music (Richards, 2009), beauty/makeup (Chong, 2018), cinema/film/screenwriting (e.g., Daffer, 1970; Gillette, 2005; Shelton, 1993), classical art forms (Laplante & Flaxman, 1995), humor and comics (Cohen, 1992; Cooper, 1996; Weal 1986; Yu, 2015), music (e.g., Girill, 1989; Nelson, 1989; Wiley, 1993), poetry (Welch, 2010), and storyboarding (Balzotti, 2016; Kody, 1992; Larkin, 1996).

The value of artistic creativity is not only evidenced in TC scholarship, but also in the corporate world. Successful companies like Google, Apple, and Facebook have been cited as incorporating elements of the arts, performance, and/or play into their corporate environments. For instance, Google designed Broadway-themed conference rooms and workstations to look like giant Tinker Toys (Stewart, 2013). Coleman (2016) explained that organizations that “foster a workplace culture of creativity are likely to have happy, motivated employees who are more loyal and more productive.” Furthermore, a recent study (Robert & da Motta Veiga, 2017) published in the *International Journal of Humor* shows a positive correlation between conversational humor and job satisfaction, which supports the argument that managers should allow or encourage humor in the workplace.

Fine arts disciplines have also been shown to partner well with both industry and the classroom to allow practitioners and students to not only enhance the technical and interpersonal skills necessary to their success but also improve student and user engagement. An example of such an interdisciplinary partnership is the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, which in 2017, partnered with Chicago’s Second City comedy theater to teach improvisation to its MBA students. The partnership was forged to enhance these students’ communication, collaboration, and well-being through the theatrical genre of improvisational comedy (The University of Chicago Booth School of Business, 2017).

Because of such recent interdisciplinary collaborations, we argue that now is a good time to (re)examine how TC researchers and practitioners are using artistic creativity in the classroom and workplace. Since the early 1990s, there has been little scholarly work on creative approaches such as improvisation, humor, and other related areas in fine arts in the journal of *Technical Communication*. **In this special issue, we are setting out to identify dimensions of artistic creativity in TC. We pose the question: What does artistic creativity look like in contemporary TC instruction and practice?** While there is no codified definition of artistic creativity in the field of TC or related disciplines, a pair of psychology researchers (Ivcevic & Mayer, 2009) who published in the *Creativity Research Journal* have identified the following five content areas of artistic creativity: visual arts, music, dance, theater, and writing. Our definition of artistic creativity builds on this list and includes the

definition of the arts as provided by the U.S. Code, which is often used in policymaking, including funding for the National Endowment for the Arts:

The term “the arts” includes, but is not limited to, music (instrumental and vocal), dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture and allied fields, painting, sculpture, photography, graphic and craft arts, industrial design, costume and fashion design, motion pictures, television, radio, film, video, tape and sound recording, the arts related to the presentation, performance, execution, and exhibition of such major art forms, all those traditional arts practiced by the diverse peoples of this country. [sic] and the study and application of the arts to the human environment.

Topics to consider for the special issue

Our special issue aims to discover how TC researchers and practitioners are using artistically creative approaches in their work. For example, we are seeking manuscripts that will discuss ways of:

- infusing paintings and drawings, music, poetry into
 - our physical workspaces and classrooms
 - the documents we create
 - our intellectual and professional processes
 - the projects and deliverables we produce
 - team interactions
- using theater and performance in
 - documentation and training
 - user experience, design, and development
 - classroom instruction
- bringing humor or comedy into our work and instruction in
 - our physical workspaces and classrooms
 - the documents we create
 - our professional presentations
- using storyboarding and sketching as techniques to help
 - team collaboration
 - users interact with our materials
 - learners and professionals communicate with teams
- incorporating other types of artistic creativity into TC practice and instruction

Manuscripts that evidence a direct relationship between TC practice and/or instruction and artistic creativity (e.g., visual arts, music, dance, theater, and writing) will be considered for publication.

Manuscripts will be selected based on the rigor of the research, ability of findings to be replicated by other practitioners or educators, and potential for interdisciplinary connections.

Proposals should be developed into

- Original research articles
- Review articles
- Focused commentary
- Teaching cases
- Case studies

Deadline for Submission of Proposals is October 1, 2019.

Submission procedures

- Cover page containing your name, institutional or company affiliation, and email address.
- 400-word proposal
- All submissions will be reviewed by at least two readers, whether you are submitting a research article, review article, focused commentary, teaching case, or case study.
- Submit via email to Tammy Rice-Bailey (rice-bailey@msoe.edu) and Felicia Chong (fchong@oakland.edu)
- Proposals should be sent as a .docx, .doc, or .rtf file attached to an email message with the subject line: “Identifying Dimensions of Artistic Creativity in Technical Communication”

Timeline

October 1, 2019:	Deadline for authors to submit 400-word proposals
November 1, 2019:	Proposal acceptance notifications are emailed to authors
February 15, 2020:	Authors submit first draft of manuscripts
April 1, 2020:	Reviews sent to authors
July 1, 2020:	Authors submit final manuscripts
August 15, 2020:	Guest editors submit final revised manuscripts and introduction for copyediting
November 1, 2020:	Issue published

Please email us if you would like to discuss proposal ideas.

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