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Hear, Tell, Live: Revisiting Storytelling in Technical & Professional Communication

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Introduction (Collaboratively Written)

In Angelyn Sommers' (2022) article on narrative's place in TPC classrooms, she posits that TPC students must learn to tell and recognize the importance of the stories of their lives. According to Sommers, it is the job of TPC educators to "prepare the next generation of technical communicators to see narrative as a dynamic tool that surrounds every aspect of the work they do" (2022). Various other research avenues illustrate narrative's role in communication and culture, ranging from how businesses use narrative to build trust and increase engagement (Hirst, 2017; Lemanski, 2014) to showing how science functions in action through storytelling (Mott et al., 1999). In TPC, space for the role of narrative continues to grow, due to storytellings' elevation of experience as a way of knowing (Walton et al., 2019). Human beings are inherently storytellers, making narrative a key component across any of our means of communication: helping us connect to each other, illustrate what is meaningful to us, and better comprehend what is meaningful to others. This is especially important when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion, since it encourages us to listen to, and amplify marginalized stories.

Despite storytelling's power, it remains a limited resource in TPC pedagogy. As such, Sommers (2022) rightfully insists that "we should train students to listen to the stories of others, weave aspects of stories into their own work, and recognize the role they themselves play in a larger narrative" (p. 4). However, in spite of this call to action, there are not many reported opportunities in TPC classrooms for students to engage with such storytelling practices. Though some scholars such as Moore (2013) discuss how students collected and communicated the stories of others, what remains to be seen is the process students go through creating and sharing their own narratives, especially as the field of Technical and Professional Communication is undergoing large-scale changes due to the rise of new technologies, Artificial Intelligence, and a constantly changing political and social climate (Lambrecht et al., 2025).

Constructed from the collaborative reflections of both instructor and student, this piece addresses the role of storytelling in TPC through critical reflection and its own narrative by offering an example of Sommers' pedagogical approach in bringing storytelling and narrative into the TPC classroom. That is, working from the positioning of narrative as stories we hear, stories we tell, and stories we live, this piece traces one student's movement through a third-year professional writing course as she constructed her own digital story. The course itself aligns with the pedagogical approaches outlined by Sommers, culminating in an interdisciplinary classroom specifically using narrative to teach technical and professional writing. Through collaborative writing of this piece

between student and instructor, we hope to tell our own story, from both sides, regarding how narrative permeated this course, and what other such courses interweaving narrative and TPC can offer students. Ultimately, this piece argues that storytelling plays an essential role in technical and professional communication pedagogy, and embracing its impact and influence (rather than attempting to ignore or reduce narrative for fear of being "non-objective") allows instructors and students to better establish their own positionalities within the various writing situations they find themselves.

Overall, our goal with this piece is to offer a reflective revisitation of narrative in multimodal technical communication by intersecting narrative theory with TPC pedagogy. Matching Sommers' inspirational work, after providing a brief literature review to better position the current role of storytelling in TPC pedagogy, we then build our case through crafting of a joint narrative, relying both on pedagogical reflections from the instructor and reflections and points of example and evidence from the student both as she built her digital story and how this course in particular helped her better understand the role of narrative in technical and professional communication. In this way, we hope to offer not only a test case for Sommers' argument, but also a means of revisiting and evolving the role of narrative in TPC and how purposefully incorporating narrative in the classroom benefits TPC pedagogy.

Storytelling in Technical & Professional Communication (Collaboratively Written)

Storytelling is an integral part of everyday life, bleeding across both the personal and professional. This is because stories are how we make sense of the world; they are a foundation on which each of us constructs reality and impose stability on our surroundings (Moore, 2013; Vealey & Gerding, 2021). In TPC as in other fields of study, the terms "narrative" and "storytelling" have prompted some debate about how they should be defined and understood. Some, such as Small (2017), prefer to distinguish between the two, while others use the terms interchangeably (Clark, 2010; Hirst, 2017; Perkins & Blyler, 1999; Sommers, 2022). While defining terms like "narrative" and "storytelling" can make it easier to navigate how they should be taught, definitions of narrative often do not account for the fact that narrative is flexible, and that how we understand it largely depends on the contexts and cultures that surround us (Henrickson, 2025; Sommers, 2022). In other words, stories are not objective reality, rather they are a way for us to make meaning out of the chaotic experiences of our lives (Henrickson, 2025). In this article we, like Sommers (2022), use the terms interchangeably, and call upon TPC educators to help students discover the many different ways they may encounter and use narrative, in order to find the right way to tell their story, connect with and advocate for others, and interrogate the status quo.

Over the past two decades, the social justice turn in TPC research has examined storytelling as a way to interrogate the status quo and amplify voices that have traditionally been left on the margins of mainstream media (Baniya & Chen, 2021; Mangum, 2021). This includes using stories as a way to counter dominant narratives that contextualize everything around them (Boje, 2001; Wilson, 2008). One way to do

this is with “antenarratives,” which are also called “before stories” since they are told before a linear narrative can be formed about the subject at hand, and are defined by Boje (2001) as “fragmented, non-linear, incoherent, collective, unplotted, and improper storytelling” (p.1). These types of narratives allow for more voices to get together and share their lived experience, making it a way to recognize, reveal, reject, and challenge traditional notions of communication (Baniya & Chen, 2021; Ding, 2014; Jones, Moore, & Walton, 2016; Small, 2017; Walton et al., 2019). This ultimately leads to the conclusion that this type of storytelling allows space for situated, first-hand experience, and community storytelling that amplifies voices of marginalized groups (Carlson & Caretta, 2021; Mangum, 2021). As such, it becomes clear that storytelling is a powerful tool that, when used well, actively speaks truth to power, and allows for a breaking of various hegemonic systems or non-inclusive narratives. In other words, one of the best means we have as writers to produce meaningful change is to offer alternative stories to the ones that currently dominate the narrative.

While a wide array of scholarship proves the usefulness of narrative in TPC as a way to foster connection (Baniya & Chen 2021), and push back against the dominant narrative, the fear of being non-objective still underpins much of the current trends in our classrooms (Small, 2017; Sommers, 2022). That is, by virtue of its connections to both technology and professionalism, TPC in particular is frequently hoisted as needing to remove the author from its prose. While a handful of scholars have argued that attempting to cover such positionality is impossible, others have approached resolving this fear of the non-objective by instead focusing on the advantages that can be gained from a more open approach. Some benefits of implementing storytelling in TPC, for example, include how incorporating narrative can be a useful tool for understanding and managing crises in professional contexts due to the link between telling stories and how we make sense of the world (Marsen, 2014). Storytelling provides a means of relating content to audiences, helping them feel that they are part of the conversation, and as such is often used when getting audiences comfortable with new technology and relaying complex (and thus potentially alienating) technical information (Lambrecht et al., 2025). Clearly, narrative serves as a productive means of building connection and collaboration, as it invites the narrator and the listener to join each other in a shared space for collective thinking and action (Baniya & Chen, 2021).

Storytelling is a useful tool for communicating with audiences and inspiring change, but TPC cannot fully embrace narrative unless instructors teach students how to think about stories (Sommers, 2022). Sommers’ framework of stories we hear, tell, and live provides a method for this kind of pedagogy. Stories we hear teaches students to listen to diverse stories, and to value all knowledge, especially that which has been marginalized by society. Stories we tell teaches students to tell their own stories and the stories of others in a way that is respectful and makes them better user advocates. Stories we live bridges the two in order to teach students how to construct new meaning from the narrative of their lives. Understanding these three elements helps students become more ethical and socially conscious communicators (Sommers, 2022). Teaching students about the stories we hear, tell, and live has always been important, but it is especially crucial in the digital age. With the rise of technology, more people

than ever are creating their own content, and finding the power of their voice online (Lambert, 2013). At the same time people are consuming more stories digitally, everywhere from job hunting, to television, and even digital billboards (Henrickson, 2025). Digital stories are everywhere, and people are responding to them. Since those in TPC are in the role of "public intellectuals, knowledge workers, and advocates for users" (Haas & Eble, 2018, p.4), they must learn how to tell stories digitally in order to reach and connect with their audience.

The project we discuss in the article is a digital story. Digital storytelling is storytelling that "produces effect and affect through intertwingularity, transformativity, interactivity and embodiment, and multimodality" (Henrickson, 2025, p.2). In other words, it allows us to play with technology and combine multiple modes in order to create our desired outcome or tell what the story is about (effect), as well as make our audience feel, or even act (affect). With the rise of technology, the stories we tell can reach more people than ever. Due to the prevalence of digital storytelling in TPC and in our everyday lives, it is especially important now more than ever to teach students "to think critically about how to tell stories truthfully and respectfully" (Sommers, 2022, p.8), so that they can go on to create and inspire positive change in the TPC workplace and their lives.

Methodology (Collaboratively Written)

The following section offers a critical reflection from the combined perspectives of an instructor (Caravella) and student (Martynova) through both the design and execution of a professional writing course that purposefully embedded digital storytelling as the means for students to achieve its learning goals. The course, described in more detail below, served as a third-year keystone in a two-part sequence aimed at strengthening students' digital writing skills within the field of TPC. Much like Sommers, we have intentionally constructed this reflection as a narrative, in the hopes of illustrating how storytelling helps not only with sharing ideas between individuals, but also the dissemination of these ideas and how they reach larger communities, especially when published through a journal venue like *Xchanges*. As such, each of the three sections echoes her 2022 article, framing our reflection in terms of stories we hear, tell, and live. As the instructor's intent was based on "hearing," (or in more realistic terms, reading) various stories and scholarship about the power of narrative in TPC, this framework informs the larger design and context of the course. This intent is then followed by the story told by an actual student detailing her perspective of choosing the course and moving through its various touchstone assignments. Finally, both instructor and student perspectives join together through the stories we both live, especially with regard to critical reflection's place within TPC pedagogy.

We hope that the story we tell here provides a poly-vocal take examining both intent and outcome from two very different positionalities with regards to the course material. This joint narrative approach in particular, especially from varying perspectives and positions of power, helps illustrate how it is not only the stories that are told, but who gets to tell them, and to whom, that make storytelling such a pervasive and impactful tool.

Stories We Hear: The Instructor's Intent (Instructor Written)

The course described here, Intermediate Digital Authoring, is a third level university course in an undergraduate professional writing program in Canada. As is common for Writing programs, by the third year, all students choose specializations, or streams, with the current course being the keystone for the digital writing stream. Each specialization follows a keystone/capstone sequence, where the keystone prepares students in both theory and practice for their fourth-year capstone, or practicum. Overall, the course works to develop students' critical knowledge and essential skills with regard to digital writing across a variety of professional writing practices and especially targets technical/industry and field-based writing situations rather than preparation specific to continuing to graduate studies.

As a keystone course part of the major program sequence, students come to this course having already completed various other courses related to professional writing, including genre studies, rhetoric, and ethics. In addition, there are two prerequisites that must be completed prior to joining the keystone in the digital writing stream: Fundamentals of Editing and Writing in Digital Cultures. Because of this, students enter the course having already obtained a wide breadth of theoretical knowledge, as well as basic editing and digital writing skills. In this way, the Intermediate Digital Authoring course can move quickly through and build upon existing student knowledge bases, and all students have some degree of experience with various types of digital writing prior to joining (so less time needs to be spent on tutorials or learning new writing software or technology). While different instructors are free to teach the course how they see fit, all sections of this course maintain identical learning goals, where upon completion of the course, students will:

- Understand rhetorical strategies and design techniques for digital writing at an intermediate level
- Adapt composing processes across a variety of technologies and modalities
- Analyze and discuss ethical and narrative issues affecting writers in an increasingly digital world
- Execute effective and ethical digital authoring projects at a near-professional level
- Develop strategies for thinking about and researching complex problems across various digital writing contexts

With these learning goals in mind, my particular version of this course purposefully relies on digital storytelling in TPC in order to provide students a clear and transferable means of constructing a polished, portfolio worthy project by the end of the term, requiring them to build on both their theoretical knowledge and practical skills as professional writers before moving on to their capstone course. As with most writing courses, this is a hands-on, active learning course, where nearly all class periods involve discussion, practice activities, workshops, tutorials, and other in-class practice.

In other words, students learn relevant theory by putting it into practice, rather than simply talking about ideas without any actual application.

During the first week of class, students are given the overarching goal of their semester-long project: craft a meaningful and substantial scholarly digital story about a TPC topic of their choosing. Though I have previously taught this course allowing various modes of composition, for the section currently being discussed, I elected to require their submissions to all be in video format and aim for ten minutes of content. This choice was determined for two key reasons: 1) my class size this year in particular was small, and because I usually group students based on their project mode for workshops and focus grouping, there was a risk of having some students be the only ones utilizing a particular mode and thus not getting productive feedback, and 2) because of the use of various touchstone assignments and the dynamic requirements of video editing in particular, students would have to practice all forms of digital writing (static visual, dynamic visual, audio, etc.) in order to accomplish this project. We hit the ground running, then, as students had exactly twelve weeks (the standard length of a university semester in Canada) to research, pitch, script, shoot, workshop, and edit their ambitious projects.

Alongside the initial outline of what would eventually be their final projects, students also received the first of three touchstones, or process assignments, on the first day of class. This touchstone assignment, the Pitch, required students to perform some preliminary research before pitching their story idea to the class. Rather than a verbal pitch, students were also required to generate a “pitch card,” a single-page static visual to help explain their ideas and research to the class. Along with their visual and pitch presentation, students also provided feedback to all of their peers as part of this assignment.

After getting feedback on their initial ideas, students turned to their next touchstone project: the Script and Storyboard. Despite these projects requiring some form of narrative, in order to have them practice more technical writing as part of the course, scripts had to follow and include the audio/visual, or A/V script format. As such, at this drafting stage, students had to not only consider their larger narrative and dialogue, but also what technical processes and edits they planned to fold into their larger stories. Finally, using various digital software, students also had to construct a storyboard draft of their projects, incorporating stage direction and layering various points of their A/V script throughout their draft. As with the Pitch, students all gave and received written feedback on these documents from their peers (though in small groups, rather than from the entire class) before turning to their final touchstone.

Finally, the last step prior to the final viewing and submission of their completed scholarly digital story, students completed their Rough Cuts in a focus-group style feedback format. At this point, students were expected to have a near-complete project (at least seven to eight minutes) of a fully edited video, though some shots and/or edits could be less focused or clear than what would be expected of the final submission. As the class had a total of 12 students, three focus groups were created, where students

watched each Cut together and the director submitted three to four focused questions for feedback along with their draft for review. Each group then spent roughly 20-30 minutes discussing the Cut and what changes they would like to see between this and the finished, polished product by addressing the director's questions in turn and adding their own thoughts and reactions on top.

Stories We Tell: The Student Experience (Student Written)

As a student my TPC and digital authoring journey began in the first and second years of my professional writing degree, when I took foundational courses such as Fundamentals of Editing, Introduction to Digital Authoring, and Ethics. In these courses my classmates and I developed core skills for communicating with various audiences in digital spaces. We learned this through projects that required us to remediate texts (often we had to take a text written in dense academic language and rework it for a different audience through digital means), as well as create instructions and guides. Those projects asked to consider how to communicate information in the most accessible and engaging manner, thus illustrating how people-centric TPC is as a practice, and the role of those in TPC as communicators and agents of change.

While the work I was doing prior to this course demonstrated how to be an effective communicator, the project discussed here taught me a new way of ensuring not only that I am reaching my audience but also that I am accurately representing the breadth of human experience and impact related to my chosen concern. In my Intermediate Digital Authoring class, my classmates and I were asked to create a ten-minute digital story in video format on a TPC topic of our choice. This meant that we had to choose a topic we could discuss meaningfully for that length of time, and which we could accurately represent utilizing the five modes: linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial (New London Group, 2000). In the following sections I discuss how I came up with the idea for my digital story; the process I went through in learning not only how to craft my story, but also the different ways stories can be crafted to best represent the people involved; and finally, the process of storytelling as a practice that happened with and among other students as I navigated this assignment alongside, and with constant feedback from, my peers. I hope to show readers the importance of storytelling in TPC pedagogy as a way to teach students how to better reach audiences, uplift underrepresented voices, and address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in TPC.

How it Started

When my classmates and I arrived for our first day of class, we received instructions for both our final digital story and the first touchstone: the pitch and pitch card. Receiving all of this information on the first day prompted us to start considering the content and format of our digital stories. I remember the first time I heard the word "story." My mind immediately jumped to my preconception of stories as those typically seen in fiction or memoirs: singular stories that follow a linear pattern of beginning, middle, and end. I

then began to consider all the linear stories in my life, thinking that I would pick something that happened to me and create a video about that.

What my classmates and I soon learned is that there were no expectations to create a linear story. Instead, we had the freedom to tell the particular kinds of stories we cared about in the manner that would be most effective for the story we wanted to tell. Sommers (2022) advises against a singular way to think about narrative since narrative is both "flexible and largely contextual and culturally situated" (p.3). This means if we did set strict genre expectations then it would severely limit the kinds of stories we are able to tell as well as standardize who is able to tell them, or even what we consider a "story." Instead of concrete genre expectations, we were provided with a list of key elements from Lambert (2003) to keep in mind when working towards our intended effect within the genre of digital storytelling: point of view, dramatic question, emotional content, the gift of your voice, the power of soundtrack, economy, and pacing. Our professor asked us to consider the lens from which we tell our story (point of view), as well as the intended effect, since picking the soundtrack and emotional content meant being intentional thus rhetorically effective for our viewers. Aligning with Sommers (2022) advice, using these elements as a starting point instead of dictating a concrete structure gave me more freedom in how I constructed my story.

The story I wanted to tell was fragmented and unconventional. I began with an experience I had at the walk-in-clinic in my hometown, where I watched an elderly couple struggle to receive care due to the fact that they did not have a phone or computer, and thus could not book an appointment online. This sparked my interest in showing how technology had become a barrier for certain demographics to receive healthcare. The challenge with crafting such a story is that technological barriers in healthcare affect many different people in different ways. While for the couple I saw it was the lack of technology itself that was the problem, other communities may have problems such as internet issues. For myself as a busy student, a lack of these technological additions such as online booking systems would actually be the greater issue because of my schedule. All of these considerations were essential in telling the story that I wanted to tell. Since all these experiences existed, and the problem was not yet solved, I also could not create a traditional narrative with a beginning, middle, and end. Instead, I had to paint a picture of what was happening for my audience.

The solution I found was to create a story that is many-voiced or "poly-vocal": combining the couple's experience, my own, and experiences of patients online to illustrate a shared problem and potential solution. My desire to create a poly-vocal story was inspired by an example provided in class, a digital story titled "Normalizing Student Parents on College Campuses" from a student at George Mason University (Stories – Scholarly Digital Storytelling, 2022). This story had an important problem that it was exploring: what are the challenges of student parents on campus, but it was told in a fragmented manner through the compilation of mini-narratives from people affected, alongside statistics from scholarly sources. I later learned that this fragmented, poly-vocal narrative is what Boje (2001) refers to as an antenarrative. Antenarrative is a before-story, defined as "the fragmented, non-linear, incoherent, collective, unplotted

and pre-narrative speculation, a bet," while simultaneously being, "polyphonic (many-voiced), and collectively produced" (Boje, 2001, p.1). The type of story is one that does not require the storyteller to have a definitive ending in mind, and instead allows us to portray various perspectives and get at the human experiences that are essential to us as technical and professional communicators. Similar to the way we structured the current article by sharing the perspectives of both student and teacher, I wanted to make a video that contained both my voice and the voices of others through a combination of personal anecdotes and scholarly sources.

The Pitch Card

Once I determined my topic, it was time for me to begin the pitch and pitch card. This portion of this assignment required us to present our ideas to the class in a two-to-three-minute presentation, with the aid of a pitch card that was: a single slide, 90% visual, and purposefully avoided additional text. Creating the pitch card was daunting at first, since I was accustomed to PowerPoint presentations with many slides of text. I was able to come up with the 10% textual portion first, creating the working title "The Move to Mobile: Who is Healthcare Leaving Behind," which I ended up keeping as the title to my final project (as seen in Figure 1). I also chose to define accessibility which both pointed to the importance of my argument and established my scholarly ethos, since this was the key area, I wanted to address within the genre of technical writing.

With the visual components, my goal was to communicate what the intended topic and audience was in a manner that my classmates could recognize quickly. Lambrecht et. al (2025) suggests that metaphor in their digital (virtual reality) story was able to save them time by prompting audiences with concepts that were already familiar to them. I ended up following a similar strategy, opting for colours that the peers I consulted and I associated with technology such as indigo and purple, a visual representation of a barrier in the form of a "do not cross" line placed across an image of a cellphone, and images of both technological devices and healthcare professionals in order to solidify the context I was working in, as shown in Figure 1. The pitch card and the pitch itself contained many images, quotes, and mini-scenarios (where I asked the audience to put themselves in a patient's shoes) combined together, to illustrate the kind of story I wanted to tell.

The story I envisioned at the beginning of the term was one where viewers could hear many voices speak out against means of accessing healthcare that they found inaccessible, and it was the importance of having both multiple voices and advocating for accessibility that I wanted reflected in my initial pitch. Looking back at my pitch and pitch card, I see that it too was a form of storytelling: the journey I took to come up with this project and what I thought was valuable about this project being the story that I chose to tell. Here it is only me that was speaking to my classmates and professor, but I was telling the story with the help of a visual and the power of my spoken voice as well. When I got feedback from my peers, I was able to see that this is an effective method to tell my story, while also receiving feedback on my greater project.



Figure 1: My Pitch Card.

The feedback I received from students who watched my presentation demonstrated that they understood the situation I was portraying. They said they saw the value in my topic, as illustrated by the selected points of feedback found in Figure 2, where one peer said, “I like the fact that you chose a real problem,” another added, “good use of emotional appeal by way of personal anecdote,” and a third explained that they “like the rawness and real insight that you brought on what you had personally seen.” My classmates also understood that I was trying to create a professional piece informed by scholarship and asked informed questions such as “What other statistics/research is there showing the decline of health accessibility…?” I ended up implementing my peers' advice in my subsequent touchstones and the final piece. I believe what helped them provide useful feedback to me was the fact that I used known associations so they could understand the story I was trying to tell in the manner that I intended.

Clear intent. Good research points-personal interviews as sources would have good appeals. How is the story structured exactly? What other statistics/research is there showing the decline of health accessibility and perhaps health in general among people of different ages/generations? Relevant topics that everyone can relate to and care about, good to have a large audience range! Could you suggest specific ways to be accessible to all people? Do these accessibility need to be different? Could you interview people working in health care? See if they notice this disconnect?

I really enjoyed how specific your pitch was and how you addressed the issue and made it obvious what you are trying to fix. While I think it was important to emphasize the current issue, I would have liked to hear more about what your final product will look like.

I think peer reviewed studies would be useful for logos and showing just how real the difference in health care treatment is. Aside from that, your presentation was really strong, clear, and well thought out! Essential health care, as well as accessibility is a sensitive topic to pursue. Exploring different aspects of why healthcare and how accessibility has become difficult for many is important to analyze.

- Interesting topic
—unique, relevant, and important
- Good use of emotional appeal by way of personal anecdote
- The necessity of this content is made clear
- Strong title, I would keep it as is!
- Description of personal credentials supports author's ethos
- I'm curious what you plan on doing for your visuals

- I like the fact you chose a real problem
- Consider clearly stating the solution of switching to mobile appointments.
- Do you have some more solutions to make it accessible?
- look forward to your digital story.

I like the rawness and real insight that you brought on what you had personally seen. Make sure you include this in Final!

Figure 2: Selected Peer Feedback on My Pitch Card

Script and Storyboard

After receiving feedback and doing further research, I took my ideas and began arranging them in a script and storyboard, working to differentiate between the many voices in my story so that every voice stood out and mine did not speak over others. Sommers' (2022) argues that TPC educators should demonstrate how narrative functions by teaching students to weave the stories they hear into their own work, ultimately illustrating the role that they play in the larger story. This project showed me exactly that. Out of respect for patients at the walk-in-clinic I did not film there. Instead, I weaved simple animations of what I saw which I constructed on Canva, news clips about my topic, videos of myself testing the usability of healthcare websites, and

screenshots from both public online commentary and various scholarly sources. It was my goal to combine these elements in a way that portrays an accurate reflection of the problem and suggest potential solutions. As Carlson and Caretta (2021) suggest, TPC professionals should not only tell but also amplify stories of those who have experienced what we write about. In this project, I used scholarly sources to amplify the voices of those in the news clips and the elderly couple whose story originally inspired this piece.

Combining many voices to tell a story runs counter to the dominant approach of listening to a single story, which is the way many of us are taught. Instead of one person's perspective, combining stories creates what Mangum (2021) calls a community of stories. He argues, "reframing storytelling toward a community of stories approach is needed to amplify marginalized voices" (Mangum 2021, p. 57). In my own project I compiled a community of stories by layering narratives of people affected by technological changes in healthcare in order to amplify voices that were not previously heard.

The process of combining these voices taught me about point of view. Point of view is, "the specific realization you, as an author, are trying to communicate within your story" (Lambert, 2003, p. 10). Since I was combining the stories of many others I had to be careful to portray what matters to them instead of simply using them as a means to prove my point. While my final video ended up looking slightly different, I began thinking about this while creating my storyboard. In my storyboard, I separated the stories of others from my narration by leaving their story the same as I heard it in the speech bubbles on the screen, as seen in figure 3, and using words like "I" in the script in order to distinguish my own experiences and perspective from that of others. I also made sure I included various perspectives, even if they were vastly different from each other. As seen in figure 3, I shared my own experiences, the experience of the couple, clips from professionals, and opinions from others around me (a section that ended up being a compilation of perspectives found online). In the end, I put together seemingly contradictory points to illustrate the importance of people being able to choose whether or not they use online services without it affecting the quality of care they receive. Layering stories and perspectives not only made a stronger case for my argument since it illustrated the full scope of this problem, but helped me to, as Sommers says, "tell stories truthfully and respectfully" (2022, p. 8).

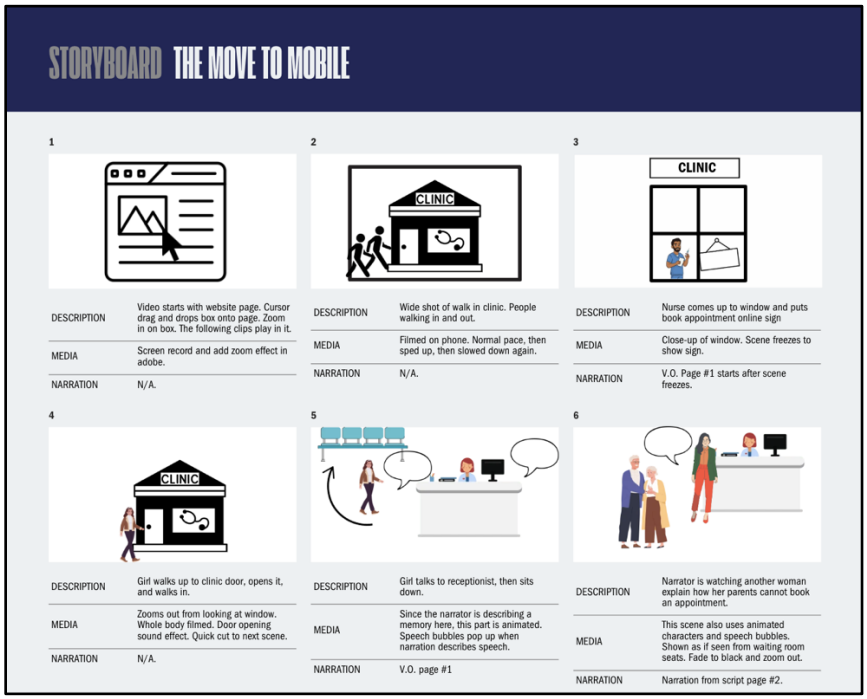


Figure 3: Select Sections of Storyboard Part A



Figure 4: Select Sections of Storyboard Part B

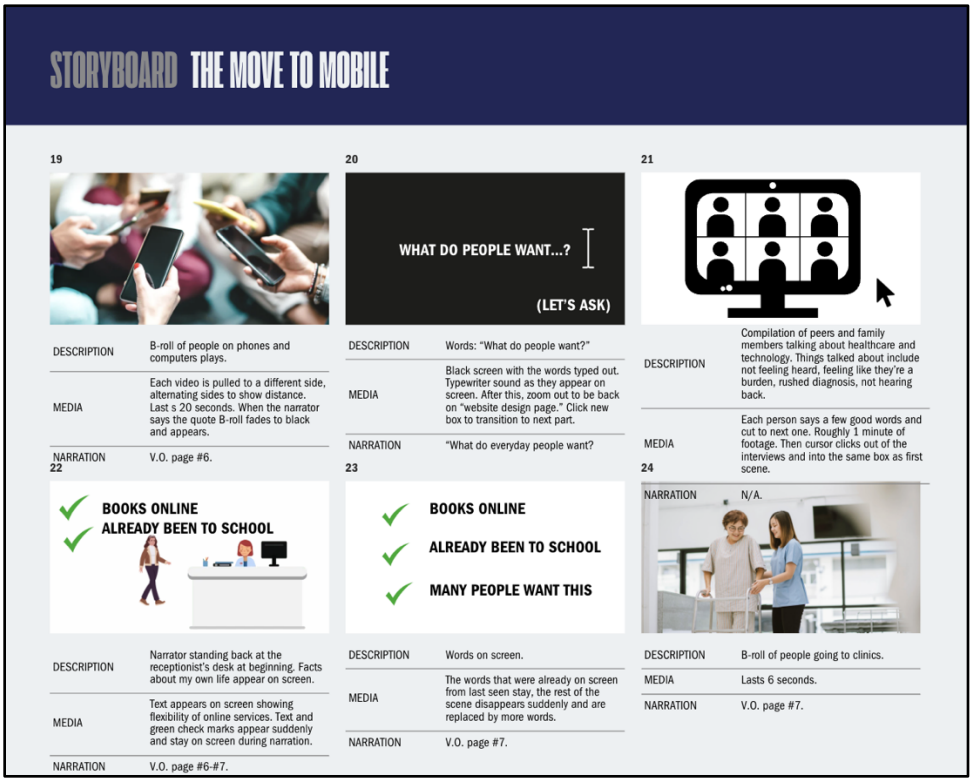


Figure 5: Select Sections of Storyboard Part C

Rough Cut and Final Video

Storytelling was not only a part of creating the pitch and final video, but also a part of the peer feedback process. Following the script and storyboard, we were asked to create a rough cut of our video and bring it to class, where we were divided in groups of four to five and provided feedback on each other's drafts. While we took some notes to organize our thoughts, the instructions stated that feedback here was primarily discussion based. Here, the professor fell in line with Moore's (2013) advocating for dialogue, as it shifts the discussion from data collection to storytelling, and allows us to hear what might have not been said in a more formal setting. Furthermore, Bacha (2018) argues that discussion and dialogue is essential to TPC as it can reveal why users like or dislike a product or technology. While our videos were not products or technologies, they were created for a certain audience, and receiving feedback helped us fulfill the expectations of those audiences just like we would have to do if we were creating a product. Receiving feedback through dialogue allowed us to tell stories about each other's work, and illustrated what our audience's natural reaction would be to our final products, while simultaneously allowing a freer exploration of these ideas than if we had provided written feedback or been given a more structured means of responding to one another.

The storytelling manner of providing feedback was indispensable to making my final video more accessible and audience-ready. In line with the requirements of this touchstone assignment, I initially asked my peers the following questions:

1. What do you think about the animations? What can I add to them to keep them simple but visually engaging and help get my point across?
2. I tried to use clips that are both reputable (like news sources which reference doctors) as well as those that just represent people. Is there a way I can better order the clips to help build ethos?
3. How do you feel about the music choices? Do they work with the “feel” of the video?

While I got answers to these questions, my peers and I started discussing different aspects of my project. I was initially worried about big-picture edits such as the feel of the video and the order of my assets, but my peers' attention went to how I presented facts in one particular section of my rough cut. As shown in Figure 4, I initially had statistics from The National Library of Medicine written out on a white page with no visuals, but after discussing it one of my peers left a suggestion that I should instead portray the statistics visually, such as in a pie chart. I ended up taking their advice, which I agree tells the story in a more engaging and accessible manner. Without discussing this section with my peers, I may not have thought about changing this section and would have had a less audience-ready digital story, as well as harder to follow information due to a lack of visuals in my final project.

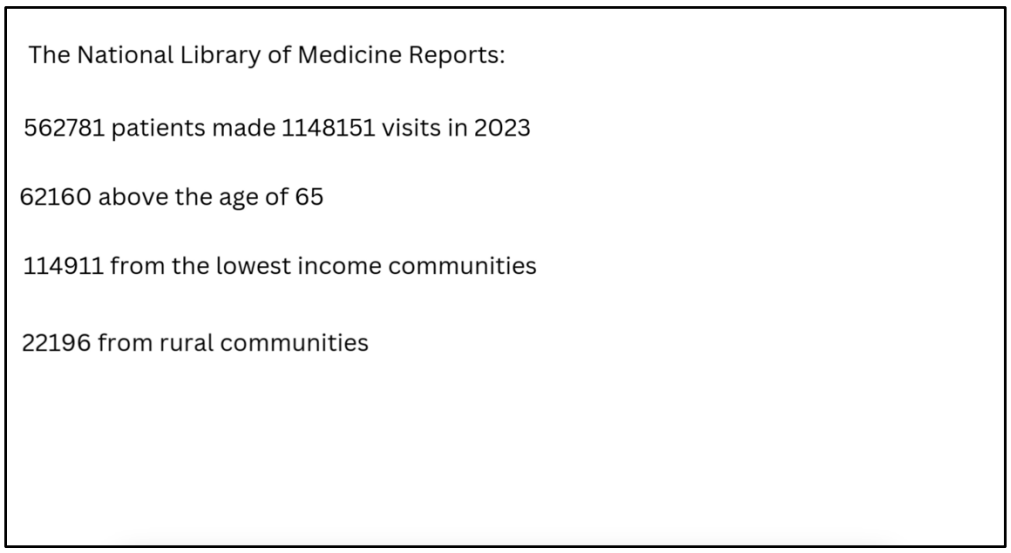


Figure 6: Statistic Visuals Before and After Peer Feedback

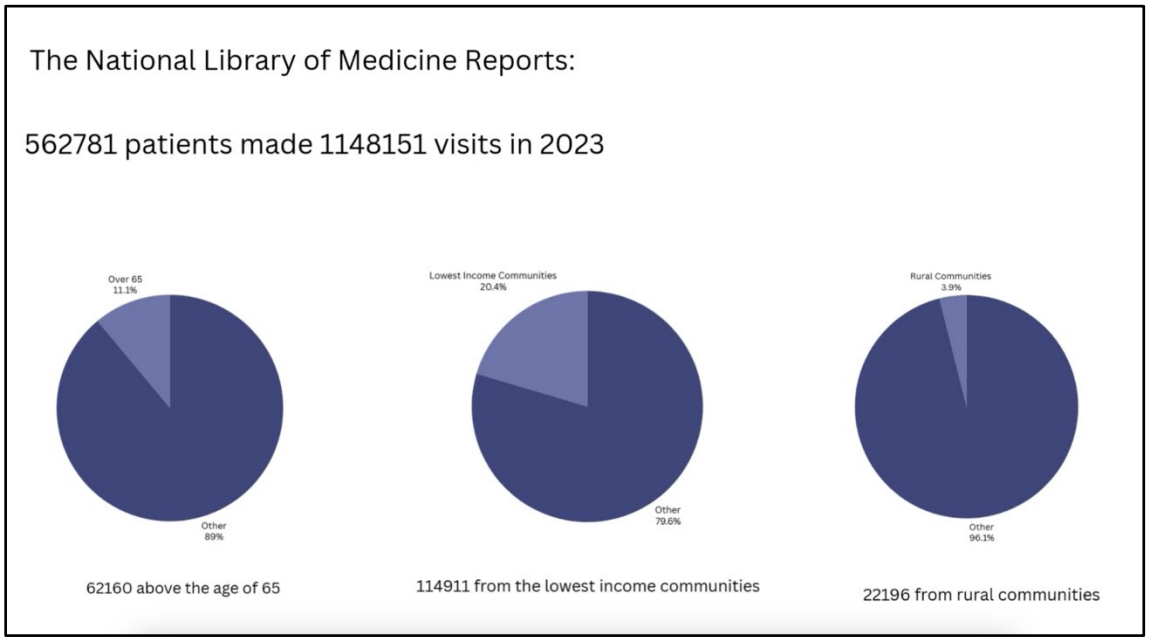


Figure 7: Statistic Visuals Before and After Peer Feedback

After the feedback session ended, the last few weeks of the class were spent working on the final cut. With the assets gathered and altered beforehand, my work consisted of ensuring my story was edited in a way that provided the audience with a cohesive antenarrative. Sommers (2022) explains that being a storyteller means learning to display information in a manner that is easier for audiences to understand, and with the many versions of the story that I have already told in the touchstones, along with the feedback from my peers in class, I felt confident to undergo the time-consuming but rewarding process of crafting the final video.

Overall Experience and Takeaways

Overall, this project taught me not only that narrative is a part of every step in TPC, from pitching an idea, exploring the situation one is working with, providing and receiving feedback, and telling your story to others; but that being conscious of narrative helps us better understand the skills necessary to become successful technical writers. This is because narrative prompts us to examine our own perspectives as well as consider other people involved. While there are many different types of narratives and the terms story and narrative carry different meanings to different people, one especially viable way to approach storytelling in TPC is through antenarrative. I found this method of storytelling to be conducive to the discovery process that is a part of TPC since I was able to gather more information from different voices rather than sticking solely to my own point of view. This meant I was able to more accurately reflect the issue, something that is essential for writing that creates meaningful change.

This project also taught me to reflect upon my own positionality, as well as the positionality of others when it came to telling and listening to stories around me. I

learned this by exploring, as Moore, Jones, and Walton (2021) suggest, not only objective or provable stories but lived experience. While I did not go out into the world and conduct interviews, I was able to gather experience by listening to the stories of others in places I was already attending (such as the walk-in-clinic), and pairing those with video clips, online discussion boards, and scholarly articles to further portray the issue. I learned to navigate rhetorical situations and see relationships in the stories I heard (Moore, 2013), therefore becoming more comfortable with what Sommers calls "the complexities of narrative practices" (2022, p.2).

While this was a way for me to become familiar with the role of storytelling in TPC, one aspect of this project that made it harder to tell the stories of others is the fact that I was relying on my own authorship. I tried to get around this by leaving the mini-stories embedded in my larger story to speak on their own, and discussing my digital story with multiple peers. If I was doing this project on a larger scale, something that I would want to do is follow up with the individuals represented. Sommers (2022) says that In the TPC classroom, instructors can embrace the iterative process of making sure we are representing stories without talking over them by creating assignments that require co-creation. For this project I did a lot of co-creation with my peers, but the lesson I took away is that doing this kind of work requires constant communication and feedback, and this is the kind of work best done with the communities represented.

In the end, I believe learning how to tell stories truthfully and respectfully has the ability to make us more socially just communicators. While including narrative in one's work does not automatically make them more conscious of the inequalities around them, telling stories changes how we perceive our work and the kinds of questions we ask (Cushman, 2015). This is an important skill for anyone anywhere, but it is especially important with digital storytelling due to the potential for digital content to impact a wide audience. Examining narrative in the TPC classroom helps students see the stories all around them, as well as the manner in which they tell their own stories. I believe the more students are exposed to stories whether it is through hearing the stories of others, or telling their own, the more they will learn to recognize stories in their workplace, and everyday lives.

Stories We Live: Implications for TPC Pedagogy (Collaboratively Written)

Narrative is much more than a lens from which we can understand various forms of writing. It is a necessary element for producing actual change, especially with regards to diversity, equity, and inclusion (Perkins & Byler 1999; Jones & Walton 2018). By putting into practice, the three-part approach posited by Sommers (2022), we see at least one example of how being explicit in the construction of complex storytelling in the TPC classroom can help our students become ethically responsible communicators. Storytelling is a key means of speaking truth to power (Bacha 2018), and our field already admits to the ways that subverting mainstream narratives can disrupt and resist injustice (Jones 2017). Thus, explicitly bringing narrative into the limelight of the TPC classroom provides students the opportunity to not only reflect on their own positionality

as writers, but also to consider what various positionalities other authors take, even when it comes to the most mundane or objectively structured pieces of writing.

As TPC educators, we can highlight our own positionality by living our own stories in front of our students, providing them an example and means of constructing their own narratives. As students, we can put into practice the many ways of incorporating narrative into our work, using it as a way to explore our own place in the world, and that of others. Obviously, this is but a small case study example following only one individual student and instructor's intent and experience of storytelling in a TPC classroom. However, while the perspectives provided here cannot cover every experience of storytelling and its relevance to TPC, it does provide yet another example of the impact of the purposeful integration of narrative and storytelling in TPC pedagogy, made clear by the student narrative as to how storytelling in particular helped her better understand and practice the various types of technical writing necessary throughout the course. Even through this very journal, which privileges undergraduate and graduate perspectives on various points of TPC scholarship, we can see how not only our stories, but who gets to tell them, shape our very understanding of the world.

No matter how objective or factual we attempt to be in our writing, or how technical or computer-enhanced such writing becomes, writing is at its core a human skill that is always executed through some level of human perspective. While this level may vary and the lines between human and computer continue to blur in the age of AI, we ultimately tell stories with every written communication we produce. Being more explicit as to not only the existence of, but harnessing of, the power of narrative in the field of TPC can thus only strengthen our abilities as both instructors and students, especially when considering what kinds of writing we choose to write, publish, and share with the world.

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