The Civic-Minded Technical Communicator and the Rhetoric of Public Policy Communication and Deliberation

Bowdon, Melody (2004). Technical Communication and the Role of the Public Intellectual: A Community HIV-Prevention Case Study. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 13(3), 325-340.

Bowden argues adamantly that technical communicators do not have a choice in whether or not to become civically engaged advocates. Through the act of collaborating with (in her example) individuals or organizations involved in disseminating information directly related to the formation of public policy, technical communicators must accept a role of rhetorically situated public intellectuals that share their knowledge with researchers and decision makers.

Bowden defines her conception of a public intellectual as someone "ready to contribute rhetorical suggestions for the shaping the final document" (327). With this definition in mind, she outlines a case study where she was brought in as an editor for an AIDS study and quickly recognized that as a technical communicator, her involvement would necessitate the application of her expertise in order to enhance the reporting of the results. Moving beyond a textual editor, Bowden engaged with the authors of the study to challenge their conceptions and critical definitions to create a study that was fundamentally more effective. She concludes by suggesting three vital avenues that technical communicators must explore when assuming the role of a public intellectual: bringing research relevant to "the history of science and rhetoric to sites where decisions are being made," "export[ing] skills for producing critical frameworks and performing rhetorical analysis to these sites of action," and sharing information with colleagues and students to benefit from their critical feedback (338-9). Bowden is clearly addressing technical communication instructors with her article, and she emphasizes repeatedly that public participation is a requisite, not optional, tenet of the academy.

Dombrowski, Paul M. (2006). The Two Shuttle Accident Reports: Context and Culture in Technical Communication. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 36(3), 231-252.

Dombrowski compares the findings of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board to the findings of the Challenger counterpart and asserts that technical communicators have impacted conceptions of how communications are affected by contextual elements such as majority opinion and corporate culture. In the course of his analysis, Dombrowski examines how investigators were able to uncover communication and methodological failures that led to non-changes in policy regarding the space shuttle program in the time between the two accidents.

Central to his argument is the culture of NASA prior to the Columbia disaster which essentially created an environment where engineers could make the same mistake twice. Engineers once again assumed that damage to space shuttle equipment would not negatively impact safety simply because a catastrophic failure had not occurred in the past where damage had been similar. Equally important, NASA managers placed engineers in a real-life Catch-22 situation by requiring them to produce evidence of an unsafe condition in order to obtain satellite photographs of the Columbia which would have provided evidence of an unsafe condition. This article clearly demonstrates several areas of organizational behavior and corporate culture that preclude the possibility of policy change by specifying arbitrary prerequisites to the reporting of findings and subsequent action. The policy changes that would have prevented the Columbia disaster were blocked by public and institutional impediments that were rooted in financial cutbacks and flawed decision making practices that, by nature, excluded dissenting minority opinions.

Dragga, Sam, & Voss, Dan (2003). Hiding Humanity: Verbal and Visual Ethics in Accident Reports. *Technical Communication*, 50(1), 61-82.

Dragga and Voss perform a rhetorical analysis of accident investigation reports and argue for a greater human presence within the reports, specifically where loss of life and injury occur. The authors claim that obscuring human loss in these reports "strips victims of their humanity and hides the tragic human consequences of technological failures from individuals trying to devise appropriate public policy, establish effective safety regulations, and modify or abolish dangerous industrial processes" (61). Although the aim of their argument is the inclusion of these elements in order to represent human losses to the persons charged with changing rules and regulations to prevent technological or industrial failures, the authors mainly focus on how to achieve the inclusion of human elements in their reports.

Dragga and Voss present a wide variety of accident reports and demonstrate strategies for how to make them more humanistic (e.g. use a stick figure instead of an "x" to represent a person in a diagram of an accident, or the inclusion of pictures of deceased victims). The appropriate strategy, the authors claim, should be to avoid further injuring victims or invading survivor(s) privacy, but at the same time writers should seek to represent those that were injured or killed in accidents. The proper inclusion of human elements should result in the reader experiencing "sensitivity […] regarding the human beings killed and injured in accidents" (78). This model, aimed at both practitioners and addressing a gap in the education of future technical communication professionals (as little to no material existed on the subject in contemporary textbooks), directly addresses how accidents should be communicated in order to deliver humanistic elements of loss and damage in a report genre that previously excluded these elements in favor of descriptions of property damage.

Eble, Michelle F., & Gaillet, Lynee (2004). Educating "Community Intellectuals": Rhetoric, Moral Philosophy, and Civic Engagement. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 13(3), 341-354.

Eble and Gaillet promote a tight partnership between universities and the surrounding community and advocate for educators to develop programs that "emphasize rhetoric and ethical inquiry inherent in writing projects" (349). Their goal is to create academics that blossom into "community intellectuals," civic minded persons that utilize their communicative talents for the civic good.

The authors locate the tradition of such a practice in eighteenth century Scotland, where, as a result of their political union with England, universities had a tight-knit relationship with the surrounding community; the community informed and shaped the pedagogical decisions of the university and the students that graduated from the university benefited from and shaped the community through the reciprocal exchange of values and ethical ideals. Eble and Gaillet propose a continuation of such a model by modifying existing technical communication curricula to encompass a high degree of reflexivity about ethical and social considerations within the surrounding community. The authors address the concept of community, and they recognize that the term community is no longer sufficient to describe the environment within which communicators operate: "businesses, corporations, and organizations are all communities in themselves, and they, in turn, serve many other communities" (351). The application of what the authors call "civic rhetoric" (derived from Cicero and the Scottish tradition) allows students to achieve social action that specifically aids the communal good and fosters a future interest in civic responsibility, ultimately shaping the student into a community intellectual.

Graham, Margaret B., & Lindeman, Niel (2005). The Rhetoric and Politics of Science in the Case of the Missouri River System. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 19(4), 422-447.

Graham and Lindeman examine two Biological Opinion reports issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) written to the U.S. Department of Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) recommending different courses of action for use of the Missouri river lands; the 2000 report advocates environmentalist concerns, while the 2003 report (written by replacement writers after the original writers were removed) advocates human uses for the river lands. After analyzing the reports the authors argue for increased attention to how science and conceptions of science are used in reports that aid in policy making.

Graham and Lindeman adopt a reader-response critical approach arguing that a report's meaning is made by the reader of the report. Using this approach, the authors' rhetorical study concludes that the environmentalist report of 2000 favors conservationist concerns by using a narrative technique and admitting scientific uncertainty to (as Tillery 2006 would say) build ethos for immediate action to preserve endangered species. The 2003 report exploits the uncertainty of the science behind the recommendations of the 2000 report to delay action until further research can be done. The authors argue that delaying action while waiting for scientific certainty to be achieved is a common strategy to counter an opposition, conservationist argument. In their analysis, Graham and Lindeman also reference the fact that the original authors were replaced, damaging the institutional

credibility of the Service; likewise, the authors call for greater transparency and a move away from hegemonic uniformity in the presentation of reports from agencies or groups: that is agencies should disclose the subject positions of authors for the scrutiny of the audience. Directed at scholars and educators, the rhetorical analysis of the article suggests new avenues or research into how science is strategically used in public policy advocacy documents.

Johnson-Sheehan, Richard, & Morgan, Lawrence (2009). Conservation Writing: An Emerging Field in Technical Communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 18(1), 9-27.

The aim of this article is to define conservation writing in terms of other genres and justify how and why educators should consider it a relevant genre in the field of technical communication. Johnson-Sheehan and Morgan demonstrate the reasons for the inclusion of this genre in the scope of technical communication studies and justify and outline a plan for teaching conservation writing at the post-secondary level.

Johnson-Sheehan and Morgan articulate the conditions that call for a course in conservation writing: the current zeitgeist of environmental action to stem the results of climate change has created an enthusiasm for the propagation of responsible environmental interactions. Next, the authors briefly summarize the history of the genre. They define conservation writing as more scientific than nature writing (focusing less on "personal reflections or emotional reactions to nature") and similar to science writing in its use of scientific evidence, but different in its "overtly political and occasionally bureaucratic dimensions" (10). Their historical survey of conservation writing shows an explosion in the genre with the creation of the EPA, and a mass popularization with contemporary writers such as Al Gore. They go on to outline several subgenres and how they can be taught to undergraduates. The main points of their pedagogical approach section center on the need for technical communication courses specifically tailored to conservation writing (as opposed to engineering writing as is often the case) and the general need to foreground education that teaches students to tailor complex scientific knowledge to fit arguments aimed at layperson decision makers and the general public.

Kimball, Miles A. (2006). London Through Rose-Colored Graphics: Visual Rhetoric and Information Graphic Design in Charles Booth's Maps of London Poverty. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 36(4), 353-381.

Kimball addresses the question of the rhetorical purpose of infographics, arguing against the notion that they "behave as […] objective outputs of scientific instruments […] rather than as subjective expressions of ideas—as tools of rhetoric" (353-4). His main argument is that practitioners prefer to represent reality as simple rather than complex, and that graphics do not simply relate information, but function rhetorically as well.

To demonstrate his point, he looks at a map of socioeconomic class in London that summarizes the results of a 16 year (1889-1902) study of poverty by Charles Booth. In his analysis, he mentions that the poverty crisis created an exigency fueled by perceived

hostility from a large group of impoverished Londoners; the resulting infographic, the map, showed the confined nature of poverty, alleviated public concern, and resolved the exigency. Likewise, the map with its diminutive representations of impoverished areas (in relation to areas of "comfortableness" or affluence) allowed people to conceive of poverty as a solvable problem, in contrast to other visual representations of archetypal poverty that made the problem seem dangerously unmanageable. Kimball admits and addresses ambiguity amongst color coding in the map and discrepancies in data not correlating to representations in the map, but insists that the infographic functions above these concerns to "convince England to move on from debate [over the poverty crisis] to action" (377). The article is decidedly scholarly, and Kimball concludes by urging scholars and educators to consider how infographics are read rhetorically just as carefully as how we read words.

Knievel, Michael S. (2008). Rupturing Context, Resituating Genre: A Study of Use-of-Force Policy in the Wake of a Controversial Shooting. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 22(3), 330-363.

Knievel examines the revision of the use-of-force policy employed by the Denver Police Department after the fatal shooting of a mentally impaired boy by a DPD officer. In his examination he uses activity theory to examine the use-of-force policy "genre" and how a "rupture" (the shooting) caused the policy to be "excavated" by the mayor through the appointment of a panel to revise the policy. The public engagement after the rupture causes relatively speedy policy change in contrast to Rude's (2004) assertion that policy change is a slow, multi-step process that occurs on many levels.

Knievel invokes activity theory to situate the events surrounding the policy revision process and uses the theory to situate events and actions within the narrative he constructs. He concludes that the removal of the "activity system" of the use of police force and placement of that system in the public light, opening it to close scrutiny, both places the system in a new context that yields unexpected engagements with the text as well as raises controversy about the examination of an internal system by outsiders. He points to examples such as the Challenger disaster and the Enron scandal as similar situations, where ruptures caused immediate examination and change in the policies that mediate interaction between the public and certain institutions as a result of close and public examination of those institutions' policies. It should be noted that the author's extensive discussion of activity theory precludes in depth examination of specific definitions of each term, but he does go into a significant amount of detail as to how he arrives at specific meanings for each term before applying them to the constructed narrative of the policy review process.

Mara, Andrew (2006). Using Charettes to Perform Civic Engagement in Technical Communication Classrooms and Workplaces. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 15(2), 215-236.

Mara borrows from the fields of design and architecture the design project method of charette, what he defines as "a number of collaborative processes, most notably those in

which architects and planners collaborate with groups of people—often the general public—to solve a design problem" (221). Mara asserts that charettes are excellent projects for technical communication students to engage in because they not only promote the students' civic participation, but they solve real world problems and help students develop their "professional ethos" in ways that service-learning cannot.

Mara introduces two successful case studies involving the use of charettes in his courses, but the primary evidence that demonstrates the validity of charettes is his theoretical underpinning. In order to problematize existing service-learning relationships, Mara points out that students in service-learning programs are often detached from the public and placed in a servicing role to a larger entity such as a corporation (similar to Scott 2004). Mara blurs the distinction between techne and praxis by reimagining the idea of a professional writer as not just a detached professional assigned to a company to get professional experience, but a civic actor that engages the larger community. Such a civically involved technical communicator, through interaction with others, develops a professional ethos that enables the student to consider broader issues. The case studies demonstrate how students can be organizers and essentially create their own service-learning partner organization by creating task groups to engage the public and issue reports based on what they learn about public interest. Since this article is entirely for an educator to evaluate this system and emulate it in his or her own classroom, Mara concludes by warning of the potential pitfalls of the charettes: misrepresenting the public interest, creating visuals or flashy designs that misdirect the public interest, and the potential for backlash that is inherent when engaging the public.

McKenzie, Keisha (2009). The Public Presentation of a Hybrid Science: Scientific and Technical Communication in 'Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government' (2002). *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 39(1), 3-23.

McKenzie analyzes the British intelligence report issued to the British public and examines the relationship between intelligence as a pseudo-science and the implicit rhetorical arguments that the report contains in furtherance of a public policy agenda. She asserts that national intelligence is a pseudo-science because it values (among other qualities associated with conventional science) objectivity; the objectivity of intelligence reporting is necessary to separate the dissemination of information from policy deliberation, which is the responsibility of the legislature (this is a legally mandated separation in the UK).

McKenzie asserts that even though the stated intention of the report is not to sway opinion, the report utilizes several rhetorical techniques that are masked by the supposed objectivity of intelligence reporting: "[the Assessment] presented [the public] with a dressed-up science, packaged intelligence that fit into a tight policy narrative of Iraq's aggressive criminality" (10). Her analysis addresses the pseudo-scientific sidebars that included grizzly facts about the effects of chemical and biological weapons when used on victims, emphasizing the rhetorical strategy of making a threat seem impending and

immediate to heighten the emotional response of the audience. Although the report's rhetorical strategies were rightly exposed through subsequent judicial investigation, the effectiveness of the report is addressed by McKenzie when she calls for further research into how "public rhetors' backgrounds and purposes play out in the communications they produce" (18). She suggests the introduction of group composition research into future analytical studies of public policy artifacts and addresses educators and researchers in the field by mandating public policy study as a way for technical communicators to connect "research to the world outside of the classroom" (19).

Ornatowski, Cezar M., & Bekins, Linn K. (2004). What's Civic About Technical Communication? Technical Communication and the Rhetoric of "Community." ***Technical Communication Quarterly*****, 13(3), 251-269.**

Ornatowski and Bekins recognize the need for technical communicators to engage with the community, but question the concept of "community" and explore various conceptions and how those conceptions reify or challenge existing practices within the field. Firstly, the authors question the role of community- (or service-) learning as an undisputed way to imbue technical communicators with a moralistic center; to distill their argument, they question the narrative behind community learning and whether sufficient attention is placed on "the process by which students presumably become more aware of the civic aspects of their writing practices" (255). The authors introduce the competing concepts of orthodox and radical communities, where radical communities challenge the notion of common belief, continuity, and political detachment of orthodox communities.

Ornatowski and Bekins cite examples that demonstrate that technical communicators often have to mediate between communities that not only demonstrate inter-communal conflict (orthodox) but also project intra-communal conflict (radical) into their expectations. In the process of mitigating between communities or factions/oppositional entities within communities, the technical communicator performs a rhetorical act by selecting or excluding discourse in a written product. The goal of community learning that the authors' suggest to educators is to teach technical writers to analyze the results of their actions with a multiplicity of communities and a complex understanding of intra-communal relations. A potent example is cited whereby a technical communicator argues in favor of retaining public control of a cemetery over a private takeover (arguing in favor of retaining the cemetery as an important part of the "community"), neglecting to examine the potential benefit that cheaper burials would have to the poorer members of the same community.

Ranney, Frances J. (2000). Beyond Foucault: Toward a User-Centered Approach to Sexual Harassment Policy. ***Technical Communication Quarterly*****, 9(1), 9-28.**

In interpreting Foucault's theories on sexuality and policy, Ranny asserts that sexual harassment policy documents have become authorless, "discursive technology" that serve only to describe behavioral standards and outline punishments for offenders of the policy (11). She argues that the standards by which cases of sexual harassment are evaluated have been irreparably damaged by the genre of sexual harassment policies, and her

solution is to shift focus to policies drafted around user-centered experiences.

The policy documents themselves are often boilerplate text, which goes strongly against her position as described by Miller (1979) and Dobrin's (1983) respective arguments for genres as social action. The policy documents fail because they are authorless and, therefore, lack the ability to adequately address the audience; she particularly finds fault with expecting policies to be read and adhered to when they consist of little more than vague generalities and instructions that privilege male conflict resolution. The proposed group-constructed policy must overcome the challenges of employer paranoia (i.e. that free and open discussion may lead to more complaints), but offers the opportunity to expose additional cases of harassment that may otherwise lay dormant. Employers must also construct a policy document that takes action to prevent harassment rather than accept it as an unavoidable occurrence that needs to be delineated and punished. Ranney concludes by outlining her plan to further investigate the issue of sexual harassment and appeals to technical communicators (and presumably practitioners) to continue the work of questioning how policy documents are authored.

Rude, Carolyn D. (2004) Toward an Expanded Concept of Rhetorical Delivery: The Uses of Reports in Public Policy Debates. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 13(3), 271-288.

In analyzing the rhetorical cannon of delivery, Rude asserts that documents authored for the purposes of defining social policy (reports, studies, etc.) must consider how the information is delivered to the audience. She provides examples of policy documents that other researchers have analyzed (Brockman, Cook) to demonstrate that policy documents that are considered culminations of efforts, no matter how well they are written, do not typically affect public policy; Rude argues for greater rhetorical emphasis to be placed on delivery, not just in terms of physical design of the document or website (although this is important), but also as "taking the document and its argument to the audience" (273).

To support her point, Rude offers a case study of a policy document designed specifically with public policy change in mind. The policy concerns clean energy reform in the Midwest, and the group that published it has a team of field workers and affiliates that explained the report in multiple, publicly accessible formats. The publisher also partnered with similar organizations to produce subsequent reports that updated or specified additional policy change. Every effort was made to place the report in the appropriate rhetorical context and to have it reach legislators and persons in a position to implement the policy changes forwarded by the report. The report was written with the goal of effecting positive policy change, and Rude concludes her article by listing principles of effective report writing that are modeled off the case study report.

Scott, J. Blake (2004). Rearticulating Civic Engagement Through Cultural Studies and Service-Learning. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 13(3), 289-306.

In arguing for increased civic engagement by technical communication students, Scott asserts that service-learning is a problematic vehicle for providing real-world experience

since it can serve to acculturate students into a practioner's view of technical communication that obscures larger societal concerns. To escape this, Scott outlines a pedagogical model that incorporates cultural studies in order to help students critically reflect on their service-learning experience.

The underlying concept behind Scott's assertion is the co-option of service learning by what he terms as "hyperpragmatism," a perspective that values pragmatic pedagogical concerns (i.e. preparing students to transition from an educational institution to industry) over cultural concerns and reflexive practices (i.e. considering the impact of technical communication on users and exploring conflicts in personal versus corporate ideologies). Scott's recommended approach forces students to "assume a critical stance toward technical communication (especially their own) and the ideological systems of power that regulate it" (298). He argues throughout for a more relaxed conception of what can be accomplished in service-learning, and places emphasis more on meta-reflection: not just having students reflect on what is accomplished (physical production), but also compelling them to consider why they need to interact with the community and in what ways their interactions are constrained by outside factors. This approach ensures that students are not only participating in civic engagement, but are using the opportunity to reflect on broader societal factors and not just on meeting the client's requirements. Scott therefore recommends that educators seek to make service-learning projects a collaborative effort between industry and their students, rather than providing industry with passive student workers that unquestioningly produce documents in order to simply gain real-world experience.

Sidler, Michelle, & Jones, Natasha (2009). Genetics Interfaces: Representing Science and Enacting Public Discourse in Online Spaces. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 18(1), 28-48.

Sidler and Jones perform a rhetorical analysis of two websites maintained by organizations at the heart of public policy formation concerning genetics. In their analysis, they recognize the implicit recognition by each organization of their respective audiences and they examine how each site is tailored to promote public understanding and participation in public policy formation.

Although the two sites examined by the authors employ different techniques, both of the organizations conform to Rude's (2004) conception of delivery (33). The actions taken by the organizations include not only sections of their websites that inform the readers of the pertinent issues of debate, but also instructions on how to become involved in public policy debate and to contact and influence elected officials. Key to Sidler and Jones argument is their conception of public information, which they model off of the Human Genome Project's efforts to make the human genome public and limit exploitation by private entities. The authors praise both organizations for developing content that is accessible to a wide range of users, but similarly point out hindrances when applicable (e.g. a high degree of visuals in one site that limits access to visually impaired persons). Their rhetorical analysis transitions into recommendations for pedagogical directions, and the authors assert that analyses such as the one they performed could help students

become aware of "the effect that rhetorical decisions about interface technologies can have on deliberative actions of the citizen-users that access these interfaces" (46).

Spoel, P., Goforth, D., Cheu, H., & Pearson, D. (2009). Public Communication of Climate Change Science: Engaging Citizens Through Apocalyptic Narrative Explanation. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 18(1), 49-81.

Spoel et al., through a rhetorical analysis of two scientific communication pieces (An Inconvenient Truth and a Canadian museum exhibit, Climate Change Show), argue for their conception of an effective use of science in informing the public. The authors argue for the creation of public experts that can understand science in relation to their own lived experience and intelligently debate public policy that is based on scientific observation.

Spoel et al. contend that, unlike past audiences who were "passive recipients of expert-controlled scientific literacy," current audiences are active in assimilating and relating science to their own experience. Citing progressive research into the communication of complex scientific concepts (Bak 1996) the authors argue for a narrative approach to explain many complex facets of climate change. Their analysis of the movie and exhibit looks at how the narrator is portrayed (the serious ethos of Gore versus the animated sheep narrator), the logical structure of the argument (the apocalyptic narrative), and the pathos of each piece (the use of direct audience address in An Inconvinient Truth and narratives of persons affected by climate change in Climate Change Show). Of great significance is their interpretation of Gore as an "outsider-insider science communicator" who can both reflect on scientific fact as a layperson as well as portray himself as having privileged and complicated (beyond the audience's means of comprehension) scientific knowledge (62). This narrative style is in contrast to the sheep, who is a humble outsider. Both styles of narration (and more broadly, rhetorical positions of the pieces) have advantages and disadvantages, but the authors settle on the consensus the most effective types of communication that foster "engaged understanding" utilize "all three modes of rhetorical proof" to foster "public expertise and scientific citizenship" (77-8).

Tillery, Denise (2003). Radioactive Waste and Technical Doubts: Genre and Environment Opposition to Nuclear Waste Sites. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 12(4), 405-421.

In a rhetorical analysis of several anti-nuclear waste repository fact sheets, Tillery positions these documents in the scope of technical communication as a new genre of scientific rhetoric. Tillery contends that these documents are different from environmental impact statements that are not considered a genre by Miller (1984) since they meet the requirement of engaging the audience and promoting action.

To demonstrate her point, Tillery categorically demonstrates that elements of each rhetorical cannon are to be found in the fact sheets. The organizations incorporate each of the different cannons in different ways (e.g. the Sierra Club arranges their sheets akin to a government report with sidebars and graphics, while other organizations with fewer resources opt for a straightforward, text-based approach to demonstrate "authenticity

derived from plainness and simplicity") (412). An interesting contradiction that Tillery points out is that organizations often utilize scientific studies commissioned (or sometimes conducted) by the DOE as evidence of the DOE's inability to manage the repository projects efficiently, creating a situation where the authors of the fact sheets ask readers to accept the DOE study as credible while simultaneously accepting the study as evidence of the DOE's incompetence or unreliability; the studies are thereby used to question the ethos of the DOE. Tillery explains the apparent contradiction by interpreting the purpose of the fact sheet as "creating a scientifically literate but skeptical public" (418). This piece is a clear precursor to her 2006 piece that presents a more sophisticated rhetorical analysis that focuses on questions of institutional ethos.

Tillery, Denise (2006). The Problem of Nuclear Waste: Ethos and Scientific Evidence in a High-Stakes Public Controversy. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 49(4), 325-334.

Tillery asserts the importance of ethos in communications surrounding high-stakes issues and discusses the ways in which professional communicators can build ethos when presenting findings to a wide range of audiences.

Tillery first classifies the categories of documents and their corresponding audiences ("scientific publications for audiences of specialists; technical reports aimed at influencing public policy; and press releases") and then lays out the three part conception of ethos borrowed from Aristotle ("practical wisdom, virtue, and goodwill towards the audience") (326). Crucial to Tillery's argument is the split between controlling presentation of the argument, and defending against inalterable public perceptions: "While writers can control the textual features that build ethos, they cannot control the public's perception of their organizations" (326). Tillery's article manifests several strategies derived from a case study of the Yucca mountain controversy and the analysis of the multiple extant documents which present findings to various audiences. Tilley argues that since "metatextual" evidence (i.e. public perception) cannot be controlled, the author must employ the "ethos-building techniques of embracing scientific uncertainty, establishing practical implications for technical data, and ensuring access to information" via the internet (331). While Tillery's main goal seems to be a discussion of ethos-building strategies for the benefit of practitioners, the theoretical approach of recognizing limitations inherent in the text based merely on audience perception (fair or unfair) and exploiting ethos-building strategies within the text to combat those perceptions appears to be an avenue of research that could be applied in the construction of an evaluative framework for public policy texts (as she demonstrates in the case study).

Wallace, Derek (2003). Writing and the Management of Power: Producing Public Policy in New Zealand. In Charles Bazerman and David R. Russell (Eds.), *Writing Selves/Writing Societies: Research from Activity Perspectives* (pp. 159-178). Fort Collins, CO: The WAC Clearinghouse. Taken 14 October 2009 from http://wac.colostate.edu/books/selves_societies/.

Using elements of activity and genre theory, Wallace performs a rhetorical analysis of a

public policy process for the privatization of electricity utilities in New Zealand that is strongly influenced by multiple theoretical perspectives. Wallace concludes that policy that supposedly seeks the collaboration with and opinions of informed citizens can actually function as a deterministic statement of governmental attention that marginalizes civic involvement.

Key to Wallace is the unresolved tension apparent in democratic society that both asks the government to "lead a process of social adaptation to ever-continuing change" as well as asks them to "consult the affected social body about measures to be taken" (160). Wallace analyzes the policy-making process in New Zealand from inception to completion of one "cycle," noting how the government had already determined to proceed on a course of privatization and pointing out that the terms of reference guiding the study restrict the logical conclusion to some kind of reformatory action, eliminating the possibility of retaining the status quo. Other elements of the report process were worded beyond the grasp of the average citizen leading to anemic feedback, and the limited amount of feedback collected was buried in report so that it would have little impact on the results of the study. Thus, Wallace presents a policy process which is a practical application of the worst-case scenario of several theorists grappling with public policy as a genre for analysis by technical communicators. He concludes by indicating that such a restrictive and deterministic policymaking process is merely a screen for "conceal[ing] the fact that the government has already made up its mind" (175).

Williams, Miriam F. (2009). Understanding Public Policy Development as a Technological Process. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 23(4), 448-462.

In her article about public policy making as a technology, Williams seeks to shift the definition of the study of public policy in the field of technical communication. In the past, policy was studied simply from a technical side: how technology is communicated in policy documents or how the communication of technology affects policy. Williams asserts that the creation of public policy is a technology.

To support her claim, Williams compares the steps in developing and testing software to the steps necessary to conceive of, draft, implement, and evaluate public policy. After comparing the procedural processes, she develops a fusion model that combines the steps of both processes into one model. She then provides the example of e-rulemaking, a process where multiple stakeholders can view and comment on government regulations before they are closed and enforced. While she recognizes the limitations involved in e-rulemaking (mostly issues of access and repetition), Williams asserts that a participatory model is essential in the development of policy and that technical communication scholars should continue the research of public policy as a technology. She closes by emphasizing that the field already considers a wide variety of documents as subjects of analysis, and that the inclusion of the study of public policy can only broaden the field and open up new research possibilities.