



UNC CHARLOTTE
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Department of English

9201 University City Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001
t/704.687.2297 www.english.uncc.edu

Informed Consent for

Professional Writing to (Un)Learn: Pre-Career Writing as a Chance for Critical Reflection

Project Title and Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study titled “Professional Writing to (Un)Learn: Pre-Career Writing as a Chance for Critical Reflection.” This is a study to understand the ways in which students in a technical communication class articulate their understanding about the potential career paths they may pursue after graduation. Many technical communication students have specific jobs they want in the following fields: business, science, engineering, communications, and the social sciences. Because one’s future career path is influenced by personal experiences and cultural constructions, it is possible that students can offer ways to locate these social constructions regarding careers through reflective writing. Too often technical writing pedagogy assumes that course content must follow “appropriate” Business or Engineering School expectations about writing, which means emphasis on group work, adherence to strict formats, and drill-and-skill grammar lessons. Unfortunately, those expectations are often antithetical to critical pedagogy and a student-centered classroom. In order to adequately address student needs in a course that has an overwhelming “career apparatus” image held by many inside and outside the discipline, we must first understand how students think about their potential career goals (if any) and how they themselves need to prepare for these careers. Then, we as technical communication teachers can tailor our courses not toward making students fit in a particular career but towards assignments and activities that allow students to rethink their assumptions about careers or, simply, future work in which they might be engaged.

Investigator(s):

This study is being conducted by Dr. Aaron A. Toscano, assistant professor of English at UNC Charlotte.

Description of Participation:

You will be asked to allow me to photocopy your career-related assignments, which may include, essays, cover letters, resumes, and reflections (written and/or online). There is no extra work to do for this study; all assignments are part of your course requirements.

Length of Participation:

Your participation in this project will take as long as it takes to do the career-related assignments. The amount of time varies depending on the assignment. Reflections will be brief, about 15-30 minutes; whereas, assignments such as cover letters and resumes may take 3-4 hours. A 5-page essay could take anywhere from 5-20 hours. If you decide to participate, you will be one of about 72 subjects in this study. Your participation lasts only as long as the semester; no post-semester follow up is required.



Risks and Benefits of Participation:

There are no known risks to participation in this study. However, there may be risks which are currently unforeseeable. The benefits of participation in this study are any information that the field of technical communication may use to improve education.

Volunteer Statement:

You are a volunteer. The decision to participate in this study is completely up to you. If you decide to be in the study, you may stop at any time. You will not be treated any differently if you decide not to participate or if you stop once you have started.

Confidentiality versus Anonymity:

Any information about your participation, including your identity, is confidential. The following steps will be taken to ensure this confidentiality:

I will keep hardcopies of student assignments (photocopies of work turned in or printouts of discussion board posts on Moodle or student webpages) in my campus office or my home office. I will give pseudonyms to participants to ensure confidentiality in any public discussion I have about the data (conference presentations, articles, and/or classes about teaching). All work collected will be destroyed three years after I complete the research.

Fair Treatment and Respect:

UNC Charlotte wants to make sure that you are treated in a fair and respectful manner. Contact the University's Research Compliance Office (704.687.3309) if you have any questions about how you are treated as a study participant. If you have any questions about the project, please contact Dr. Aaron A. Toscano at atoscano@uncc.edu or 704.687.6562.

Participant Consent:

I have read the information in this consent form. I have had the chance to ask questions about this study, and those questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am at least 18 years of age or am an emancipated minor*, and I agree to participate in this research project. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form after it has been signed by me and the Principal Investigator.

Participant Name (PLEASE PRINT) Participant Signature DATE

Investigator Signature DATE

*Emancipated Minor (as defined by NC General Statute 7B 101.14) is a person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday and meets at least one of the following criteria: 1) has legally terminated custodial rights of his/her parents and been declared 'emancipated' by a court; 2) is married, or 3) is serving in the armed forces of the United States.

