# Race Conversations as Technical and Professional Communication

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**Abstract:** This study aims to provoke transformative dialogue on race discourse in technical communication, resonating across academic, professional, and societal contexts. I situate discussions concerning race within the domain of technical communication, wherein the dissemination of specialized information to diverse audiences is paramount. This article argues that race discourse functions as a form of technical communication. By tracing the inclusion of race in technical and professional communication (TPC) scholarship and exploring the concept of racial literacy, this piece proposes that race should be understood as technical knowledge. I first present a conversation that highlights prevalent arguments in race and communication. Then, I present technical communication scholarship currently addressing race and advancing social justice, organized around themes gleaned from current literature found through certain search terms. This article includes a case study of how the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) digital platforms foster critical race conversations. Through the systematic literature review and digital case study of the NMAAHC, this work illustrates how racial literacy is central to ethical, accessible, and justice-driven communication. By envisioning future directions for race discourse in technical communication, I've identified key implications from the analysis, including strategies for shaping and adapting race conversations to maintain relevance and effectiveness, grounded in real-world examples of TPC practices. Collaborative efforts with allies are also highlighted as essential in mitigating cultural fatigue and fostering meaningful dialogue.

**Keywords:** Technical and Professional Communication; Social Justice; Racial Literacy

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A recent conversation with an academic friend went something like this…

**Speaker 1:** *Hi, I am checking in! How are you?*

**Speaker 2:** *Good. I'm just going through some things with school.*

**Speaker 1:** *I'm sorry to hear that.*

**Speaker 2:** *My program is interesting. One of my textbooks talks about how police officers are the descendants of slave owners,[1] and the leather community (a BDSM group)[2], and more like that — it just makes your jaw drop.*

Technical and professional communication (TPC) scholars will be familiar with the social justice turn in TPC scholarship over the last several decades (Jones, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Walton et al., 2019). And in light of this social justice turn, I believe conversations like the text thread between friends highlight that the social justice turn in TPC is the right space and time for us to engage in significant discussions about race. As social justice advocates, we must be able to engage race and ethnicity with different perspectives and ideologies to avoid echo chambers without meaningful discourse. Openness to diverse viewpoints is essential in race discussions.

I situate discussions concerning race within the domain of technical communication, wherein the dissemination of specialized information to diverse audiences is paramount. This conversation highlights prevalent arguments in race and communication, a pivotal aspect of the social justice turn. I believe the conversation highlights the critical need to support social justice for everyone, regardless of their political or ideological beliefs. It emphasizes that social justice should be a universal concern, not limited by or restricted to any specific viewpoint or alignment. This is where the potential lies for us to navigate meaningful race conversations and to engage in meaningful critical dialogue.

Here, I seek to provide an analysis of race conversations as a form of technical communication, examining current discussions and also delving into public-facing discussions on race. I examine the literature to discover common themes, then I particularly focus on the National Museum of African American History and Culture's (NMAAHC) "Talking About Race" online program. I would argue spaces like these are examples of technical and professional documents in that a public serving and facing institution offers these documents and resources for individuals and groups to better understand, articulate, and advance arguments on behalf of social and racial justice. In this sense, these public facing texts and articulations from organizations like NMAAHC can be examined as examples of technical and professional communication. I also examine prevalent arguments circulating about race conversations and envision potential paths forward for navigating meaningful discussions on race. I do this through a lens of the narratives emerging within Black TPC and Black women's TPC.

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[1] Scholars have examined the historical connection between slave patrols and modern police forces (Maclin et al., 1998; Ralph, 2019; Robinson, 2017; Hadden et al., 2021; Durr, 2015; Moreland-Capuia, 2021; Johnson, 2014).
[2] I have no citations to give as my search revealed no sources to back up this claim.

**Race Conversations: A Dialogue**

I want to make explicit the rhetorical function of this dialogue. The disjointed nature of this exchange is intentional and an example of contemporary racial illiteracy in everyday communication. The absence of stasis between speakers is not accidental; it models the communicative breakdowns this article theorizes. The lack of stasis — talking past one another, shifting frameworks, redefining terms, and invoking incompatible narratives — illustrates the communicative breakdowns that often shape public conversations about race. Rather than presenting a unified or resolved discussion, the dialogue models how racial discourse circulates through tension, misunderstanding, and competing ideologies. I offer it here as a firsthand account that demonstrates the very challenges this article analyzes: how racial literacy must navigate incoherence, defensiveness, emotional labor, and divergent epistemologies.

The previous text conversation continues:

**Speaker 1:** *My program is moving along. I finished my certificate in Racial Equity. I am still in the PhD program, working on dissertation prospectus, and I'm thinking of doing the dissertation on online recovery spaces and anti-racism in White-dominant recovery spaces!*

**Speaker 2:** *I am struggling with DEI in school and other spaces. I feel what liberals are perpetuating is causing way more division and resentment in modern day than conservatives. As I said, the textbook I have for one of my classes said police officers originated from slave owners, which is not true, especially given there is a high rate of Hispanic and Black police population. Also, the forcing of the need for "safe spaces" for all these different groups is problematic as it is literally self-implemented segregation, when the majority of White people are not actually hateful to minorities. As a nuanced, educated person, I'm getting tired of comments in media and in my program about how White people have no culture and dismissing the other identities. I think people have gone too far to try and "fix" our country's past wrongs/atrocities. I do believe if it keeps going this way, we will see real intense racism and hate than we ever have. Because again, I believe most people are not racist or hateful, but the forced nature of what is going on is scary. Hopefully I did not offend, but I am in a space in my life where I'm not going to dance around the bush.*

**Speaker 1:** *White people definitely have culture. And there is no such thing as one culture for White people. There is a plethora of identities that exist within that category. Just look at the results from ancestry DNA tests. What if White people connected back to their ancestral roots and claimed their own identity, resisting the White category?*

**Speaker 2:** *I love connecting to ancestry. Every group, whether racial or religious, has experienced atrocities throughout history. We all need to acknowledge those atrocities and move forward and try and do better. Focusing on the past and trying to paint others as villains is not helpful and actually creates so many problems. And by moving forward I don't mean dismiss or forget, just try not to pin ancestral crimes on people alive today who had nothing to do with those horrific things. Vikings attacking the English, Irish with wars and famines, the active slavery that still exists in Africa and China, and much, much more. These are horrible things that*

*have happened or are still happening that can't be fixed by us paying others or arguing between ourselves.*

**Speaker 1:** *Today's racism exists in a different way than interpersonal racism. It is systemic and structural in the fact of entrenched systems which keep the poor and the affluent easily separated. It's not particularly aimed at certain groups, but the outcomes negatively affect certain groups. An example is that in schools we teach Standard American English (SAE) as the standard by which all must fit. Well, that dialect is not the only one. In fact, there are about 160 dialects, so what makes the one that upper-middle-class White people speak the standard? As a result, they get better grades. It is easier for them to learn in school because they are speaking their language, so to speak. Better success in school leads to better jobs, better pay in the long run, and more opportunities to succeed than those who don't naturally speak that dialect, such as BIPOC, etc. So, it is the outcome of the systems that shows racism when only certain races are negatively affected by an arbitrary rule. It is White supremacy in that it's saying the language of Whites is better than the language of all others, so we all need to conform to that. I'm only speaking about the U.S. here.*

**Speaker 2:** *I think English was the language that was the primary start of America, in addition to Native American languages, which are also part of the original languages. I believe you should keep your culture, but if you are in America you should strive to learn English to thrive more in the structured environment work-wise. Similarly, if I moved to China; I would need to learn Cantonese or Mandarin. Or if I moved to Africa or the Middle East, I would need to learn the native languages.*

**Speaker 1:** *Yes, but what if we all moved over there and claimed it as a country, despite the people already there, and took it by force through wars. Then said, "Now you must speak our language to survive in our world." Is that equal footing for success? Doesn't one group have an advantage in that system that the colonizers set up?*

**Speaker 2:** *Maybe we shouldn't continue with this conversation. I know I started it by opening the door, but I do not mean to offend you. I care about you, and I've been having a short fuse with politics.*

**Speaker 1:** *Sorry, but I was not offended. I just thought it was conversation!*

**Speaker 2:** *It's no problem. I just don't want to say something I regret and accidentally hurt you.*

**Speaker 1:** *I don't see how that would happen, unless you said something overtly racist. Did I say anything untrue?*

**Speaker 2:** *I am not a republican. I do have conservative values. One can be conservative without being a republican. I don't identify with that political party. However, democrats are causing a lot of the issues currently going on in terms of poverty, racism, and war.*

**Speaker 1:** *I'm not political yet I see both sides of the issues. I'm more longsighted in the sense of "how and why it is the way it is" than the "what to do to keep the system in place and make it work as it is."*

**Speaker 2:** *It is said that they are trying to fix it, but democrats were the ones who started the fire. An example are democrats who gave incentives for minorities to be on welfare and have fatherlessness. Democrats are pivotal in keeping specifically Black people and families down. It's all disgusting. Then they act as if it is the average White person who is destroying the Black person, but it is more nuanced than that.*

**Speaker 1:** *I think politics is very shortsighted honestly. Why not admit we colonized? Why not admit it was and is unfair to do that to people? Let's not focus on today's Black person versus White person. I agree that is not the issue at hand. And by "we" I mean the people who adhere to America as a nation. Some see it differently, like the traditional lands. As in, we are colonizers on stolen land, and that America is a system of government that was enacted on unwilling participants.*

**Speaker 2:** *That is horrible, yet that is literally the case for most lands all over the world. That is how civilizations spread. It does not justify the bad deeds but is not exclusive to North America.*

**Speaker 1:** *The fact that we all did it in the past does not mean we have to continue doing it that way now. Hopefully, civilization advances to be more civilized. "That's just the way it is" simply doesn't land for me.*

This is just one personal example of a genuine dialogue and firsthand account of race discussions that vividly illustrates the current contentious issues.

What follows builds from this exchange to analyze how race conversations function as forms of technical communication, and how racial literacy frameworks can help us understand and navigate the tensions revealed in this dialogue.

This type of conversation about race prompted me to contemplate my own interests in social justice, particularly regarding race and ethnicity. This conversation prompted this piece, which investigates the fundamental questions:

- What are some race conversations being had in technical and professional communication that contribute to the field's understanding of racial equity and social justice initiatives, particularly in the context of Black technical and professional communication spheres?

- How do various institutions and platforms utilize technical and professional communication to engage in and facilitate nuanced race conversations?

- Additionally, what moves can be made moving forward with race conversations as TPC, and within the field of TPC, contributing to efforts to increase racial literacy and social justice?

*Establishing Race in Technical Communication*

To fully account for the historical development and epistemological underpinnings of race discourse in TPC, it is important to revisit key foundational texts that shaped the field's early trajectory. The roots of TPC are deeply embedded in White, male-dominated institutional histories. Connors' (1982) seminal article on the rise of technical writing instruction in America reveals how the field's early institutionalization was deeply enmeshed in White, male-dominated epistemologies. To contextualize the historical gaps in TPC's engagement with race, Connors (1982) critiques the field's origin as a White, male-dominated endeavor, noting that early technical writing instruction excluded race as a factor in communication. Connors makes clear that TPC emerged not as a neutral discipline, but as one centered on industrial efficiency and largely blind to race, gender, and other markers of social identity. His work provides crucial grounding for understanding how TPC's disciplinary roots reflect White-centric values, which continue to shape the field's norms. Connors (1982) documented how technical writing instruction emerged from English departments with little engagement with race, a gap that would persist for decades. Adam Banks (2006) expanded on this critique, arguing that English departments have long struggled to recognize the relevance of race to language and action, especially in the context of technological access and digital equity. This historical erasure of non-White voices reflects the foundational exclusion that contemporary scholars must confront and redress.

Scholars like Haas (2012) and Williams and Pimentel (2012) helped position race, rhetoric, and identity as central concerns for TPC. Haas (2012) examined how race and rhetoric co-construct technical knowledge, while Williams and Pimentel emphasized the power of race discourse to effect social change. Medina (2014) critiqued the erasure of race in conversations about new information and communication technologies (ICTs), arguing for a broader inclusion of linguistic diversity and culturally situated knowledge. Medina emphasized the importance of race and ethnicity as core ethical concerns in TPC, particularly in community-building and collective advocacy. Coleman's (2014) research on workplace writing at a historically Black college (HBCU) further reinforced the significance of race in professional documentation and institutional practices. These works mark a turning point in TPC's acknowledgment of race as a constitutive part of communication.

Philosophically, the field has long been split between competing logics of efficiency and ethics. Ornatowski (1992) critiques the technocratic ethos in technical writing, warning that it often prioritizes institutional goals over ethics. Likewise, Miller (1979) calls for a humanistic rationale for technical writing, one that values situated knowledge and rhetorical engagement. Miller (1979) suggests that the field must incorporate ethical and rhetorical dimensions alongside functionality. Ornatowski (1992) builds on this by highlighting the tension between efficiency and politics in technical writing, foregrounding how rhetoric and ethics must be integrated into technical discourse. These arguments justify attention to race as central to the ethical function of TPC.

Rude's (2009) work on mapping research questions in TPC also supports this trajectory. Rude (2009) emphasizes the importance of systematically investigating underexplored dimensions of the field, such as race and identity. Further grounding the field's development, Rude (2009) calls for a more systematic mapping of TPC's research questions and methodologies. Her work provides a scaffold for understanding how technical communication can be expanded beyond industry needs to address civic and public communication, including race discourse. As this study draws from a systematic literature review, Rude's (2009) argument for structured inquiry justifies the methods used here to trace the evolution of racial justice conversations in TPC. This approach underpins my rationale for conducting the current systematic review.

*The Social Justice Turn in TPC*

As TPC began explicitly aligning itself with social justice goals, scholars urged the field to move beyond inclusion and toward advocacy. Jones (2016) defined TPC's social justice turn as an ethical imperative to address systemic inequities through both research and pedagogy. According to Rude (2008), the field has both the "content knowledge" and "responsibility" to pursue equality, a claim that Jones echoes by emphasizing the transformative potential of TPC. Jones et al. (2016) expanded this conversation, tracing the historical marginalization of BIPOC voices in the field and proposing research frameworks rooted in cultural responsiveness. Walton et al. (2019) further asserted that injustice is not merely a social issue but a technical communication problem. Agboka (2014) and later Agboka and Dorpenyo (2022) emphasized intercultural ethics and the necessity of confronting global injustices, arguing that technical communicators are uniquely equipped to enact change.

Haas and Eble (2018) contributed a framework for equity-centered pedagogy, urging instructors and researchers to adopt social justice ethics that support diverse student populations. Shelton (2020) critiqued the field's masculinist detachment and called for greater engagement with the historical roots of structural oppression, urging scholars to adopt practices that question normed and privileged assumptions. These contributions collectively represent a paradigmatic shift: they redefine technical communication aims as equity and justice, not efficiency.

## Contemporary Conversations: Centering Coalition

The last five years have seen an outpouring of scholarship that centers Black voices, amplifies coalition-building, and introduces new frameworks for racial equity in TPC. Mckoy et al. (2020) introduced the Black TPC Position Statement, which advocates for institutional practices that support Black students and faculty through coalitional engagement. Their 2022 follow-up further developed empirical, pedagogical, and theoretical frameworks to solidify Black TPC as a field-defining discourse. Byrd (2022) introduced the concept of *Black technical joy*: a celebration of resilience, innovation, and identity in the face of racialized labor and institutional exclusion. Similarly, Grant and Walker (2023) offered a model for coalition-based technical writing, co-creating deliverables with Black-led community organizations to resist extractive and exclusionary research practices. Recent work by Pouncil and Sanders (2022) has further developed the notion of an *embodied, coalitional approach* to social justice. They illustrate how Black and non-Black practitioners can engage across difference through critical understanding of positionality and power. Their framework for navigating these complexities reflects a growing

maturity in the field, balancing racial justice aims with rhetorical nuance and institutional critique. This ongoing conversation has moved beyond simply recognizing race to actively reimagining the field through Black epistemologies, resistance rhetorics, and inclusive methodologies.

*The Role of Racial Literacy*

Building on these foundational and contemporary conversations, this project argues that racial literacy is a form of technical, structured, contextual, and audience-specific knowledge. Literacy was once defined narrowly as reading and writing. As literacy studies evolved, scholars such as Kelli Cargile Cook (2002) emphasized that literacy is no longer just the ability to read and write, but a continuum of learning that enables individuals to reach their goals, develop potential, and engage fully in society. Literacy practices are always socially embedded and shaped by institutional context.

Billie Wahlstrom (1997) expanded this idea in TPC, calling for broader literacies that empower students as ethical communicators and agents of change. Yet even multiliteracy frameworks can fall short when they don't recognize the tacit knowledges developed within specific cultural settings. Racial literacy provides a more targeted lens for technical communicators. Stevenson (2014, 2018) defines racial literacy as the ability to recognize, respond to, and resolve racially stressful encounters. Anderson and Stevenson's (2019) work, along with Stevenson's (2014, 2018) work, emphasize racial socialization, critical vocabulary development, and trauma-informed coping, all skills that mirror the goals of effective TPC (clarity, responsiveness, cultural competence, etc.).

Racial literacy thus becomes a crucial competency in TPC. It demands that we examine how Whiteness is often positioned as the default in design, content, and user experience. Addressing race in TPC also requires confronting what King (1991) termed "dysconscious racism," or an uncritical habit of mind that justifies inequity by accepting the status quo. This ideology lacks any vision for a more just society and reinforces White norms as default. Jackson (1999) further notes that both White individuals and people of color may unconsciously adopt these dominant assumptions.

Building on these concepts, this project proposes a shift from dysconscious racism to racial literacy in TPC. Racial literacy, as defined by anti-racist educator.com and used in my research, is "an individual's deeper awareness and understanding of race and racism." It offers the vocabulary and tools needed to navigate complex racial dynamics and recognize how racism operates at multiple levels (Blackmon, 2025, p. 16). In TPC, racial literacy is essential not just for representation, but for equitable design, communication, and engagement.

For technical communicators, developing racial literacy means first acknowledging how White cultural norms influence design, language, and access, often under the guise of neutrality. This awareness must then translate into deliberate efforts to interrogate communication practices, foster equity, and validate the lived experiences of those marginalized by these systems (Blackmon, 2025, pp. 44–46). This article argues that developing racial literacy and cultural

knowledges is central to TPC, especially as we work to disrupt dysconscious racism and design inclusive communication systems.

To move from dysconscious racism to racial literacy, individuals and institutions must engage in intentional reflection, critique normative design standards, and elevate historically marginalized voices. As Ramasubramanian et al. (2017) argue, racial literacy grows through intentional opportunities for education, structured dialogue, and critical engagement. These are practices that are core to ethical technical communication. These conversations help individuals examine their own biases and privileges, better understand systemic racism, and contribute to inclusive change (Blackmon, 2025, p. 32).

The case study example in this article examines the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) as a public-facing model of racial literacy. Through its *Talking About Race* digital platform, the museum exemplifies how technical communication can be used to dismantle systemic racism, promote user-centered design, and support racial justice education. This example illustrates the possibilities of race discourse as technical communication and the urgent need for racial literacy across professional, digital, and institutional contexts.
The next section provides an overview of the systematic search strategy and review process employed to gather and synthesize relevant literature on race discourse in technical and professional communication.

## Research Methods

This study uses a mixed-methods approach that combines a systematic literature review with a digital case study, both of which are informed by qualitative research methodologies in TPC and rhetorical studies.

*Systematic Literature Review*

The rationale for including a systematic literature review lies in its ability to map the field's engagement with race discourse, identify gaps in scholarship, and establish a foundation for understanding how racial literacy has emerged as a vital competency in TPC. Following Rude's (2009) call for systematic inquiry in TPC, I used defined search strategies across multiple databases including JSTOR, Academic Search Premier, and *Technical Communication Quarterly* archives.

I employed the following search terms:

- "race and technical communication"
- "racial literacy and TPC"
- "Black technical and professional communication"
- "social justice in TPC"
- "anti-racist pedagogy in TPC"

To ensure recency and relevance, inclusion criteria required that sources:

- Be published within the last 10–15 years
- Be peer-reviewed journal articles, edited collections, or dissertations in rhetoric, TPC, or related fields
- Focus explicitly on race, ethnicity, or social justice within technical and professional communication

Excluded were texts that only tangentially referenced race or that focused solely on workplace diversity without linking to communication practices.

Although this search strategy aligns with disciplinary conventions in TPC, I recognize that this discipline-centered search is also more limited than the cultural site I analyze. As a researcher, I must acknowledge this tension between this discipline-centered search frame and the wider cultural and civic context of the case study. Notably, I did not use "Black" or "African American" as standalone search terms. I only combined "Black" with "technical and professional communication," which means the review may have filtered out broader Black rhetorical traditions and racial discourse, including Black Lives Matter discourse, African American community histories, Black feminist rhetorics, Black mental health literacies, Black women's digital literacies, and other cultural practices that can inform us of how racial literacy circulates in public life. These broader discourses inform the communicative ecologies within which audiences encounter and interpret race, yet they fall outside the scope of a search strategy grounded strictly in academic TPC. This tension reflects a methodological irony: even intentional, equity-oriented scholarly methods can replicate the exclusions they aim to address.

Acknowledging this limitation mirrors one of the article's central insights: well-intentioned scholarly methods can reproduce epistemic exclusions, narrowing what counts as relevant racial knowledge and underscoring the need for research approaches that extend the boundaries of the discipline. Naming this limitation is part of the racial literacy work itself, highlighting the need for research approaches that attend to rhetorical activity occurring beyond formal TPC scholarship. By acknowledging this irony, I aim to model the reflexive stance necessary for developing more expansive, equity-oriented research practices in the field.

## *History*

The search terms "race," "technical communication," and "history" yielded recent discussions on raced historical texts and contexts. Van Winkle (2022) explores Du Bois's data visualizations addressing the "color line" issue he famously noted. Contemporary TPC scholarship continues to address this problem of the color line, relevant in both the 20th and 21st centuries. O'Brien (2022) discusses historical marker texts (HMTs), or historical marker texts-plaques or stone markers at historically significant sites that often promote White supremacy and misrepresent BIPOC contributions. Alexander and Edenfield (2024) document the Atomic Energy Commission's seizure of Ellenton for the Savannah River Plant by examining official SRP histories and counter-narratives, highlighting the neglect and disproportionate impact on African American sharecroppers. They recommend DEI practitioners seek excluded perspectives to understand organizational impact. Walwema et al. (2024) analyze inclusivity and exclusivity in The Green Book, emphasizing strategic exclusivity for protecting marginalized communities,

and suggest using ethical frameworks for antiracist spatial protections to support TPC antiracist work. These sources show the historical work being done on race in TPC scholarship.

<u>Language</u>

Language plays a crucial role in discussions about race within technical communication. A search for "race and technical communication" over the past three years revealed a strong focus on translation studies in relation to social justice. Gonzales (2022) explores multilingual technical communication involving Indigenous language interpreters and translators. Cardinal (2022) discusses "superdiversity" among migrant multilingual audiences. Cooley and Gonzales (2023) argue that translation can advance social justice when guided by the lived experiences of multilingual communities. Gonzales et al. (2022) highlight the benefits of collaborating Baniya with Indigenous language speakers to improve technical documentation, such as COVID-19 information, thereby enhancing social justice and language access. Baniya and Potts (2024) address the biases in emerging communication technologies, noting their tendency to favor standardized White English. During the COVID-19 pandemic, BIPOC communities globally translated and localized materials to combat misinformation, exemplified by the Centro Profesional Indígena de Asesoría, Defensa, y Traducción's campaign "Los Derechos Viven en Todas Las Lenguas" (Our Rights Live in All Languages) in Mexico. These studies collectively underscore the significance of language in racial dialogues within technical communication.

*Public health and policy*

Several studies explore public health and policy issues related to "race" in "technical communication." Welhausen (2023) highlights racially biased mainstream media coverage of the drug epidemic. Morris (2024) uses critical discourse analysis to show how participatory rhetoric in U.S. housing reports can reinforce racial and class hierarchies, undermining diversity and inclusion. Sánchez (2023) examines the removal of USPS mail sorting machines and demonstrates how neoliberal cost-cutting measures threaten voting by mail, especially for BIPOC communities. Williams (2022) introduces the Policy, Roles, Sites (PRS) model to help technical communicators analyze and influence public policy on issues like race and policing, gun rights, and gun control. Balzhiser et al. (2019) argue for critical design decisions that promote equity and inclusivity, such as including race on forms to ensure accurate representation and address intersectionality. They emphasize the need for TPC designers to recognize the impact of design on experiences of discrimination and to act as agents of social change. Taken together, these sources emphasize the critical role TPC in addressing systemic racism and promoting social justice by challenging biases and fostering inclusivity in public health, policy, and design.

*Workplace*

In the search of "race" and "technical communication," I discovered sources on "race" and the workplace. Chen et al. (2022) discuss the often-overlooked aspects of the academic job market, highlighting counterstory vignettes that address disability, ethnicity, caregiving, international status, and financial insecurity. Bennett (2023) examines how medical insurance job ads may perpetuate ableist assumptions, hindering DEI goals and social justice. Bennett (2024) critiques

university career center communications that privilege dominant bodyminds, challenging professional discourse centered on White, patriarchal, cisgender, male experiences. Racelis (2024) presents an autoethnographic narrative revealing workplace genres as affective spaces where linguistic and racial ideologies implicate identity. Randazzo (2024) analyzes how hirers' perceptions of professionalism in résumés and cover letters inequitably affect people from marginalized genders, sexualities, nationalities, races, or ethnicities. Taken together, these sources illustrate how discussions situated in TPC highlight the pervasive influence of racial and intersectional biases in the workplace.

### *Technologies*

More recent scholarship challenges us to reconsider where and how technical communication takes place, especially through digital and cultural practices outside the academy. In the search results for "race" and "technical communication," I found sources discussing race and technology. Allen and Johnson (2023) analyze how mobile ridesharing apps integrate digital interfaces, cultural practices, and rhetorical discourses. Using Haas's (2012) digital cultural rhetorics (DCR) and André Brock's (2020) critical technocultural discourse analysis (CTDA), they reveal how innovative interfaces often envision a universal user, while culturally specific apps better serve community-based experiences. They recommend designing technologies that prioritize marginalized communities. Brock's (2020) concept of "distributed Blackness" explores how African American communities use digital platforms like Black Twitter to construct identity, perform expertise, and critique dominant narratives. His critical technocultural discourse analysis (CTDA) provides a valuable lens for reading not just the content of digital texts, but their technological affordances and social implications. Similarly, Sophia Umoja Noble's (2018) book examines the intersection of AI, information control, and discrimination, advocating for the inclusion of marginalized voices in technology development and action against racist and sexist content. Baniya and Potts (2024) highlight biases in emerging technologies, which often favor able-bodied English speakers. Halcyon Lawrence (2020) shows that translation requires understanding racial biases in speech technologies. Together, these sources emphasize the need for technical communication to address and mitigate racial biases in technology, advocating for inclusive design and the participation of marginalized communities in tech development.

### *Academia*

In my search on "race" and "technical communication," I discovered scholars examining race in the academic field of TPC. Sano-Franchini et al. (2023) teach bell hooks in TPC classes at large, predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in the Southeast, despite facing proposed bans on critical race theory. Bay (2022) addresses DEI issues in business and technical communication service courses. Shelton (2020) advocates for Black Feminist pedagogy in TPC courses to address bias, difference, and social justice, encouraging the decentering of Whiteness and embracing intersectionality. Dayley (2020) focuses on TPC students of color, contributing to diversity and inclusion literature by highlighting racial realism from critical race theory. Savage and Matveeva (2011) identify the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities in TPC education and propose strategies to attract and empower marginalized groups. Mendoza et al. (2024) discuss the performative responses to anti-racist initiatives at Michigan State University,

advocating for support of intersectional and marginalized BIPOC graduate scholars in program development, curriculum, and writing program administration.

Race presents an educational opportunity to question and challenge conventional patterns of behavior and thinking. Conflict can be harnessed as an educational tool, fostering profound and impactful change through thoughtful and analytical discussions. Engaging in such dialogue is crucial to addressing and resolving misunderstandings in academic discussions and debates (Wagner, 2005). Together, sources situated around academic TPC programs underscore the importance of addressing systemic inequalities and advocating for equitable representation and practices in TPC academia, highlighting the ongoing need for inclusive and socially just approaches in the field.

### *Black technical and professional communication*

For this section of the text, I drew upon my personal knowledge of the field. Recent years have seen a growing recognition of Black Technical and Professional Communication (BTPC) within the field of technical communication studies. Scholars are actively exploring Black voices, practices, and contributions to TPC to foster inclusivity and social justice. BTPC studies encompass a range of topics, methodologies, and viewpoints aimed at promoting racial equity, challenging systemic inequalities, and amplifying Black experiences (Mckoy et al., 2022). Grant and Walker (2023) exemplify this commitment through their advocacy for Black epistemologies and coalitional technical communication, emphasizing the need to confront racist language practices and recognize historically marginalized contributions. Mckoy et al. (2020) provide valuable resources and insights for BTPC scholars, promoting a coalition approach that respects and celebrates diversity within the field. Hull et al. (2020) and Byrd (2022) highlight the agency of Black professional communicators in addressing racial equity issues and navigating digital spaces. Byrd's work specifically underscores Black technical joy as a form of resilience and learning amidst challenges in TPC. These scholars advocate for reevaluating traditional notions of professionalism and embracing Black cultural practices within technical communication contexts. Studies by McIlwain (2019), Lockett (2021), and Banks (2006) delve into the intersection of race, technology, and activism, illustrating how Black communities leverage digital platforms like Black Twitter to advance social justice causes and preserve cultural narratives. These digital spaces serve as vital repositories of Black experiences and expressions, challenging dominant narratives and promoting digital racial literacies. Together, these sources underscore the critical importance of integrating Black cultural references, communicative practices, and ideas into TPC scholarship. They advocate for inclusivity, social justice, and a reexamination of traditional norms within conversations in the field to better reflect and serve diverse communities.

To see how racial literacy functions in practice, I turn to a digital example that brings these frameworks together: The National Museum of African American History and Culture.

## Digital Case Study

To build interdisciplinary connections and highlight the relevance of public discourse in digital environments, this study also draws upon media and cultural studies. Brock's (2020) work on

Black cybercultures demonstrates how Black users navigate and reconfigure digital spaces like Black Twitter, which function as informal sites of TPC. Brock's framework of distributed Blackness underscores the affective, communal, and technical dimensions of online engagement, offering a compelling model for how racial literacy is practiced in digital communication spaces.

Similarly, Marc Lamont Hill's (2016) work explores how public technologies, media, and discourse shape perceptions of race and vulnerability. His attention to systemic injustice and communicative framing contributes to a broader understanding of racialized technical discourse, particularly how language and power circulate in public-facing communication. Hill (2016) interrogates the structural disenfranchisement of Black communities, particularly through public policy and media discourse. While not a TPC text per se, Hill's work demonstrates how communication technologies can become tools of both oppression and resistance. Together, Brock (2020) and Hill (2016) expand our understanding of TPC as a site of public engagement, activism, and racial critique. These domains deepen the analytical lens used in this article by situating TPC within racialized digital rhetorics.

I located several relevant publicly available resources that clearly support *race-related materials and digital learning*, which align with my analysis of NMAAHC as a site of technical and racial literacy:

Numerous platforms engage in technical and professional communication regarding race, utilizing various mediums such as books, articles, websites, podcasts, and videos. Websites, in particular, serve as a vital channel for disseminating specialized information to audiences who may be new or unfamiliar with its content. Due to the breadth of resources available, it is not feasible to delve into detail about each one within the scope of this article. However, some examples of freely accessible online resources include:

- Native American Glossary — from the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), it features a glossary focused on Native American communities, providing definitions and explanations of terms relevant to Native American culture, history, and issues.

- Upstander Project — dedicated to using documentary film and other media to engage audiences in social justice issues, historical memory, and human rights, they collaborate with educators, activists, and communities to create impactful storytelling that fosters dialogue and action around pressing social issues.

- Dismantling Racism Works Web Workbook — offering resources, workshops, and tools for individuals and organizations committed to understanding and addressing racism, it provides educational materials, consulting services, and facilitates discussions aimed at promoting racial equity and social justice

- Racial Equity Tools — providing resources, tools, and information to support organizations and individuals in advancing racial equity, it offers a comprehensive toolkit that includes articles, guides, assessments, and frameworks designed to promote understanding and action on racial justice issues.

The example I look at in this article is just one of many examples from web spaces, public content, and educational materials (including those above). But I offer NMAAHC and examine it as an exemplary example (and one that is very comprehensive) of the many other spaces and materials offered. I encourage readers and researchers interested in these cases to explore further racial literacy initiatives (Center for Racial Justice in Education, 2024; Couric, 2020; Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, 2022; Racial Equity Tools, 2020; University of Washington, 2024).

This list is by no means exhaustive, as there are many more resources available through a cursory search. While this information is crucial for our community, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of one individual's capacity to address all issues comprehensively. Therefore, I encourage others to continue this work, as there is much more to explore and uncover in the realm of racial equity and technical communication.

For this case study, I employed a **qualitative content analysis** framework (Mayring, 2000) to examine textual and visual elements across the site. In addition, I drew on **discourse analysis** (Gee, 2014) to assess how race is framed, defined, and operationalized across different audience-targeted modules (e.g., "Parents," "Educators," "General Public").

The analysis focused on:

- Terminology and definitions (e.g., "Whiteness," "implicit bias")
- Visual and multimodal strategies
- Calls to action and reflective prompts
- Navigation structures that shape user experience

This methodology allows me to assess how NMAAHC enacts racial literacy through digital public communication, linking theory to practice in a real-world institutional context. Together, the systematic literature review and the digital case study create a recursive analysis that builds from field-wide discourse to a grounded, rhetorical application.

*The National Museum of African American History and Culture*

The National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) on the National Mall in Washington, DC educates the public about race and diversity and promotes Black visibility. Online access to the museum's materials expands its reach nationwide.

*Rhetorical Analysis of the NMAAHC "Talking About Race" Platform*

The *"Talking About Race"* initiative by the NMAAHC exemplifies racial literacy through its strategic use of audience-centered design, rhetorical sensitivity, and accessible knowledge delivery. This platform functions as a public-facing, multimodal technical communication project whose primary objective is not only to inform but to equip users with tools to engage in complex, even emotionally fraught conversations about race.

## *Audience Awareness and Segmentation*

The site's content is divided into categories based on social role: "*Educators," "Parents and Caregivers," "People Committed to Equity,"* and *"General Public."* This segmentation aligns with one of the core tenets of technical communication: recognizing and addressing user needs. Each category curates specific tools, articles, and video content to match users' backgrounds and intentions. For example, educators are offered classroom strategies, while caregivers are directed to content on how children perceive race.

This segmentation is a design decision that rhetorically acknowledges that knowledge about race is context dependent. It resists a one-size-fits-all approach and instead affirms that social location affects how one receives, internalizes, and acts on racial information — a point aligned with intersectional and trauma-informed practices.

## *Visual and Multimodal Rhetorics*

The platform makes deliberate use of bold, emotionally resonant imagery. For instance, photographs of protests, families, and historical scenes are juxtaposed with prompts like "Why is talking about race important?" and "What is Whiteness?" These visual elements are not ornamental; they act rhetorically to position the user within a continuum of racial discourse, history, and lived experience.

Multimodality through the integration of video, interactive exercises, textual explanations, and infographics enhances both user engagement and cognitive retention. From a technical communication standpoint, this layered design increases usability, supporting different learning styles and knowledge entry points. The design helps mediate racial stress, aligning with Stevenson's (2014, 2018) and Anderson and Stevenson's (2019) racial literacy framework, which emphasize managing emotional responses to race-related conversations.

## *Framing, Terminology, and Discursive Positioning*

The rhetorical choices on the site demonstrate a deliberate framing of race as systemic rather than individual. For instance, definitions of terms like *implicit bias*, *White privilege*, and *microaggressions* are clearly defined with embedded links to more expansive articles. These definitions avoid euphemism and instead engage in what Carmen Kynard (2007) might call "rhetorics of Black radicalism," unapologetically clear and politically grounded.

This explicitness resists dysconscious racism (King, 1991) by refusing to normalize Whiteness or hide the mechanisms of structural inequity. The site's tone is assertive yet invitational: it neither panders to White fragility nor alienates learners unfamiliar with racial justice discourse. In doing so, it exemplifies technical communication as ethical rhetoric, balancing clarity, persuasion, and care.

## *Designing for Action and Reflection*

Each module includes calls to action (e.g., *"Reflect," "Learn," "Practice"*) which reinforce racial literacy not as a passive acquisition of knowledge but as a practice. This design mirrors instructional TPC formats like procedural documentation or UX journey mapping, where the user is invited to perform a task with intention.

Additionally, reflective questions like *"How does race influence your worldview?"* and *"When were you first aware of your racial identity?"* function as invitations to engage what Deborah Britzman (1998) calls "difficult knowledge," content that asks learners to grapple with social trauma and unsettling histories. These questions operate rhetorically as both feedback loops and invitations to dialogue, drawing the user into self-directed learning within a scaffolded environment.

**Discussion**

The NMAAHC's "Talking About Race" platform is a model of racial literacy as technical communication. Through audience-focused content delivery, intentional terminology, multimodal design, and recursive reflection prompts, the platform enacts rhetorical strategies that support not just awareness but transformation. It serves as a living example of how institutions can translate complex cultural concepts into accessible, actionable, and affirming digital spaces, underscoring the role of TPC in social justice education and public discourse.

Race education and anti-racist training on the NMAAHC website is technical communication. The section "Talking About Race," which answers the museum's most frequently asked question about race, is particularly interesting. This signature program for educators, students, and families provides online resources on equity and social justice topics. The website directly addresses institutional racism, racism, and prejudice at various levels, raising awareness of anti-racism and its relevance to American life. The section "Being Antiracist" uses text, quotes, videos, visuals, and activities to challenge race perceptions.[3] The NMAAHC encourages visitors to fight daily inequalities by highlighting the social and historical nature of race and addressing individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism.

Incorporating Ibram Kendi's "How to be an Antiracist" gives the museum's efforts academic legitimacy and emphasizes the importance of conscious decision-making and action to fight racism. The NMAAHC's work aligns with technical and professional communication research, particularly in digital and racial justice, highlighting its importance as a platform for activism and social change.

The NMAAHC promotes dialogue about race and racialized spaces to invite attitudes and mindsets that create a more equitable and just society. It shows that race is a social and historical construct, contrary to mainstream beliefs, and how media, culture, and institutions have normalized racism. The NMAAHC's anti-racist pages' writers and curators use technical communication to engage audiences in critical discussions about race and history.

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[3] Both the "Talking About Race" and "Being Antiracist" webpages were no longer present on the NMAAHC website at the time of the publication of this article. They are visible, however, through use of the Wayback Machine (https://web.archive.org/).

The "Being Antiracist'' page features a collage of people's faces (NMAAHC). The image represents a multifaceted approach to understanding and combating racism through a combination of text, quotes, videos, visuals, and activities. The page prompts visitors to reconsider conventional notions about race.

As I explore the page, I see racism examined beyond individual acts, with recognition of its presence in policies and systems that yield inequitable impacts. At the NMAAHC, various forms of racism are addressed, including individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural, each accompanied by clear explanations and examples.

Particularly valuable for anti-racist scholars is Kendi's perspective, which empowers individuals to consciously choose between being racist or antiracist on a daily basis. Embracing an antiracist stance involves not only grasping cultural and systemic barriers but also actively taking steps to address inequities in everyday life. The page encourages visitors like myself to proactively challenge and dismantle racism in interactions with family, friends, and communities, offering useful guides for engaging in conversations about racist behavior and managing triggers.



"Implicit Bias and Structural Racialization," By Kathleen Osta & Hugh Vasquez, National Equity Project. Download full PDF

*Figure 1: Screenshot of "Implicit Bias and Structural Racialization" visual aid by Kathleen Osta and Hugh Vasquez, National Equity Project (Source: Being Antiracist page, National Museum of African American History and Culture, https://nmaahc.si.edu/talking-about-race/topics/being-antiracist). Image originally published in "Implicit Bias and Structural Racism" by Kathleen Osta and Hugh Vasquez, National Equity Project (Source: https://nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/implicit-bias-structural-racialization).*

*Activism*

I view activism through the lens of networking with other minds contesting power, as Castells (2015) defines it, to shape new meanings and forms beyond mainstream power structures. Figure 1 shows a visual of the interconnected nature of implicit bias and structural racism, showing how priming, associations, and assumptions are cyclical with history, policy, practices, and inequitable outcomes and racial disparities.

Central to this activism are efforts aimed at transforming attitudes toward race and marginalized communities. In our era dominated by electronic media, cultural transformation and social movements increasingly rely on technological platforms, as noted by scholars such as Eyman (2015), Noble (2018), and Beck (2015). The NMAAHC's engagement in digital activism for racial justice is a prime example of leveraging digital technologies to shift people's attitudes toward race and racialized societies.

In alignment with research in TPC within the digital space and racial justice, the NMAAHC serves as a beacon of activism in the digital realm. Its efforts to promote racial literacy resonate deeply with scholars working at the intersections of cultural rhetorics, digital technology, and BIPOC populations. The work of those involved in crafting the NMAAHC's anti-racist pages exemplifies technical communication in action. Just as technical writers produce documents across different media to convey complex information to specific audiences, the NMAAHC's content creators employ theories and strategies to disseminate usable information about race and racism, seeking to invite people to engage in race conversations that could potentially reshape perspectives and actions toward racial justice.

The writing and content curation efforts behind the NMAAHC's anti-racist pages align with the principles of technical communication. As Haas (2012) notes, writing is inherently subjective and influenced by various intersecting identities, including race. The NMAAHC's "Talking About Race" platform reflects the principles of cultroscripting and Afroscaping, as discussed by Burrows (2020), showcasing a world where African Americans control their destinies and use the past to educate current audiences about advancing the movement. Through strategic dissemination of anti-racist content, the museum embodies activism in the digital age, fostering racial equity and social justice through meaningful race conversations.

My analysis demonstrates that NMAAHC uses intentional design that is conceptual, informational, visual, and pedagogical to fulfill a clear public-facing technical communication role. The NMAAHC was selected as a case site due to its public, educational, and multimodal communication strategy. The museum's "Talking About Race" digital platform exemplifies user-centered design, clear audience, and equity-oriented pedagogy, all ethical TPC practice.

*Navigating Race Conversations*

Conversations about race are vital TPC, demanding that technical communicators engage with diverse perspectives and navigate varied audiences. As noted earlier, embracing a range of viewpoints prevents echo chambers and fosters meaningful discourse on race, crucial for social justice advocacy.

However, challenges persist as forces and individuals who may undermine social justice efforts with rhetorical strategies to maintain hegemonic structures. Critics may downplay racial disparities or dismiss race conversations as distractions from broader societal issues, perpetuating dominant narratives that hinder progress towards racial equity.

Navigating these counterarguments requires strategic engagement and genuine dialogue across ideological divides. Addressing systemic inequality demands a nuanced awareness and understanding of racial dynamics and an ability to mindfully question beliefs. Moving forward, TPC research could explore strategies for inclusivity and engagement within institutions such as the NMAAHC, particularly in navigating diverse perspectives including those of with alternative and diverse viewpoints within the Black community (moderates, conservatives, etc.).

**Implications**

I identify five key implications for technical communicators based on this research and case study work:

- **Shape**, **shift**, and **adapt** race conversations to keep them going.

- **Look into the real-world examples** of TPC; stay grounded and in touch with how TPC is being practiced.

- **Organize** and **strategize** DEI (as Black professional communities can and do).

- **Realize** that the next wave of self-definition and organization within social justice training is emerging.

- **Collaborate** with allies at times of pushback to **mitigate cultural fatigue** surrounding race conversations.

What follows is an expanded analysis of these five implications and how they function as practical strategies for strengthening racial literacy and navigating race conversations in TPC.

*Shape, shift, and adapt race conversations to keep them going.*

The NMAAHC site is about opening conversations about race. In ongoing race conversations, it becomes crucial to adapt and shape the dialogue to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. The power of language to include the public in accessible terms is actively anti-racist. A popular example is Conscious Lee, a Black university professor and social media influencer who disrupts

the status quo by challenging dominant narratives while speaking in what can be perceived as his native dialect, African American Vernacular English or Black English.

Despite these efforts, changes in power dynamics do not occur overnight. Noble (2018) notes that the public remains "minimally aware of these shifts in power" (p. 70) and reveals how political and economic systems benefit from the misinformation and mischaracterization of marginalized communities. Higher education is characterized by academic silos, where disciplines become increasingly specialized and distant from one another (Harlow, 2010). However, bridging these silos is essential for fostering comprehensive understanding and collaboration (Harlow, 2010). The academic field of technical communication has historically shifted beyond technology and industry concerns to include human social and cultural contexts and power structures.

*Look into the real-world examples of TPC; stay grounded and in touch with how TPC is being practiced.*

The NMAAHC educates and trains the public to be anti-racist through its website's offerings. Understanding real-world examples of TPC practices helps academic researchers stay grounded and connected to the field's practical applications. The professionalization of workplaces can disempower individuals, as specialized jargon in professions like medicine, law, and engineering often excludes those not initiated through education and practice. Similarly, technical communication scholars have developed their own language for discussing race.

To educate and train the general public, however, technical communicators must abandon specialized discourse and use accessible language and spaces instead. This public training is a crucial form of TPC. Many individuals, including some BIPOC people, may not be culturally literate or aware of the internalized aspects of White culture. Institutions like the NMAAHC play a vital role in enhancing cultural literacy and awareness of race and living in a racialized society.

Steele (2021) explores the possibilities and limitations of digital spaces for social justice. Modern social movements like Black Lives Matter, the Land Back movement, and Stop Asian Hate illustrate the use of digital tools to build communities and advocate for racial justice (Castells, 2015; McIlwain, 2019). Black Twitter users, a prime example of digital racial literacies, engage in critical discussions and share stories that highlight racism and racial prejudice (Lockett, 2021). Public institutions and civic organizations use digital spaces to contribute to the conversation around race and social justice.

*Organize and strategize DEI (as Black communities can and do).*

Conversations about race TPC are enriched by diverse rhetorical practices and strategic approaches employed by Black communities. Burrows (2020) discusses how these practices navigate and negotiate the complexities of addressing racism and systemic barriers in communication contexts. Burrows defines rhetoric as "a series of communicated practices grounded in a shared cultural knowledge" (p. 16). He contrasts Western rhetoric, seen as persuasion, with African American rhetorical practices, which consider how "race and racism affect the rhetoric subject when addressing an audience, especially one hostile to the message of

the marginalized group" (p. 17). Burrows' (2020) *Rhetorical Crossover* addresses "the talk" that Black individuals receive from their families on how to navigate White spaces, including an academic version of this talk for Black scholars.

Black communities demonstrate remarkable organizational and strategic capabilities in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) discussions. McIlwain (2019) showcases how Black individuals leverage technology to overcome political and institutional obstacles, highlighting their adeptness in navigating challenging environments and contributing to social and political movements. Platforms like Black Twitter serve as powerful tools for raising awareness of structural anti-Black racism, facilitating critical dialogue, and fostering global community connections (Lockett, 2021). Lockett (2021) emphasizes how Black Twitter challenges the dominance of White culture by using Black cultural references to communicate broadly, defying racialized language boundaries. Mckoy (2019) identifies rhetorical strategies in Black spaces and communities, including reclaiming agency, sharing narratives, and including Black epistemologies. Mckoy et al. (2020) highlight the work of Black TPC scholars and share Black scholarship with the larger NCTE/CCCC organization, showcasing strategies Black professional communicators use to address racial equity and social justice in the field.

Gunn (2020), drawing from Black feminist perspectives in speculative fiction, explores the intersection of Black identity and technology through Afrofuturist lenses. Gunn's work is explicitly Afrofuturist, envisioning futures free of oppression and shaping the future directions of Black feminist theory, digital organizing, and resistance against White supremacy. Afrofuturism, defined as a Black cultural lens exploring the relationship between Blackness, technology, futurism, and time, is central to this vision.

The incorporation of diverse rhetorical practices and strategic frameworks from Black communities enriches conversations about race within technical and professional communication. These insights not only challenge prevailing narratives but also offer innovative pathways for addressing systemic inequities and promoting inclusivity and advancing social justice. Embracing and amplifying these perspectives are essential for advancing DEI efforts and fostering meaningful discourse within TPC.

*The next wave of self-definition and organization within social justice training is emerging.*

The next evolution of self-definition and organizational strategies within social justice training is emerging, particularly through race conversations in TPC. Black professional communicators are leading this movement, leveraging their expertise to advance discussions on racial equity. I identify Black professional communicators here who have self-identified or appear on the CCCC's BPTC database. These Black scholars exemplify resilience, creativity, and a steadfast commitment to social justice. By amplifying their voices and experiences, we gain valuable insights into the challenges they face and the strategies they employ for change. Byrd's (2022) research on Black software developers and tech workers illustrates how they use cultural competencies and digital platforms to navigate career transitions and empower marginalized groups. Scholars like Mckoy (2019) and Shelton (2019) are deeply engaged in advancing racial justice within TPC. Shelton's (2019) work shows how social justice activism and Black feminist epistemologies can decenter Whiteness and integrate Black lived experiences into TPC. Black

feminist and womanist work are inherently allied with anti-racist work, sharing a commitment to dismantling systemic inequalities and promoting social justice. These frameworks celebrate and affirm Black culture and identity, amplifying marginalized voices to elevate perspectives historically silenced. They advocate for building alliances across social justice movements, recognizing the interconnectedness of the fight against racism, sexism, economic inequality, and other injustices. Edwards (2018) highlights the importance of incorporating race conversations into TPC classrooms. Steele (2021) in "Black Digital Feminism" underscores that Black women often bear a disproportionate burden in combating racism, facing overwork and underappreciation. Despite these obstacles, Black professional communicators persist in advancing racial justice agendas and challenging systemic inequities within their fields.

*Collaborate with allies at times of pushback to mitigate cultural fatigue surrounding race.*

Recent TPC work on racial trauma and racial justice (Dayley, 2020; Pouncil and Sanders, 2022) highlights that Black students and scholars are often required to do the work of reading and writing on oppression while also doing their own healing. It's important to note the risks inherent in challenging traditional paradigms, norms, and power structures. Racial trauma is a real issue, exacerbated by widespread misinformation and a lack of awareness about cultural issues and their role in perpetuating oppressive power structures. When scholars of color and marginalized identities engage in social justice work, they are putting themselves at risk. Recent work on Black fatigue and emotional labor shows the unequal impact these issues have on Black bodies (Corbin et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2016; Winters, 2020). Pouncil and Sanders (2022) stress the need for Black technical communicators to understand their positionality and protect themselves from harm when working in alliance with non-Black technical communicators. During times of activism and resistance, there are varying levels of acknowledgment and acceptance when discussing race with White allies. As Black and brown communities confront internalized guilt and shame, it is crucial for allies to listen and join in these efforts for change. This moment demands solidarity and active participation.

Pouncil and Sanders (2022) emphasize the importance of Black and non-Black practitioners navigating their complex relationships within coalitions, considering these collaborations' historical, cultural, and social nature. Pouncil and Sanders (2022) also encourage ongoing critical reflection, collaboration, and understanding of positionalities in order to work towards transformative coalitional goals. Sites and resources dedicated to improving racial dialogues demonstrate that the work of educating and training allies in advancing social justice through discussions on race has already begun. These sites and other resources give hope that there are individuals interested in learning and taking action to educate themselves. Such resources offer training for individuals to equip themselves for social justice-aligned action.

**Conclusion: Advancing Race Conversations in TPC**

Social justice scholars such as Jones examine "how TPC can be complicit in reinforcing which perspectives and whose experiences are valued and legitimized" (Jones, 2016, p. 345). Ignoring or being unaware of injustice means contributing to the problem. Many TPC scholars now perceive their work as advocacy (broadly defined), taking a critical approach to how TPC work impacts society, culture, and the human experience. Aligning with social justice scholarship,

Agboka and Dorpenyo's (2022) introduction to their special issue focuses on social justice for enacting change and how our advocacy in social institutions, systems, and practices can deconstruct oppressive power structures. They position TPC as "a field with advocacy as its core mandate" (p. 6).

The NMAAHC and its resources also offer valuable pedagogical implications for TPC. Educational sites like these have made public race conversations possible, breaking the taboos of the past. Teacher activists can work towards goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion by bringing these site pages into the classroom for study. They enable the development, education, and training of students and instructors on critical issues. TPC is uniquely positioned to integrate this knowledge into classrooms, higher education administrations, and professional organizations and workplaces. By being equipped and informed, TPC practitioners can effectively apply these skills and contribute to meaningful societal change. This opportunity is now available and crucial. Future research could investigate the possibilities and any measurable impacts public sites such as these are contributing to the education and training of American society.

I can see how this is emerging, how it's happening right now, opening new opportunities for us to keep going and do even more. Real-life examples underscore the significance of meaningful race conversations. During the conversation with a friend, my focus gravitated toward the intricacies of racial dialogue. I situate conversations about race in the domain of TPC through this exchange and subsequent research, emphasizing the importance of effective technical and professional communication in navigating complex racial issues.

Contributors to anti-racist content, whether individuals, institutions, or organizations, engage in technical communication, crafting and disseminating information across various media to specific audiences. The personal dialogue, the field of TPC, Black TPC, and the museum are all critical sites where this important work is happening. These examples illustrate how various organizations are contributing to this discourse. By looking at these as they emerge from diverse platforms and genres, we can see where the dialogues are the most active and evolving. By envisioning how productive race-centered technical communication conversations are happening and evolving, we have a pivotal opportunity to define and provoke substantive and meaningful dialogue about race and technical communication.

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