English, Spanish *o los dos*? Teaching professional writing on the U.S.-Mexico border

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ABSTRACT

In "Spanish for the Professions and Specific Purposes: Curricular Mainstay," Doyle discusses how SPSP is poised to become an "adaptable signature feature of future Spanish curricula" (2018: 96). For SPSP to become a mainstay, Doyle argues that it requires "greater needs-grounded imagination (…) whose potential SPSP portfolios will vary according to educational missions and contexts" and proposes certificate programs as responsive and adaptable programs to fit diverse curricular contexts (2018: 96-97). In this paper, the authors discuss the development of a cross-disciplinary certificate program in Bilingual Professional Writing (Spanish/English) at a public university on the U.S./Mexico border to meet the needs of our unique student body and to better prepare students as globally-minded writing professionals. This model values students' home languages and echoes Collier and Thomas' (2004) assertion that a bilingual and dual language approach can be astoundingly effective at the university level.

Keywords: *Professional Writing Programs, Bilingual Writing in Higher Education, Language for Specific Purposes*

I. INTRODUCTION

"English, Spanish *o los dos*?" To faculty in the Rhetoric and Writing Studies program at the University of Texas at El Paso (UT-El Paso), the answer was unquestionably *los dos* when we began to redesign the curriculum for a professional writing certificate for undergraduate and graduate students. At the core of the certificate design is a curriculum that emphasizes written communication and strives to incorporate both Spanish and English equally in the required courses. The redesigned curriculum was launched in fall of 2018 as the Bilingual and Professional Writing Certificate (BPWC) program. The BPWC is the first and perhaps only program of its kind in the U.S. to focus specifically on writing in Spanish and English for professional contexts. In the BPWC, two languages are then used for the specific purpose of communicating professionally. This UT-El Paso program attends to both local and global needs. At the

local level, it honors our students' language assets and maximizes our university's unique location on the U.S.-Mexico border. At the global level, it prepares students for today's workforce, which is quickly becoming more multilingual and globalized, and provides them the opportunity to become effective, ethical and dynamic bilingual professionals. Our goal in this paper is to explain the significance of the program, the curricular design choices made by the founding instructors and its unique position at the crossroads of both Language for Specific Purposes and Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

Before entering into the particulars of the program, it is important to note why we situate the BPWC within the broader approaches of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP)[i] and Rhetoric and Writing Studies[ii] as we draw upon scholarship from LSP and our discipline, Rhetoric and Writing Studies (RWS). LSP curricula are interdisciplinary by nature, and draw upon the research and methods of the disciplines they serve. More often than not, LSP is part of a foreign language curriculum or departments; in our case, the BPWC is a joint effort with the Translation program in the Department of Languages and Linguistics but forms an administrative unit of the Rhetoric and Writing Studies Program within the Department of English at UT-El Paso. On a basic level, the primary goal of LSP is to prepare students for the practical application of a target language in professional environments (Lafford 2012), while the primary goal of RWS is to prepare students for the rigors of writing in professional and academic contexts. The key tenets of our disciplinary approach to teaching writing is that writing is a rhetorical, situational and social act, and values students' own language or language varieties. Thus the BPWC program allows students to embrace their English-Spanish bilingualism, value their home languages and enrich their education while improving their workplace discourse.

The present article focuses on both curriculum design and implementation of the BPWC and examines the topic in relation to a particular geographical context. The article is organized by first discussing the background of the university and its student body, the requirements for the certificate, and then the process of creating the courses and materials with particular emphasis on three trends in LSP and RWS pedagogies: technology, ethics, and service-learning. In tandem with the discussion, we argue that the BPWC is an LSP-writing program and advocate for the advantages of using a rhetorical approach in LSP instruction.

II. GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The University of Texas at El Paso is a public, doctoral-granting institution located in one of the world's largest bi-national and bilingual metropolitan areas which includes 840,000 residents of the far-west Texas city, El Paso, and 1.39 million residents of Ciudad Juárez, México. Founded in 1914, the university began with an enrollment of 27 students and one degree program. Today, UT-El Paso offers 170 bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs in 10 colleges and schools to its more than 25,000 students. As a commuter campus, the student body reflects the demographics of the bi-national region where it is located; 82% of UT-El Paso students self-identify as Hispanic and 78% of them further identify as being of Mexican heritage (U.S. Census Bureau 2018). Additionally, two-thirds of El Paso households identify as Spanish speakers (U.S. Census Bureau 2018). These statistics do not include the approximately 1,000 Mexican nationals who also attend the university each semester—thus making UT-El Paso a Mexican-American majority student population that is highly bilingual and multicultural.

Apart from our student demographics, the geographic, cultural and economic ties between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez provide prolific options for bilingual employment. Geographically, the two cities share an international border and three ports of entry where millions of passenger vehicles and pedestrians cross annually[iii], yet the relationship between the cities transcends this divide. The concept that is used often to describe the link between El Paso and Ciudad Juarez is *symbiosis* (Chamberlain 2007), and the interaction between the cities is, according to El Paso city leaders, "a unique and unbreakable historical, familial and economic connection that has resulted in a rich culture and vibrant economy...bolstered by $51.1 billion in trade" that "account[s] for 18% of all trade between the two countries" (El Paso City Resolution 2010: 3). Furthermore, every year "Juarenses spend $1.2 Billion in the El Paso economy and over 60,000 jobs in El Paso are dependent upon economic activity in Juarez" (El Paso City Resolution 2010: 3)[iv].

This brief snapshot of the relationship between the sister cities and the larger regional economy demonstrates the extraordinary business and job opportunities available for bilingual professionals on the border, and explains the impetus for the development of a

Bilingual Professional Writing Certificate Program at UT-El Paso. Our unique situatedness and student body made it an obvious choice to implement a bilingual writing certificate.

III. THE BILINGUAL PROFESSIONAL WRITING CERTIFICATE

Housed in the Rhetoric and Writing Studies (RWS) Program within the English Department, the certificate program aims to prepare students:

1)   to analyze the workplace situations that demand written responses in English, Spanish or both

2)   to ethically consider the audience and purpose when composing

The certificate was also designed to enhance the students' specific discipline rather than focusing on writing within a discipline. In other words, the certificate can complement any degree plan or be earned as a stand-alone certificate, and students have flexibility in choosing the courses required for the certificate from a limited menu of options, which will be discussed in a later section.

Although an administrative unit in the English department, the BPWC is a cross-disciplinary endeavor with the Translation Program in the Department of Languages and Linguistics. However, it's important to highlight the atypical nature of the program's placement in the Department of English and define it within the LSP framework. To do this, we draw upon national survey results on the state of LSP reported in 1990 and 2012 to demonstrate that this program is, based on the survey data, the only LSP that we know of that comes out of an English Department and is the first of its kind to focus on the study of writing. In 1990, Grosse and Voght published the results from a mail-in survey[v] on the state of LSP in U.S. higher education which included information on the types of institutions that offer LSP; the number and types of LSP courses and degree tracks; the LSP partnerships among administrative units; the perceptions of administrators regarding LSP offerings and expected growth of the field, among others. Two decades later, in light of advances and challenges to LSP, Long and Uscinski sought to understand how much the field had progressed since 1990 and "deemed it fit to conduct a new survey modeled on Grosse and Voght's work" (2012:

174). The new survey incorporates and expands upon the questions used in Grosse and Voght (1990). In "Evolution of Languages for Specific Purposes Programs in the United States: 1990-2011," Long and Uscinski present the results of their 2011 survey and compare and contrast them to the 1990 survey. Much like Grosse and Voght, Long and Uscinski sent invitations to participate in the survey to department administrators of foreign languages. Of the 1,435 survey invites, only 13%, or 183 departments responded (2012: 174). The researchers used the online platform, Survey Monkey, to administer the 53-question survey, "27 of which came from the survey conducted by Grosse and Voght (1990)" (Long and Uscinski 2012: 175). The survey results reported are extensive, but we would like to focus on three areas that are pertinent to the current discussion: LSP partnerships, LSP courses taught by non-foreign language faculty, and LSP programs offering a degree track, minor or certificate. Respondents were asked whether they partner with other academic units to provide LSP courses and to identify who they partner with across campus. Twenty-four percent of foreign language departments answered "yes" and indicated that partners included professional schools of business, nursing, public programs and education (Long and Uscinski 2012: 182) –that is disciplines with specialized language and vocabulary. The researchers also asked about the teaching of foreign languages by other (non-foreign-language) departments at their institution. Ten percent of the respondents answered that other departments or units on campus taught their courses (Long and Uscinski 2012: 182). Of all of the responses for departments or units that were involved in foreign language teaching, the Department of English was not listed[vi], nor was it listed in the original Grosse and Voght study in 1990 (Long and Uscinski 2012:182). Given the data collected and the participants in both studies, UT-El Paso's BPWC, then, may be the *first non-English LSP that emerges from a Department of English.*

Moreover, to assess the strength of LSP offerings at U.S. institutions of higher education, Long and Uscinki added a question not included in the original survey by Grosse and Voght (1990) regarding whether the LSP was part of a formal program such as a degree track, certificate or minor (2012: 181). At least 27% of the 183 departments responded that they offer at least one of the above (degree track, minor or certificate); the most common was a minor in Spanish for Business, followed by other degree offerings in Spanish for Translation (Long and Uscinski 2012: 181). Long and Uscinski,

however, provide a quick overview of the data on LSP programs and do not offer specific information on certificate programs. We believe that it is of great significance that certificate programs are not explained, and there is no mention of a bilingual certificate program. Nevertheless, since the publication of the survey results (2012), there has been a call from scholars to deepen and expand LSP offerings, and specifically in the area of certificate programs. Doyle (2018: 98) promotes certificate programs and their flexible nature and sees certificates becoming an "adaptable signature feature of future Spanish Curriculum". Although the BPWC is not strictly part of a foreign language curriculum or department, we agree with Doyle that the certificate program is adaptable and relevant to diverse disciplines and degree plans.

At this juncture, we would like to further define the BPWC within the LSP framework. We have discussed earlier that, because of the nature of the program, we have drawn upon literature in LSP to include English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Spanish for the Professions and Specific Purposes (SPSP), yet our program does not fit into the traditional labels as it shares some commonalities with ESP and SPSP but its primary emphasis is written discourse in both languages. To determine how to situate the program within an LSP framework, we turn to Doyle (2013). In "Continuing Theoretical Cartography in the LSP Era," Doyle predicts that non-English LSP will undergo "its fuller maturation process within American Higher Education" (2013: 3) and:

> the maturation will surely continue as all language use can be defined as LSP, one way or another, either narrowly…or more broadly and less traditionally (e.g. LSP-Literature, i.e., the specific use of language for literary studies and criticism, or even the supposedly more general LSP of being able to engage in tourism…) (2013: 4).

Doyle's emphasis on the future maturation of non-English LSP allows for "all language use" to be defined as an LSP and includes "broader" and "less traditional" programs that focus on the specific use of language for diverse study areas. As such, we apply this broader definition to the bilingual certificate program and identify it as an *LSP-writing program.*

Finally, we should point out that there are different types of LSP programs. In "Languages for Specific Purposes Business Curriculum Creation and Implementation in the United States," Fryer (2012: 132) notes that some LSP programs focus on

acquisition and proficiency of the target language while others, "special collaborative programs," such as the MEXUS[vii] program at San Diego State U., "requires a high degree of language proficiency in English and Spanish, the target language". The BPWC program falls into the latter category, where students must take an entrance exam to demonstrate a high degree of language proficiency in both languages. UT-El Paso's program seems to be unique in its faculty's expertise and orientation. While LSP programs aim to teach subject matter in the target language, the BPWC faculty are specifically trained to teach in two languages and to teach communication, both written and oral communication, with a partnership between RWS and Translation faculty.

Thus, the certificate program's unique blend of RWS and Translation faculty and courses provides opportunities: learning opportunities for its students and research and pedagogical opportunities for its faculty not previously explored in the teaching of languages for specific purposes. Undoubtedly, the fact that the certificate program at UT-El Paso falls under the auspices of the Rhetoric and Writing Studies program within the Department of English has allowed for the flexibility to create curricula that are not bound by an English-only language policy. Further, the cross-disciplinary collaboration among the faculty also allows for cross-pollination of teaching practices from one discipline to the other. We argue that this cross-disciplinary approach provides fertile ground for exploring themes from multiple perspectives. In the following sections, we present the course requirements for the certificate and discuss themes and practices that emerged from our collaboration to support our position.

III.1. Certificate Requirements

As indicated in the UT-El Paso academic catalog (2019), the BPWC program "is intended to prepare students to communicate in print and digital environments ethically and responsibly in both English and Spanish". UT-El Paso's program curriculum also emphasizes "the practice of rhetoric, technology, and language as they apply to bilingualism and translation in professional settings." The certificate is open to students enrolled at the undergraduate *and* graduate levels to enhance their degree plan or as a stand-alone certificate. The certificate comprises 12 credit hours and 4 courses: 2 courses in Translation and 2 in Rhetoric and Writing Studies. The courses include

Introduction to Translation, an elective in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (either Bilingual Workplace Writing or Bilingual Technical Writing), an elective in Translation (Legal, Business or Healthcare Translation), and a Rhetoric and Writing Studies Practicum course. Students can choose from these pre-approved electives and enroll in the courses that most align with their career goals. This allows for a versatile and adaptable certificate that is applicable to numerous degree plans. So far, the majority of students who have completed the certificate have been from the Translation Program, but interest in the certificate program is growing as more students recognize bilingualism as a personal and professional asset. The certificate program not only honors students' home/heritage language; it prepares them to write professionally in two languages regardless of their discipline. Students who leave the borderland can boast an asset that no other university develops: bilingual composition in a professional setting. Students who remain in the borderland region can demonstrate documented proficiency in written bilingualism in both languages. Either way, proficiency in professional writing in both languages, according to an European Union Report on Languages and Employability, translates into increased employability as "multilingualism is no longer a choice or an option; it has become a must for business growth" (European Commission Joint Research Centre 2015: 20).

III.2. Theoretical foundations

As mentioned previously, the certificate also emphasizes rhetoric, technology and ethics. All program instructors, regardless of departmental affiliation, have received targeted training in these three areas, including training in teaching bilingual writing as a requirement for their teaching in the program. The courses' theoretical foundation is rhetoric since the certificate is aimed at the teaching of effective writing in professional contexts - whether the resulting text is in English, Spanish or both, the focus is on the written word. Given its rhetorical orientation, the program looks to the National Council of Teachers of English's position statement on *Understanding and Teaching Writing, Guiding Principles* (2018) to guide the program's teaching and course objectives. As the position statement explains, "when it is effective, writing is rhetorical, i.e., it takes into account the values, ideologies, interests, needs, and commitments of the people, the

audiences, for whom it is intended." It is necessary to point out that we rely heavily on using the rhetorical situation as a means to teach students how to create effective messages for diverse audiences and contexts. Scholars in RWS have used the term *rhetorical situation* since Bitzer defined it in 1968. Loosely, we follow Grant-Davie's characterization of the rhetorical situation "as a set of related factors whose interaction creates and controls discourse" (1997: 265). The NCTE Position Statement (2018) names the related factors of writers, purposes, audiences and contexts as key to informing the choices that writers make when composing. The related factors should guide writers' (NCTE 2018):

- content (the subject or focus of the writing);
- form (the shape of the writing, including its organization, structure, flow, and composition elements like words, symbols, images, etc.);
- style/register (the choice of discourse and syntax used for the writing, chosen from among the vast array of language systems [often called "dialects"] that are available for the writer), and
- mechanics (punctuation, citational style, etc.).

Particularly in the RWS courses within the BPWC, students are asked to carefully consider how their specific audience will use their text. That audience analysis leads them to identify appropriately worded content, form, register and language, to include dialect. Assignments are designed where students must consider the specific rhetorical situation of an assigned prompt in order to do well; for example, in the Workplace Writing course, students have a sensitive letter assignment that is scenario-based. Students are provided with the assignment and important details that they will use when analyzing the writing situation. For example, one scenario asks students to respond to the president of the local chamber of commerce. The president requests free or reduced prices for a company's services as a "favor" because of his/her position. The student responds as the owner of the company where the services are requested. It is not enough for the student to craft a letter in the correct format or in "good" English or Spanish, for the letter to be effective students must carefully analyze the scenario and the interaction of the factors when crafting their response because the response must consider their standing in relation to the president of the chamber of commerce to choose the right tone. They have to weigh carefully their word choice because the letter could have real consequences (i.e., blacklisting from the chamber of commerce or alternately other business owners could expect the same "deal"). In the Technical Writing course,

students are asked to develop a set of instructions for a process or procedure of their choosing, and ideally in their field or future profession, and also prepare an accompanying memo that identifies the cultural elements that must be considered as the instructions are prepared for translation to be used in a specific Spanish-speaking country. To complete the assignment successfully, students must demonstrate that they understand not only how the language must be tailored to the instruction set users, but what language, register, and cultural aspects must be considered when composing the instructions.

This deliberate and explicit focus on rhetoric enhances what Ruggiero alludes to in her "Graduate Courses in Languages for Specific Purposes: Needs, Challenges and Models" (2014). Ruggiero's survey of graduate programs in the area of languages for specific purposes identified "few opportunities for graduate students to gain the necessary experience, training and expertise to either teach or pursue non-academic interests in this area" (2014: 56). She thus recommends transforming graduate foreign language programs from their current focus on training future academics by developing courses "that situate language within broader social, historical, geographic and cross-cultural perspectives" as advocated by the 2007 Modern Language Association assessment of the state of foreign languages (2014: 59). Her re-centered course "presents a multicultural approach to the teaching of Spanish for Specific Purposes (SSP)[viii] and civic engagement" (2014: 62). Although Ruggiero does not specifically address how she incorporates rhetorical studies or theory into her re-centered course, the 2nd section of her 5-part course focuses on "The Rhetorical View of Specialized Languages: Effective Communication in Intercultural Context" (2014: 64). Ruggiero's background and expertise is not rhetoric and writing rather a foreign language discipline, yet she has nonetheless woven rhetoric into her language teaching. Her rhetorical approach emphasizes the need to communicate effectively for broad audiences and provides students the opportunity to develop cultural and intercultural competence. For the BPWC, both its graduate and undergraduate students can expect to incorporate rhetorical theory in their coursework that expectation is explicit in all program courses. Our goal is to thus provide students with the opportunities Ruggiero found lacking in graduate language education.

We also believe in using Bitzer's (1992) formal exploration of *rhetorical situations* across the disciplines as a way to frame the intentional choices we made in curriculum design and instruction. Also echoed in the NCTE's position statement, Blitzer defined a rhetorical situation as one where "a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about significant modification of the exigence" (1992: 6). Our curriculum design and instruction both utilized this concept and included it as part of the curriculum. We understood that the certificate program involved: 1) people, that is, the University's administration, both faculty departments teaching in the program, students desiring to augment their skill set to become more marketable in a burgeoning interconnected and global society; 2) events, in the sense of an increasing awareness of multilingualism as an asset in the border region, the appropriate mix of capable instructors; and 3) relations, meaning the complex of the people and circumstances identified. These interrelated factors allowed us to address the need to teach writing in two languages: the exigence. Our curriculum is designed to help students recognize the exigence in situations that demand an appropriate response and then teach them to use appropriate rhetorical strategies to craft the appropriate response. Along with our understanding of the rhetorical situation in which we developed the program, we also recognized trends in higher education that would also inform our pedagogies and practices in the program. We discuss those in the following section.

IV. PEDAGOGIES AND PRACTICES

Many scholars assert that students who take LSP courses tend to approach the courses as applied learning environments—meaning that they "intend to use that knowledge on a frequent basis in their future work environments for the benefit of the enterprise for which they work and/or the clientele base with whom they will interact" (Lafford 2012: 21). With that in mind, we knew that we had to approach course design by carefully considering both student and future employer expectations. Three main trends emerged from faculty discussions and research that we believed had to be addressed in course

content, delivery, or as part of the final program outcomes to address student and industry expectations: digital technologies, ethics for writers and service-learning.

IV.1. Digital technologies

In regards to digital technologies, we aimed to understand Generation Z, also known as iGeneration. Gen Z are students born between 1995-2012 (see Stillman and Stillman 2017). General observations that can be made about Gen Z students may be helpful in informing teaching practices; they are the first generation, from birth, to have access to technology and the Internet (Seemiller and Grace 2016), and they have been characterized as having short attention spans and expecting the use of up to date technology in their educational experiences. Scholars such as Hopkins et al. (2018) have suggested the use of social media and other web-based tools such as podcasts, YouTube and FaceBook instead of traditional methods of teaching. Arnó-Macià (2012: 95) asserts, too, that online learning: "seems to be especially appropriate for LSP given that it allows for the customization of learning to suit students' needs…" For this reason, the BPWC was designed as a 100% online program where instructors could customize the learning experience albeit within the university-selected learning management system.

Our courses are conducive to an online environment because they are writing intensive, and students have to use writing as the primary means to communicate they are writing more in this delivery format than any other because much of the student-teacher, and student-student interaction must be in the form of written discussion boards or emails. The RWS courses, as bilingual classes, are designed using a 50-50 model such that the content and assignments are divided equally between Spanish and English. This may take on diverse structures in the online environment, but the most common format is alternating weeks between Spanish and English. The determining factor in selecting the language for major assignments is the nature of the assignment and its fit into the overall course. In informal assignments, such as discussion board posts, students are also encouraged to use both languages. Often, students are told they need to compartmentalize the use of different languages; our courses afford students the opportunity to choose the language/s that they have commonly used to write. Further, while RWS courses require writing as the principal mode of completing an assignment, not all assignments follow traditional print format. Students may complete assignments

that call for a twitter feed, a presentation deck, a podcast script or they may have to determine the most rhetorically effective mode to use for a specific scenario.

The overall instructional design is one of a flipped classroom[ix] that incorporates a variety of educational sources from YouTube videos, academic articles and other web content, and students engage in their learning through peer, teacher, team and external audience interactions. For example, for a module on writing an application letter (cover letter) and résumé for a current job or internship, in addition to readings in the textbooks, students learn about the different terms that are used to refer to a résumé in Spanish (C.V., *hoja de vida,* etc.), read an academic article on "Translating Politeness in Bilingual English-Spanish Business Correspondence" by Fuertes-Olivera and Nielson (2008), watch YouTube videos on tips for creating an effective CV and visit websites from diverse countries such as Chile, Mexico, and Spain. Students engage with the content in three discussion boards: a class, reading and team forum. Discussion board questions foster debate, problem-solving and reflection so students gain a critical understanding of the rhetorical choices they make in communicating effectively with multicultural audiences. According to King de Ramírez (2017: 68), "...this is especially important for HLs [Heritage Learners] who may assume that cultural practices learned at home are shared by all Hispanics in their community". Typical questions posed in the discussion forums are designed for students to consider the rhetorical situation to help them to understand and manage cultural differences, such as:

> What is the appropriate tone in professional writing contexts?
>
> Are there differences in how appropriate tone is defined in English and Spanish?
>
> What does *goodwill* mean? How do you create this in your writing?
>
> After the reading, explain what differences you found in the norms for writing résumés in Spanish and English? Did you identify any differences among the examples from Spanish-speaking countries?

By way of discussion boards and other collaboration tools, the courses foster engagement, and also teamwork. In the technical writing course, students complete their final project in teams and are expected to develop their own parameters and roles for group members to finalize their technical report. Online and distributed collaboration is intended to mirror today's globalized workforce environment and aligns with the

attributes that employers value most: "problem-solving skills and an ability to work in a team" (National Association of Colleges and Employers 2018). We recognize students are navigating different time zones, and personal, work and school schedules, so they are encouraged to use both the university's learning management system and other communication technologies that foster collaboration and coordination as they produce a multi-step and complex text. The goal is to foster adaptability and awareness of various technology that allows for collaboration and coordination—the same adaptability that employers will expect our graduates to demonstrate when they join a global workforce.

To reinforce concepts of external audiences, that is audiences other than the instructor, and foster intercultural sensitivities, we have laid the groundwork for collaboration between sections of technical writing at UT-El Paso and the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez campus. In a pilot study, students participated in peer reviewing a technical report and presentation and provided feedback on the process. The peer review is important because it allows students to appreciate the complexities of writing for a global audience while developing cultural sensitivity and intercultural competencies. Donovan and Quezada assert that the peer review brings to life the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) "Principles for Post-Secondary Teaching of Writing;" specifically our writing instruction "considers the needs of real audiences," "recognizes writing as a social act [and] writing processes as iterative and complex," and "depends upon frequent, timely, and context-specific feedback to students…" (2015). The cross-cultural peer review added another audience to both the UT-El Paso and UPR-Mayagüez students. They knew they were now writing not only for their respective instructors, but that other readers would be reviewing their work for overall understanding and clarity and that these new readers were culturally diverse. Their peers would also be looking for ideas to strengthen their own writing since both sets of students were enrolled in technical writing courses. Students were then asked to reflect on the process and comment on the strengths and weaknesses in the drafts they reviewed and consider how the review further informed their subsequent revision process. Although there were challenges to conducting peer review digitally, across time zones, and with unique student populations, we believe that this is a sustainable

pedagogical practice and important to LSP curriculum development for the 21st century.

Recognizing Gen Z's desire to customize and have additional resources available to them at the push of a button, BPWC faculty have collaborated with UT-El Paso Library professionals and developed a Library Research Guide (or LibGuide) that includes carefully curated additional electronic resources for all courses. The LibGuide provides both students and faculty with bilingual and monolingual resources for writing in different contexts as well as glossaries, and style and grammar handbooks. The LibGuide and an embedded course/program librarian, who has been a critical resource to the certificate program since its inception, provide students an organized reservoir that can further enhance their sources while managing the materials instructors must require or provide in individual courses.

IV.2. Ethics for writers

An ongoing element of RWS curriculum has been writers' ethical considerations and the development of those considerations as students develop their assignments. Recognizing that having the certificate program designation on student transcripts would increase prospective employers' or graduate programs' expectations of our graduates, we understood that ethics had to be foregrounded for students and incorporated into the overall program structure. The desire to infuse more general skills, such as leadership, in foreign language study was also forwarded in 2011 in the 21st Century Skills Map by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and P21 (2011). Other scholars such as Uribe et al. (2014), Long et al. (2014) and Doyle (2017) propose developing leadership with integrity as a core value within the curriculum. The need for leadership skills is also seconded by the National Association of Colleges and Employers study (2018) that lists leadership as the fourth most desirable attribute that employers seek. We agree, then, with Derby et al. (2017: 85) that "leadership as an educational notion is rising in importance throughout academe that we should ...find creative ways to incorporate this key concept into FL [Foreign Language] curricula as often as possible".

For the BPWC curriculum, we focused on one key attribute of leadership: the principle of ethics. Following Uribe et al. (2014) and Doyle (2017), ethics was "infused" into the curriculum, starting first with the program outcome statements and then into each of the course outcomes in the syllabi. For example, the Bilingual Workplace Writing syllabus highlights in the outcomes statements that students will "consider the ethical dimensions of composing and working within and with organizations as well as the ethical dimensions of translation in professional settings." Ethics instruction is supported in BPWC courses through specific modules that ask students to consider the ethical implications of their writing. While translation brings with it a specific ethical consideration usually found in professional associations' codes of ethics (See American Translators Association Code of Ethics and Professional Practice 2019), students are not always aware of how ethics relates to their professional and technical communication. The RWS faculty carefully considered the inclusion of ethics discussions in their textbook and instructional material selection; they provide specific discussions of ethical implications for student writing at the outset of the courses, and also weave those ethical considerations into subsequent assignments. In Workplace Writing, an ethics section is included in every weekly lecture. Students are asked to explore the *Professional Ethics-Code of Conduct* on the Association for Business Communication website (2019). They also discuss recent ethics' scandals in the local, state or national government. In the Technical Writing course, students are introduced to the ethical considerations for technical writers as described in the Society for Technical Communication *Ethical Principles* (2018). Further discussion regarding specific scenarios through assignments helps students understand how their writing can result in or respond effectively to ethical dilemmas or ethical lapses. As we continue to refine the BPWC curriculum, we see ethics as a fundamental part of a curriculum that responds to the growing need to develop future leaders and professional, ethical writers.

IV.3. Service-Learning

In the Rhetoric and Writing Studies Practicum course, students are asked to work with a non-profit organization as bilingual, professional writers. The benefits that come from this experience are underscored by Deans (2000) who argues how service-learning is one means by which we can emphasize how writing is a social act. He relates service-learning to writing by showing us how service-learning exposes students to multiple

discourses and asks them to write within these different nonacademic discourse communities. In addition, service-learning asks students to situate their work in wider non-academic communities, and it has students cross cultural and class boundaries by working with community organizations and their clients who often hold subject positions different from their own (Deans, 2000). In short, service-learning can be viewed as the fruition of some of the most important contemporary theoretical claims of rhetoric and writing studies.

Furthermore, in the practicum course, Deans' paradigm of "writing for the community" is used. By having students write in both English and Spanish for the community, the primary site for learning is the nonprofit organization rather than the classroom, and workplace discourse becomes the most highly valued discourse. Students work with the agency contact (their agency mentor) and the instructor becomes a facilitator of the process (Deans 2000: 17). Thus, students learn nonacademic writing practices and reflect on the differences between academic and workplace discourses, and students provide needed writing products for agencies, focusing on different audiences, purposes, and contexts. In addition, other benefits come from this service-learning experience. As King de Ramírez (2017: 56) states: "service learning allows students the opportunity to observe authentic language usage, network with individuals outside academia, and become familiar with sociocultural issues that affect their immediate community".

The writing practicum begins by students selecting a community writing partner (a non-profit organization who has partnered with the Department of English for this type of service-learning experience) and developing a practicum contract with the agency mentor. Students are informed ahead of time what the organization's literacy, writing, and communication needs are, and these needs include the production of texts in English, Spanish, and/or both (bilingual). Based on these needs and the student's academic background, skills, and interests, the student negotiates the projects to be completed with the agency mentor. The instructor must approve and sign off on this contract before the student begins working with the agency mentor. A major requirement is for students to produce texts in both languages, English and Spanish. Throughout the course, students provide progress reports to the course instructor where

they outline the status of their projects and how close they are to completion of the tasks listed in their contract.

Consequently, students, by the end of the practicum, have produced texts, in print and/or digital, in English and Spanish, for their community. Deliverables can include websites, newsletters, grants, recommendation reports, brochures, PowerPoint presentations and other workplace and professional texts. At times, students will create these texts in English, Spanish, or both. At other times, students may translate existing texts from one language to the other. But for the texts created and/or translated, students revise, edit, and proofread these texts before submitting them to the non-profit organization. The deliverables are evaluated by both the course instructor and the agency mentor; this way, as Bacon (1997) advises, instructors call upon the expertise of the community writing partners (the agency mentors). Students then benefit from the input of two experts—the writing instructor and the agency mentor. This practice helps instructors too in that it can support the teacher's expectations of students in the classroom when the same expectations and standards are echoed by the agency mentor who represents the needs of real readers (1997: 39-55). In addition, students, through their writing practicum, are working now with professionals outside academia, and as Long (2017) asserts, "the most successful LSP programs include courses in a variety of approaches to several disciplines and put students into contact with experts in the field" (2017: 4).

Moreover, aside from being grounded in service-learning scholarship, the practicum course responds to Wu's lament that "a limited number of foreign language programs in the United States...provide their students with experiential learning opportunities that require them to functionally use their linguistic and intercultural skills in professional contexts" (2017: 567). As students work with their agency and faculty mentors, they practice writing, in English and Spanish, within a professional context and for an actual audience in the community.

V. CONCLUSION

We asked English, Spanish *o los dos*? The BPWC program most emphatically answers "*los dos*". Achieving *los dos*, however, in ways that meet current industry and student

demands as well as meeting pedagogical and curricular trends presents both challenges and opportunities. As we developed the program, we considered UT-El Paso and the program's location, both geographically, interculturally and within the University structure. The program developed in response to the El Paso community's implicit and tacit need for bilingual communicators, but it also responds to the global and intercultural realities our students are expected to navigate once they graduate, certificate in hand. Making the program attractive to students and effective as an online certificate meant we had to design the program with current trends in mind and operationalize those trends in each of the courses. We believe in doing so, we will become part of future LSP transformation and can contribute to the *specific purpose* by introducing rhetorical theory used in monolingual and general purpose composition courses. As the program grows, we anticipate we can evaluate individual courses, assess pedagogical practices, enhance digital technologies used and track our students' successes while keeping our program's goal, to develop ethical, bilingual, culturally sensitive and dynamic communicators, firmly in mind.

Notes

[i] Language for Specific Purposes is an approach most often applied to the teaching of English for professional contexts (English for Specific Purposes) although there is increasing demand and growth in Spanish for Professional and Specific Purposes (SPSP) in the US. Given the bilingual nature of the BPWC, we include LSP scholarship from all three of these areas.

[ii] Rhetoric and Writing Studies (RWS) in the United States emerged from English Departments and literary studies in an effort to study, initially, the traditional Greco-Roman concepts of rhetoric and how students learn and instructors teach composition. Since about the mid-twentieth century, however, the discipline has grown to encompass multiple concepts of rhetoric and explores writing process(es) through various lenses. The discipline has continued to grow and is a separate field of study from its English Department roots. Degrees at undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels are awarded by a number of programs. In many instances, RWS programs have become independent academic departments within their universities.

[iii] In 2011, the City of El Paso International Bridges Department reported that "more than 3.6 million passenger vehicles, 4.2 million pedestrians and 300,000 commercial vehicles crossed into Ciudad Juárez through the three bridges" (City of El Paso 2020).

[iv] See also El Paso Regional Economic Development Corporation. REDco (2005-2006 Labor Market Assessment by the Wadley Donovan Group).

[v] The mail-in survey consisted of a two-sided questionnaire and was mailed to chairs of departments of foreign and classical languages at 4-year institutions in the U.S. The total surveys sent out were 3,093; 26%, or 790, responded (Grosse and Voght 1990: 37).

[vi] In the 1990 survey, departments that taught foreign languages included Continuing Education, Theology, Religion, History, Asian Studies, Native American Studies, Schools of Law, Engineering, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Education, Foreign Service and Diplomacy. In 2011, Long and Uscinski added to this list: Anthropology, Biblical Studies, Business, Humanities, Linguistics, Philosophy, and Pan-African Studies (2012: 182).

[vii] Undergraduate transnational dual degree program in the U.S. and Mexico (Office of Postsecondary Education 2007).

viii Some scholars use Spanish for Specific Purposes (SPS); Others use Spanish for the Professions and Specific Purposes (SPSP). Depending on the context and the material we are citing, we use both terms and acronyms in this article.

ix Flipped classroom model or inverted classrooms occur when instructors assign class content to students to be completed outside of traditional class time. The content may include traditional readings or multimedia content such as videos from multiple sources. The goal is to allow for more active learning during class time. Class time is then dedicated to working through problems, discussing complex, complicated concepts and engaging in collaborative learning (Roehl et al. 2013). In the RWS class, these activities may include workshopping students' writing, discussing rhetorical concepts, peer review and student-teacher conferences or reviews.

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