1. Beyond Situated Learning: Rethinking Internship Theory and Practice in the Distributed Workplace

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Abstract: This chapter retheorizes internships as pedagogical moments for students to learn what we have commonly called "soft skills." I argue that soft skills, which consist of communication, collaboration, ethics, work ethic, critical thinking skills, and the like, are fundamentally rhetorical skills that require individuals to learn how to read and respond effectively to different workplace situations, people, technologies, and problems. Workplace supervisors and human resource professionals across all disciplines agree that soft skills are highly desired by employers, but there is little agreement on if and how they can be taught to students. New internship configurations such as virtual internships, global internships, and online education make soft skills all the more necessary for success. If the most desirable quality in job seekers is soft skills, then we should actively teach and cultivate them. Today's internship practicum should include more about how to function effectively in a job using soft skills; as such we need to develop different pedagogical interventions that cultivate these skills.

Keywords: internships, soft skills, experiential learning

Key Takeaways:

- Internship practica can cultivate soft skills via opportunities to read, respond, and critically reflect on a variety of different workplace rhetorical contexts.
- Soft skills instruction is more relevant and "teachable" in the context of the kinds of distributed technical communication work and internship arrangements that interns face.
- Case study pedagogy, attention to diversity, and modular course structures can foster soft skills development by asking students to critically reflect on how they can deploy soft skills to address workplace issues.

The 1990s and early 2000s saw a surge in scholarship theorizing how technical and professional communication (TPC) students learn through internships (e.g., Anson & Forsberg, 1990; Beaufort, 1999; Freedman & Adam, 1996; Gaitens, 2000; Little, 1993; Savage, 1997; Smart & Brown, 2002; St.Amant, 2003; Tovey, 2001). Long integrated into TPC undergraduate majors, internships have been seen as a critical component for learning technical communication principles

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and workplace practices. Melonçon & Henschel (2013) note that over half of all TPC undergraduate programs require an internship course. Internships, then, serve as a critical bridge between the academy and industry, allowing students, supervisors, and academics to forge connections. Situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) became key concepts for theorizing how TPC students learn via internship opportunities, but these theories often accounted for learning in traditional office environments, in which interns were mentored by veteran technical communicators, and internships were coordinated by faculty.

Times have changed for TPC interns. In our global, distributed workplace environments, internship work is vastly different. What was once a one-time internship in a traditional office environment has been replaced by new arrangements such as virtual internships, internships with start-ups, global and study-abroad internships, micro-internships, contract work, unpaid internships, and the expectation of multiple internships over a student's college career (Durack, 2013; Gates, 2014; Leath, 2009; Perlin, 2012; Ruggiero & Boehm, 2016; Suzuki et al., 2016; Yarbrough, 2016). In these new arrangements, technical communication interns may not have seasoned TPC professionals as mentors or may not even have any academic or industry mentor. Moreover, a student today will be expected to have at least 12–15 jobs during their lifetime (U.S. Department of Labor, 2019). While excellent research on internships has continued in the field (Baird & Dilger, 2017; Bourelle, 2015; Katz, 2015; Kramer-Simpson, 2018), how interns learn and how we might teach them differently in these new TPC contexts and work arrangements is less understood.

In light of these shifts, this chapter retheorizes internships as pedagogical moments for students to learn what we have commonly called "soft skills." I argue that soft skills, which consist of communication, collaboration, ethics, work ethic, critical thinking skills, and the like, are fundamentally rhetorical skills that require individuals to learn how to read and respond effectively to different workplace situations, people, technologies, and problems. Workplace supervisors and human resource professionals across all disciplines agree that soft skills are one of the most desirable job qualifications (Robles, 2012), but there is little agreement on if and how they can be taught (Shuman et al., 2005). If the most desirable quality in job seekers is soft skills, then why aren't we actively teaching, or at least cultivating, them? In short, today's internship practicum should include more about how to function effectively in a job using soft skills; as such, we need to develop different pedagogical interventions that cultivate these skills.

I start with a brief overview of internship theory in TPC, then move to how TPC work and internships have shifted with a global, distributed landscape. I outline emerging issues that TPC interns face, including working remotely, working without TPC mentors or direct supervision, self-directed learning, taking initiative, using distributed technologies, gendered and racial conflict, cultural differences, global communication, entrepreneurship, and collaboration. Using

evidence from internship courses taught over the past 15 years, I then offer three specific pedagogical approaches to soft skills training that can help students to negotiate these emerging issues in productive and ethical ways. The key takeaway here is that the TPC internship and its corresponding practicum should be less about introducing students to the field and more about teaching students the essential workplace soft skills that they will need to succeed in today's global workplace.

Internship Theory and Pedagogy in Professional and Technical Communication

The field of professional and technical communication has produced a rich body of research on internships, how developing writers benefit from internships, and how they make the transition from school to work. Early scholarship in the field was invested in identifying and describing the internship experience and what it can do for the student (Gloe, 1983; Hull, 1977; Little, 1993; Southard, 1988; Tessier, 1975; Wyld, 1978). Much like internships are theorized in engineering and other STEM fields, this early internship scholarship in TPC created an opening for integrating experiential learning in TPC. Scholarly topics included how to set up internship programs, what a successful internship looks like, and different examples of internships (Bosley, 1988; Coggin, 1989; Hager, 1990). This early work operated in a kind of epideictic fashion to argue that internships are important learning opportunities but did not necessarily theorize what was being learned and how interns were learning.

Several strands of research on internships soon emerged. Brenton Faber (2002), Aviva Freedman and Christine Adam (1996), and Tiffany Bourelle (2014), for instance, each focus on how the internship is an opportunity for students to see themselves as "professionals" on the job. The professional internship is "an aspect of professional certification that prevails in one form or another across most professions" (Savage & Seible, 2010, p. 53). A second and related dimension of internship research is the transition from school to work. Research by Chris M. Anson and L. Lee Forsberg (1990), Neil Baird and Bradley Dilger (2017), Anne Beaufort (1999), Doug Brent (2012), and Susan M. Katz (1998) each present different ways in which interns move from seeing themselves as students to seeing themselves as professionals. Anson and Forsberg (1990), for instance, describe a specific learning process through which interns move from academically oriented writing to workplace-specific discourses and processes. Beaufort (1999) similarly provides a shift from one identity (student) to another (intern/worker).

Most of the scholarship that theorizes how interns make these shifts has been based on Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger's concept of situated learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that learning is situated in a community of practice. An apprentice enters into a community of practice as a newcomer and is initiated, so

to speak, into that professional community. In this model, "legitimate peripheral participation" introduces newcomers through immersion in the community and absorbing its modes of action and meaning. In many instances, this immersion occurs through in-person apprenticeships. Aviva Freedman and Christine Adam (1996) posit that in legitimate peripheral participation, learners do not fully participate and that the learning that occurs is incidental, drawn forth more by the community of practice (p. 399). While Freedman and Adam theorize the learning as "authentic," the emphasis on peripheral still holds. In this model, interns are working with or alongside a professional who models processes and practices; thus, the model is predicated on professionals in the workplace doing the modeling or "teaching" of the intern.

The "teaching" in an internship, then, comes largely from the internship supervisor, not the faculty member. Faculty tend to be in the role of coordinating internships and making sure the academic parameters are in place. This focus on internship coordination over teaching, mentoring, or coaching leaves the faculty member as an observer of what is happening in the internship, which he or she then uses to apply to future interns (see Anson & Forsberg [1990] for instance). In TPC, we assume supervisors will train interns because they are in the writing and communication professions; as such, what shines forth in our scholarship is often what the student is doing/learning in the internship rather than how we are teaching interns. As educators and scholars, we need to develop innovative ways to support students in their internships, coach them to develop the professional skills they need on the job, and help them to make explicit connections between learning on the job and their academic coursework.

While there has been a robust discussion of experiential learning in internships, little explicit connection has been made to soft skills. Ironically, the description of situated learning and much internship literature related to legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice imply soft skill development. Unlike academic learning, in which students attend classes, listen to lectures, read textbooks, complete assignments, and take tests, internships are a form of applied learning, or learning in which students apply theories and concepts to a real-world environment. Another way of understanding internships is as a situated learning activity; in this case, learning is situated not in a classroom environment where objective knowledge is conveyed but is situated within the activity in which someone participates. Lave's early work on situated learning is foundational for this understanding. Lave (1991) posits that learning is always situated in a place, among people, technologies, and cultural factors: "learning, thinking, and knowing are relations among people engaged in activity in, with, and arising from the socially and culturally structured world" (p. 67). Epistemologically, situated learning is contextual, emplaced, and active. Lave (2009) further claims that "theories of situated activity do not separate action, thought, feeling, and value and their collective, cultural-historical forms of located, interested, conflictual, meaningful activity" (p. 202). I highlight this sentence specifically because of the inclusion of

terms normally associated with soft skills—value and feeling. Feeling and value also influence one's ability to learn in and from a situation. And while we might want to see academic learning as objective learning, all learning is in fact situated.

For instance, college students might do very well in class academically but have difficulty in applying what they know to real-world situations. Or they struggle with traditional academic work and do extremely well applying what they know in real-world situations. It is the rare student who can move between both kinds of epistemological frameworks seamlessly. This may be partly because there are differences in the skills needed to succeed in the university and the soft skills needed in the workplace. Academic skills are honed by college students over sixteen years of schooling and are different from workplace soft skills where there is no safety net and employees must communicate and negotiate with multiple stakeholders at once. As instructors, we can create the conditions of possibility for students to understand these differences and invent out of them. As Lave points out, "Doing and knowing are inventive in another sense: They are open-ended processes of improvisation with the social, material, and experiential resources at hand" (Lave, 2009, p. 204). That is, part of what we are cultivating in internship experiences is gathering the resources necessary to invent meaning in a new workplace context.

Since Lave and Wenger's theories were introduced into the field, new internship formations have challenged and increased the pedagogical need for faculty to facilitate internship learning. These new formations highlight a gap in the TPC scholarship on internships: a lack of attention to instructor pedagogy, or at least the pedagogy of the internship course or arrangement. In the new landscape described below, this lack of attention to specific pedagogical approaches stands out as a crucial need in current theories on internships.

Shifting Landscapes for Internships

Thus far, our pedagogies for internships have not changed over the past 30 years, even though our students, their workplaces, and their internships have changed. In *Internships: Theory and Practice* (2017), Charles Sides and Ann Mrvica predict that trends such as managed education, the student as consumer, and internships outside of an academic support system may affect the future of internships as a way of learning by doing. Today, some of these trends have manifested, but other trends have also emerged. Internships outside of an academic environment have definitely blossomed as more and more students take on multiple internships while in college. By the time my students have taken the internship practicum their senior year, they have already been in at least two to three internships. Popular websites and career advice suggest that students undertake multiple internships while in college. We've also witnessed an expanded discourse about the exploitation of interns, the problems with unpaid internships, and sexual harassment and discrimination against interns in multiple industries. Other

new internship formations include virtual internships, micro-internships, study abroad internships, entrepreneurships, and service-learning internships. In these situations, it's no longer realistic to think we're teaching students to write in one particular industry or type of workplace. What we're teaching is how to navigate and succeed in an ever-changing workplace in which students may undertake more than 15 jobs in their lifetime, often in different careers and industries that have yet to be imagined. In such formations, new pedagogical challenges emerge: remote work with little to no supervision, lack of TPC mentors or experts on the job, self-directed learning, use of distributed technologies, gendered or racial conflicts, cultural differences, global communication practices, and collaboration. How do we cultivate learning in emerging internship formations? With the rise of TPC programs comes the rise of technical knowledge in TPC theory and practice. That is, TPC students are getting the "hard skills" they need in their major courses; what's needed is more instruction in the soft skills they need to succeed in the workplace. Internship practica are the ideal place for practicing and reflecting on the soft skills that they need to become successful in any professional environment.

Rhetoric and Soft Skills in Emerging Internship Configurations

Soft skills has become a buzzword to describe a specific skill set desired by companies. As opposed to the "hard skills" of engineering, coding, building, accounting, and other specific technical skills or expertise, soft skills refers largely to the communication and human interactive skills needed to succeed in a workplace. Marcel Robles (2012) describes soft skills as "interpersonal qualities, also known as people skills, and personal attributes that one possesses" (p. 453). Robles surveyed business executives to come up with the ten soft skills most desired in today's workplace: "integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethic" (p. 453). As many scholars note, these skills are not easily "taught" (Robles, 2012; Shuman et al., 2005) because they are ways of being toward others, toward work, and toward environments, which develop over time through situations, self-reflection, and applications. While students can read about soft skills, they must have opportunities to examine their own abilities, see where they need work, gain feedback from others, and test out these new skills as they are in development. As employees experience different and new workplace situations, solve different problems, and learn to work with different populations and colleagues from different cultural backgrounds, they (hopefully) develop, refine, and hone these interpersonal and soft skills.

Students with the best soft skills already have some meta-awareness of the behaviors needed to succeed because they can "read" people well and/or interact

in large groups to produce consensus while also being able to advocate for themselves and others. This kind of rhetorical sensibility can be cultivated. I avoid using the term "taught" because it implies that soft skills can be obtained and held like rote learning, when they are only truly understood in practice, much like rhetorical ability. Rhetorical ability, because it involves assessing the rhetorical situation, learning about or understanding your audience, and adjusting your writing/language/behavior to meet that audience, underlies all of the soft skills listed above; there is a strong performative and improvisational dimension that requires cultivation.

Pedagogical Cultivation of Soft Skills

If the TPC internship and its corresponding practicum are now less about introducing students to the field and more about teaching students the essential workplace soft skills that they will need to succeed in today's global workplace, what assignments or approaches should we use? Programs have a variety of approaches to supervising interns. Three common configurations that have emerged are one-on-one counseling (independent study) with an internship coordinator; a traditional course where students must have an internship during the class—this is often called a practicum; or an online course (distance education) with students either in one major or across majors (Bay, 2017). As part of these configurations, different conceptions of pedagogy are implicit. When internship supervisors offer independent study credit, there is often the assumption that the internship supervisor is teaching and mentoring the intern; as such, the internship coordinator serves as almost a gatekeeper to ensure the student has learned or undertaken the work. In a classroom situation, the assumption is that students have much to teach each other in a more formal institutional structure. The online class also provides that support but recognizes that interns can learn from students in other majors and backgrounds.

Most of these pedagogical configurations still require weekly writing assignments where students reflect on what they are doing/learning. The end of the semester internship report is a common genre where the student reports on what they did in the internship in order to earn credit. They may provide written updates to internship coordinators throughout the internship, either in person or online. The final report may contain samples of the internship work and may often be a report already composed as a requirement of their internship supervisor. While TPC programs may have one or more of these configurations, students are undertaking internships outside of those configurations as well, which means there is no pedagogical infrastructure for internships.

At Purdue, our TPC internship course meets once a week for a two-hour block. The first hour consists of engagement and reflection on the internship experience. Students are required to complete an internship work agreement form, on which they collaborate with their supervisors on goals and supporting activities

for the internship. Worklogs, or guided reflections on the internship experience, are shared with the class on a bi-weekly basis. Students bring samples of their internship work to share and receive feedback from classmates. Short readings and articles about internship experiences are also discussed. The second hour focuses on professional identity; students work on developing an online portfolio, LinkedIn and networking profiles, and presenting themselves as emerging professionals. While students do receive mid-semester and final evaluations from their supervisors, I have downplayed these components in their final grades. Very rarely do internship supervisors provide critical comments or evaluations of work. As many interns have reported, their supervisors do not want to provide negative comments in case they might impact student grades. For students with virtual internships, it is sometimes difficult to speak directly to supervisors or even maintain sustained contact. For these reasons, plus the shifting dynamics of internships, I have slowly shifted the course more toward a critical reflection on the internship experience.

Following Kristen Lucas and Jacob D. Rawlins (2015), I present a curricular overview of how soft skills can be integrated into internship pedagogy. I focus specifically on the use of case studies, approaches to diversity and difference through reflection, and self-directed online modules that students can complete inside or outside of an official course or credit. These components respond to contemporary exigencies such as COVID-19, the #metoo movement, and racial conflict, all of which impact the development of an intern's professional identity.

Case Study Approach

One approach that has been useful for cultivating soft skill development is the case study method. In this situation, interns do not read about artificial or even real-world based experiences with other professionals, as in Gerald J. Savage and Dale L. Sullivan's textbook (2001); rather, they write their own case studies to share with their classmates and use as reflective development tools. Using cases in TPC is a well-documented approach to teaching problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making (Balzotti & Hansen, 2019; Mara, 2006; Pennell & Miles, 2009), but little attention has been paid to having students write their own cases. Having students write their own cases asks them to reflect on their own soft skill development and to see how workplace problems are often embedded in a web of communication, collaboration, and "people" issues. That is, a procedural problem in the workplace—say an ineffective workplace process—is just as much a structural issue, as in using the wrong process for the job, as it is a soft skills problem—being able to collaboratively develop a different process and communicate that change to people who may not be amenable to a change.

An example I have referenced before (Bay, 2017) might help. A summer engineering intern has trouble getting things done because she doesn't know how to communicate with the hourly workers on the shop floor. She problem solves with her instructor and peers on ways to collaborate more effectively with this

group of co-workers. One of the suggestions provided is to bring something like donuts to share with these workers in order to create goodwill and buy-in for her ideas. She ultimately develops more camaraderie with these workers based on this small, thoughtful act.

This instance is a perfect example of a case study at work. In order to be effective, case studies must describe a situation in which there is no clear or obvious solution to the issue or problem that is being discussed. In such a situation, soft or interpersonal skills are often part of the solution since much of the execution of any solution in the workplace involves how it's deployed, the personalities involved, and the values being advocated. This intern had to figure out what the shop floor workers needed in order to see her as someone they could trust and respect. By collaborating on the problem in class, she was presented with several different options but figured out ultimately that there were particular approaches she could take to gain trust—all of which involved the successful deployment of soft skills. Having students write their own cases on real-world workplace problems and issues can help them become aware of how they need to cultivate soft skills as much as writing skills on the job.

David H. Jonassen (2006) provides a typology of case types that can be used as case studies for different rhetorical purposes: exemplars, analogies, problems to solve, and even student constructed cases. In his taxonomy, exemplar cases are often used as examples to be followed; in such a situation, students study the case and learn by reading through the thought process and solution to the problem. In problem-based cases, students read through an authentic case with no clear solution and then work to try to solve the problem on their own; such an approach is often used in legal and medical education. Student-generated cases, in Jonassen's approach, are often done in hypertext and allow others to move through the problem as they see it.

In an internship environment, case studies can be based on a student's personal internship experience or in combination with other workplace experiences. They should be written as issues emerge on the job. In this approach, interns are assigned to write and present a case study of a problem or issue on the job based on their own experiences. Students must produce a detail-rich narrative of a problem without judgment or bias and present it to the class. Everyone in class writes a response or solution to the problem and shares it with the other interns. Because each student writes a response based on their own internship formation or orientation, they consider the issue from different angles. The intern chooses an approach that best fits their situation and with which they feel most comfortable. If possible, the intern actually enacts the approach in their internship to see what happens. The intern is thus exposed to different rhetorical approaches and learns to adapt rhetoric to the circumstance. The intern reports back to class and reflects on the outcome. Throughout this process, the intern learns what works and what does not in their particular situation, while also reflecting on their rhetorical skill development.

Ideally, interns will write these cases as they emerge, so they could occur throughout the semester without a defined due date. Often, in the writing of the cases, interns may be able to solve their own issue, which teaches them how to use writing and reflection to solve issues on their own without advice from others or the teacher. More often when I have taught this assignment, students mull over a situation at work for several weeks before they recognize it's an issue to be addressed. A common example are students who does not feel challenged by the work they have been assigned in their internships and don't understand why others are getting more sophisticated work projects. In this situation, we often brainstorm that it's not that the intern is not competent or able but that they are not actively and successfully communicating that competency with workplace cues or other soft skills. Once the student hears how others might solve the issue on the job, they have an arsenal of approaches that they can either try out or adapt to fit their personality and situation. In this case, it might be providing written progress reports to their supervisor on a daily basis, or it could be participating in breaks with co-workers rather than continuing to work through them. In both of these possible solutions, an intern must demonstrate competency through more than just the final products, which is an example of rhetorical expertise in action.

Attention to Diversity and Difference

The social justice turn in TPC has highlighted the ways that we need to do better at making students aware of structural and institutional inequities. The internship course is an ideal location for asking students to reflect on racial and gendered dynamics in the workplace. One approach that has proven useful is to reconsider the experiences of interns as explored in some older scholarship in TPC. For instance, I have students read Sherry G. Southard's "Protocols and Human Relations in the Corporate World" (1989), a 30-year-old essay that outlines expectations for interns in the workplace. While we might say this is a dated essay—and it is—many of the points still hold since they often focus on soft skills cultivation: observing behaviors, paying attention to interactions, and noticing how professionals interact. Translating those behaviors to actions, though, is different than reading about them. We look at that essay and others to examine the gendered, racial, and economic assumptions that are happening there. We then talk about how workplaces are different today, or not. Similarly, students read classic essays that detail intern experiences, such as Anson and Forsberg (1990) and D. Kathleen Stitts (2006), to look at unexamined assumptions about interns and co-workers. For example, a series of recent articles by Kristin Pickering (2018a, 2018b, 2019) provides fascinating analysis of how interns manage emotions in the workplace. However, reframing those experiences from the perspective of gender and race provides starkly different conclusions about emotions in the workplace. I reinforce these points through focused worklog prompts about how diversity and difference appear in students' workplaces and on readings about microaggressions

and conflict in the workplace; when students try to deny or elide discussions of difference, we have a foundation to discuss why they are unable to see that difference.

After reading through and re-analyzing these narratives, students are much more aware of how different behaviors and expectations emerge in the workplace. On multiple occasions, I have had students bring up examples of sexual harassment and microaggressions they have experienced in their internships. Before they have the opportunity to read about and discuss these issues, they often do not see their experiences as problematic and worthy of intervention. Reading and reflection opportunities provide them with a vocabulary and a way of thinking about these experiences. It also makes other students aware of these experiences and how they would address them in their own internships. While not a "soft skill" in Robles' list, social awareness of microaggressions and harassment is part of the interpersonal relations that are at the heart of soft skills training.

Modular Approaches to Internship Pedagogy

With the rise of virtual internships and recent shifts in higher education because of COVID-19, we need to take a modular approach to internship pedagogy. Viewing internships as capstone courses taken in a major's final semester or as the sole experience in a program does not work when students are undertaking internships throughout their entire time in the university. Positioning internships throughout the curriculum might be one approach to cultivating soft skills throughout a major or program. In order to support such an approach, we might need to take a modular approach to internship education. We have enacted this approach partially at Purdue with our summer internship course for any majors throughout the university. As I have written (Bay, 2017), internship courses that focus on soft skills can be offered to students from different majors and programs across the university. We've done this through an online summer internship course that functions like a business writing "on the job" course. By focusing on soft skills, students are able to cross the programmatic and disciplinary boundaries that might limit learning. In fact, the approach works quite well because students constantly have to attend to different audiences and expectations.

A modular approach would allow for pedagogical interventions in situations where there is no mechanism or ability to obtain course credit. Some students, for instance, decline to obtain credit for their internship experiences because they cannot afford the tuition expense. Micro-internships, like those offered by Parker-Dewey, are short-term projects that don't fit a traditional internship credit mechanism. Likewise, study abroad internships are often encapsulated in a study abroad program and don't always provide a mechanism for learning on the job. Providing modules online that would allow students to gain proficiency in different areas of soft skills might be a way for students to reflect on their learning and feel supported. Much like a badge system, modules could ask students to

reflect on different aspects of the internship experience or solve a problem, which could provide some evidence of their ability to deploy different soft skills. Another model would be for programs to create discussion boards or learning management systems open to any TPC student undertaking an internship. While someone might need to monitor these sites, such a configuration would provide students with support for their learning outside of an academic structure. These kinds of institutional structures can allow for support for students, while also allowing faculty and staff to better understand what is happening for interns at various points in their academic careers.

Future Directions

New developments such as virtual internships, global internships, and multiple internships over time have shifted the opportunities for faculty to facilitate internship learning. We must move internship theory beyond situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation to an understanding of internships as rhetorical phenomena in which students learn "soft skills," regardless of the discipline or field of study. Soft skills, which consist of communication, collaboration, ethics, work ethic, critical thinking skills, and the like, are fundamentally rhetorical skills that require individuals to learn how to read and respond effectively to diverse situations, people, and problems. Workplace supervisors and human resource professionals across all disciplines agree that soft skills are one of the most sought job qualifications, but there is little literature about how and if they can be taught. Internships provide the perfect opportunity to cultivate soft skills because they are opportunities to read, respond, and critically reflect on a variety of different workplace situations. Such cultivation can occur in a variety of internship configurations, whether they be course based or independent study. But reorienting our internship pedagogy toward soft skills as rhetorical work requires us to incorporate attention to diversity and difference, bring in more examples and case studies, and implement a modular approach to internship education. Coupled together, these additions can help move the internship practicum forward to address the new realities of student interns.

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