Possibility: Prioritizing Accessibility in Teaching, Learning, and Language

The 21st Century Englishes Conference is hosted by the Rhetoric Society of the Black Swamp, Bowling Green State University’s (BGSU) Student Chapter of the Rhetoric Society of America, and BGSU’s Rhetoric & Writing Ph.D. Program. It is sponsored by BGSU’s English Department.

Date: Friday, November 19th - Saturday, November 20th, 2021
Time: Saturday, November 20th at 10:30am EST for Welcome and Opening Remarks
Virtual Location: Live Zoom and the 21st Century Englishes Conference website
Contact Information: Kari Hanlin and Krys Ingman at 21stcon@gmail.com
Proposal Deadline: Sunday, October 17th at 11:59pm EDT

Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has complicated and exposed the ways in which our pedagogical and writing practices are vastly inaccessible. As many of us scrambled to convert our physical classrooms into digital, asynchronous spaces, we also learned to prioritize flexibility and empathy in our pedagogy. In the months that have followed, we have reexamined our attendance policies, reframed our accessibility statements beyond boilerplate language, and worked in dialogue with our students to learn together, despite and in response to the ever-changing global landscape.

Working through the pandemic further revealed the needs of marginalized communities who have historically been glossed over in and outside classrooms. Aimi Hamraie (2020) writes that we must “recognize that the very types of remote access that universities now mandate for classrooms and conferences have been denied to disabled people.” Disabled, alter-abled, and neurodivergent communities have advocated for a higher standard of accessibility across academia and beyond—making it our responsibility to continue examining our practices and prioritize equitable access.

Throughout this conference, we hope to engage in conversations surrounding where we have been, where we currently stand, and where we might go in the future as we prioritize accessibility as a vital intersection of pedagogy and writing.
We invite individual and panel proposals from academics and community members, and particularly encourage submissions from graduate students, undergraduate students, and contingent faculty on this theme prompted by, but not limited to, the topics and questions below:

**Defining Access:**
How do you define accessibility? What counts as accessible content? Why is creating accessible content important?

What is the relationship between access and inclusion? How do these terms inform your pedagogical and writing practices?

**Accessibility during (and beyond) COVID-19:**
How does the visibility, utility, and rhetoricity of accessibility statements benefit students?

What has the pandemic and variability in teaching modes taught you about equitable access to information? For educators, what have you learned from your students about their needs during remote learning? What have you learned about your own needs?

How can multimodal teaching strategies bring curricula closer to students?

Flexibility is a common theme in accessibility and disability studies. How has your flexibility throughout the pandemic made you more aware of inaccessible practices in higher education? (Ex: in writing, pedagogy, administration, etc.)

**Intersections with Disability Studies:**
Where and how does universal design and writing intersect? Teaching? The model of higher education?

Accessibility disparities are often thought of as an issue unique to computers and technology but also exist as physical problems. How do instructors help students navigate physical accessibility barriers?
What possibilities emerge when placing disability and rhetoric and writing studies in conversation?

How does a focus on disability center access and inclusion in the teaching of writing and rhetoric?

**Students’ Perspectives on Access**

What improvements and gains were made in accessibility during the pandemic that we can build upon through the future?

How was your ability to engage in learning impacted by the pandemic and your access (or lack thereof) to various functionalities (ex: access to the internet, assuming additional caretaking or familial responsibilities, etc.)?

**Submission Guidelines:**

Please submit all proposals via email to 21stcon@gmail.com as Microsoft Word attachments.

*If desired, you may submit multiple proposals for different types of presentations. For example, if you would like to give an individual presentation and a workshop presentation, you are more than welcome to submit two separate proposals. While we will allow two submissions for different types of presentations, we will not accept multiple submissions for the same type of presentation (ex. Two individual paper presentations).*

This year’s conference will be virtual with several options for presenting:

**Live Zoom Individual/Project Proposals**: Please include a title, a 50 word abstract to include in the program, and a 250 word proposal. Also include presenter(s) name(s), email(s), and university/community affiliation(s). Presenters should plan on 15 minutes per project.
Proposals of similar topics will be grouped in 75-minute panels (including Q & A) of 3-4 projects.

**Live Zoom Panel Proposals:** Please include a title, a 50 word abstract of the panel, a 750 word proposal, and a 50 word narrative of the relationships between the presenters to include in the program. Also include presenter names, emails, and university/community affiliations. Panels should plan for 75 minutes total, including Q & A time. There is no limit to the number of panelists, but we ask that all panelists are active contributors/facilitators during the panel.

**Live Zoom Workshop Proposals:** Please include a title, a 50 word abstract of the workshop, a 750 word proposal describing plans and activities for the workshop, and a 50 word narrative of the relationships between the presenters to include in the program. Also include presenter names, emails, and university/community affiliations. Workshops should plan for 75 minutes total. There is no limit to the number of panelists, but we ask that all panelists are active contributors/facilitators during the panel.

**Pre-recorded YouTube Video Proposals**: Please include a title, a 50 word abstract to include in the program, and a 250 word proposal. Also include presenter(s) name(s), email(s), and university/community affiliation(s). Presenters should limit videos to 15 minutes.

**Project Poster Display Proposals:** Please include a title and a 250 word description to be displayed with the piece. Outside of the 250 word description, please include a description of the mode or software platform that will be used. Also include presenters(s) name(s), email(s), and university/community affiliation(s). All accepted posters will be available for viewing on the 21st Century Englishes Conference website from 8am EST on Friday, November 19th, 2021.

**Artwork Display Proposals:** Please include a title and a 250 word artist/author statement to be displayed with the piece. Outside of the 250 word description, please include a description of the mode or software platform that will be used,
and, if possible, attach an image of the artwork. Also include artist(s) name(s), email(s), and university/community affiliation(s). All accepted artwork displays will be available for viewing on the 21st Century Englishes Conference website from 8am EST on Friday, November 19th, 2021.

*If you have a project that is co-authored, we recommend submitting it as an individual/project proposal. If there are 3 or more collaborators, we recommend submitting it as a panel proposal.

In the spirit of innovation and presentations that explicitly invite collaboration with/among audience members, we invite projects and panels to structure their delivery in any interactive manner they please, such as workshops, teaching demonstrations, or creative readings.