Transcript for Charity Anderson’s 21st Century Englishes Conference presentation:

Adaptable Intelligence in Shifting Bodily Values and Writing Spaces:
Refashioning Online Methods into Our Return to Face-to-face Instruction

November 20, 2021

**Accessibility Statement:**

As a measure to make my presentation more accessible to my audience, I included a plain text transcript for all of my PowerPoint slides. I am making the transcript available in the chat. I am also uploading the presentation’s PowerPoint slides into the chat for anyone who wants to review them for future reference. I open to any suggestions on how to make this presentation more accessible. My email address is andercl@bgsu.edu and my pronouns are (she/[ella](https://www.spanishdict.com/translate/ella)/[ohoyo](https://glosbe.com/cho/en/ohoyo)).

**Slide One:**

Hello and welcome to my presentation on the crossroads of adaptable intelligence, shifting bodily values, and writing space. The goal of this presentation is to evaluate the online teaching strategies we used during the pandemic and to refashion some of those methods with accessibility for students in mind into practical options during our return to face-to-face instruction.

I came to this topic through the combined experience of being a student with multiple disabilities, myself, as well as being the only certified online instructor in my department during the shutdown of the spring of 2020 when all instructors, despite their resistance to learn how to teach online, were forced into the world of online instruction for a full year.

Many students came to me for advice on how to help them communicate with other faculty members who were not perceived to be as easy to communicate with during the shift to online learning. Many students compared my classroom methods to other instructors who were not as prepared for the shift and voiced frustrations. And as a student, myself, I found that some of my disability accommodations were not translating smoothly during the shutdown and that this subject needed to be addressed on all levels of instruction: from FYE students all the way up to PhD students.

**Slide Two:**

We are at a point of shifting… bodily values and writing spaces shift. The 2020-2021 transition to online and remote learning was difficult for everyone in the academic world, but it also forced a lot of students with documented or hidden disabilities into a series of additional hurdles they were not properly prepared to overcome.

Consider that

“The scanner, text messaging, voice recognition software, optical character recognition, and even e-mail, first developed for people with disabilities, are now an integral part of our discursive and communicative world” (Jay Dolmage, *Disability Rhetoric*)

Yet the immersion into a technical world during the 2020-2021 era caused *more* difficulties for students with disabilities. This calls into question: what went wrong and how can we prevent it in the future?

Consider that

bodily values shift throughout history and those shifts are the center of disability studies, and rhetoric can be seen as the “study of all communication” and the “study of circulation of power through communication” (Dolmage).

**Slide 3:**

Yet the majority of respondents to a survey I conducted during the fall of 2020 concluded that universities in Ohio are aware that students who are blind or deaf need additional accommodations during the transition to online learning, but did not recognize the added barriers set in place for students with autism, sensory disorders, ADD, ADHD, and the myriad of other disabilities that would affect the learning process in a totally digital forum. This calls into question: who are we considering and who are we excluding, and why?

**Slide 4:**

When considering Bolter's book, *Writing Spaces*: *Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*, "Electronic and digital technology are helping to refashion the writing space again. In the late age of print, this refashioning is not complete, and we are now experiencing the tensions and inconsistencies that come from attempts to either reconcile the two spaces of print and digital technology or definitively to replace the one with the other," (22) we are brought to the awareness that our world is at a crossroads for simultaneously evaluating its value of the bodies in the classroom and the space where the writing takes place in our universities.

**Slide 5:**

This presentation serves to take a look at this living moment, when we are all experiencing a point of shifting from remote and online learning back into face-to-face classrooms for everyone this fall, and I offer an evaluation of the methods used in the online spaces during the 2020-2021 transition and refashion them into our return to face-to-face instruction in the 2021-2022 transition. This calls into question: What methods and strategies transplant well from the online spaces? What methods and strategies can alleviate the tension between writing spaces that Bolter addresses and the bodily values that Dolmage addresses?

**Slide 6:**

Dolmage’s book centers around the “spaces and moments in rhetorical history in which tension around the body is most pronounced”. Well, we are in a moment of time where the “tension around the body” as Dolmage addresses and “the tensions… from attempts to… reconcile the two spaces of print and digital techonology” as Bolter recognizes, are at a peek point of amplification due to the constant shifting that students and teachers have tried to survive throughout the last year.

Metis (pronounced MAY-TISS) is the “rhetorical concept of cunning and adaptive intelligence” and it requires a view of the body and embodied thinking as being double: sideways and backward movement. The use of rhetoric considers and adapts to the many varieties of bodies involved as well as the space where those bodies are, and so must our teaching.

**Slide: 7**

**Suggested Teaching Strategies**

**Consider the “hidden” students**

Begin to think of your student body as multi-layered components that adapt to your requirements with varying levels of ableness. Students may be able-bodied; students may have documented disabilities with accommodations from Accessibility Services; but students may also fall into a third category which has a larger portion of students than you may be aware of: those that have hidden disabilities.

The exact number of students with disabilities in the United States is difficult to pinpoint due to the varying levels of participation, the variations in target populations, the differences in survey methodologies in the Department of Education’s quadrennial National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) and the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS2), and the individual college students’ circumstances, but estimates are well into the hundreds of thousands even with these limitations in place (Leake 73).

This means that a significant amount of college students in your class have disabilities but do not have accommodations granted to them from the Accessibility Services office. Students may not have accommodations for the following reasons: they are unaware of how to apply for accommodations, they may be unaware what accommodations are available, they may not want to be identified as a disabled person, they may not have access to the large amount of medical documentation that is required to receive disability accommodations, they have cultural or ethnic reasons to not pursue disability accommodations, they may have personal or financial reasons, they may be in transition for approval from the Accessibility Services office, they may have given up trying to complete the very long application, they may not have the skill set to complete an application, they may have been rejected Accessibility Services or discouraged by someone else, or the office of Accessibility Services may not have granted them a requested accommodation for novel reasoning.

With this large “hidden” group of students with disabilities, consider how to reach not just your students with accommodations, but how to create a more accessible classroom for everyone.

Teach for the students in front of you and address previous methods which may not work well for the current group.

**Slide 8:**

**Consider Peer Reviews**

Making peer reviews an online assignment through Canvas or Blackboard, rather than making it an in-person activity, allows students who need more time to read and students who utilize read aloud technology or text to talk technology the ability to generate more well-developed feedback comments. Making peer reviews an assignment with a 48-hour window, rather than a one-hour in class window, provides a much more accessible environment for not just accommodated and hidden students, but all students in the class. If your classes are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, assign the peer reviews on Tuesday for homework online and discuss them on Thursday in class.

 **Slide 9:**

**Consider how grading contracts look for students with disabilities**

Labor based contracts are not accessible for everyone and can be considered ableist

Labor based contracts also do not take into account the reading materials being inclusive

Structured ableism is a huge factor and students with disabilities often feel at a disadvantage with having to negotiate more so than an able-bodied student would need to with a grading contract

Modified contracts that take into account a student’s ability and the due dates should be flexible

Consider how students in general may perform differently depending upon previous traumas to writing assignments and overall student well being when utilizing labor-based contracts

For more information on structured ableism in the college classroom, I suggest the book, *Negotiating Disability: Disclosure and Higher Education (Corporealities: Discourses Of Disability)*,byStephanie L. Kerschbaum (Author), Laura T. Eisenman (Author), James M. Jones (Author)

**Slide 10:**

**Consider Plain Language & Flexibility in Assignment Sheets and Rubrics**

Create options for goals to be met

Keep rubrics short and to the point

Clearly write how the rubric links to the learning goals for the class

Make rubric requirements move across different modes (they can apply to both essays and videos for example)

 rubric requirements should be generous

make the option to turn in multiple drafts throughout the semester

For more information on alternative assessment strategies, I suggest the book, *Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead),* by Susan D. Blum

**Slide 11:**

**Consider Recordings**

recording class, live feeds, recording videos, short instruction videos to accompany a handout or assignment

Having visual and audio guides throughout the semester helps students with differing learning styles and abilities.

For each semester, make new recordings. Students may feel undervalued if you provide recordings for previous classes, especially if assignment details have changed.

**Slide 12:**

**Consider Mindfulness Techniques**

The one thing we’ve all had in common during the last year is the flux of stressful events.

Explore ways to foster a supportive space for your students to learn and flourish with their writing.

Encourage and provide time for peer interactions each week (even if it’s online).

**Slide 13:**

**Consider Digital Access Barriers**

Not every Millennial or Post-Millennial is tech-savvy.

We’ve learned that every walk of life has access barriers to technology this year: students, too.

Some students are more privileged than others with their technology skill set and available tools.

Some students lack the funds to have basic internet service.

Students with disabilities also have to utilize alternative software programs to access even basic PDF documents and eBooks.

Some PDFs are not scanned in properly by the instructor. Some books do not come in eBook format. And even with a documented disability, Accessibility Services has a stringent process of receiving accommodations for reading material outside of being blind or having a learning disability. Many students who need accommodations for reading for other disabilities, like ADD, ADHD, autism, etc. are often not granted accommodations for reading or given a longer application process for accommodations for reading. Making sure all of your reading material is easily accessible for all students helps immensely.

**Slide 14:**

Works Cited

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