Saying No to the Checklist: Shifting from an Ideology of Normalcy to an Ideology of Inclusion in Online Writing Instruction

Sushil K. Oswal and Lisa Meloncon

ABSTRACT

Writing Studies finds itself looking to outside sources in an attempt to understand disability, differing abilities, and accessibility. As a result, in an effort to make our online courses accessible, we often turned to as varied sources as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Quality Matters Rubric (QM), and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which we are referring to as checklists, due to their form and instrumental purposes. Programmatically and administratively, we seem to have accepted checklists at face value as something we simply need to adopt and/or implement rather than something to question. With the growing number of students with disabilities in our online classrooms, we argue that such reliance on checklists perpetuates an ideology of normalcy, and we ask, instead, that we start WPA work from the location of disability and accessibility. When we do so, we encourage direct participation from our disabled students and faculty in our theory, in our research, in our curricular planning, and in our pedagogical conceptualizations. Starting with access helps us move toward an ideology of inclusion.

Writing Studies has produced a significant body of scholarship that takes a critical and engaging stance on key issues in the field. However, the critical momentum of this scholarship loses all of its force in some crucial settings, such as online writing instruction (OWI). It seems the field makes an almost a 90-degree turn in which research is discarded in favor of checklists at key pedagogical moments. Rather than rolling up our sleeves and face the task using the field's own scholarly acumen, the field too readily looks for crutches designed by any self-styled outside expert. Of late, dis-

ability and accessibility and their implementation in online writing courses (OWCs) have been such a topic.

Over the past decade a growing group of Writing Studies scholars have produced a sizeable body of critical scholarship around issues of disability and accessibility (e.g., Dolmage, *Disability*; Kerschbaum; Lewiecki-Wilson and Brueggemann; Meloncon, *Rhetorical*; Oswal, "Participatory"; Slatin and Rush; Walters; Zdenek). However, this scholarship has failed to adequately address the programmatic and pedagogical issues associated with moving OWCs online. Writing studies finds itself fumbling for answers in trying to understand disability, differing abilities, and accessibility, and as a result, we often turned to outside sources such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Quality Matters Rubric (QM), and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), to name the most common. Whereas borrowing and adapting from other fields is nothing new for Writing Studies, our immediate discontent with these checklists is the failure to adequately engage with them in a critical way (Dolmage; Oswal, "Physical"; Wood et al.). We are using checklist as a catchall term to mean a heuristic that provides a list of actions that should be taken to make OWCs accessible. In general, the checklist provides suggestions for implementation of the most basic levels of accessibility. Programmatically and administratively, we seem to have accepted checklists at face value as something we simply need to adopt and/or implement rather than something to question.

In what follows, we take up this question of wholesale adoption of accessibility checklists in OWI, and we do so because accessibility affects a college population—estimated at eleven percent of undergraduates and eight percent of graduates (US Dept. of Education)—that has been historically ignored or underserved by our universities. By building on the existing scholarship specific to OWI and accessibility (see Hewett and DePew; Oswal and Hewett; Oswal and Meloncon; CCCC OWI committee), we first situate our argument theoretically within the related work provided by scholars in Writing Studies and Disability Studies. In the next section, we discuss the most commonly used approaches to online course design, the Quality Matters assessment rubric (QM), Web Consortium Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), and the Universal Design for Learning framework (UDL). In the last section, we propose participatory approaches as an essential step in realizing the goal of a user-centered accessible design for OWI that will enable fully inclusive and accessible classrooms.

A Critical Explication of OWI Design Approaches

With at least a third of all students taking a course online (Allen and Seaman), the need to ensure that our online writing courses are accessible to students with disabilities becomes a paramount concern. Further, with many students not identifying as disabled when they enter college (Roberts et al; Schelly, et al; Wagner et al), instructors face additional challenges of trying to determine how to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The importance of designing accessible online learning spaces was clearly highlighted with the publication of the Conference on College Communication and Composition's Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction. Principle 1, which is described as an overarching principle, states: "Online writing instruction should be universally inclusive and accessible." To help achieve this goal and to assist faculty who may have little understanding about accessibility standards from both a curricular, technical, and legal standpoint, many institutions are adopting standards that are produced by outside organizations and often include the implementation of a checklist.

While checklists are meant to help facilitate inclusive and accessible classrooms (both online and face-to-face) by providing faculty a starting place on issues where they may not have a lot of experience, unfortunately they are often both the starting and ending place for accessible course design. As Sushil Oswal and Lisa Meloncon reported, many faculty are not "paying attention" to accessibility, and they do not realize that part of their role as instructors is to play a major role in making their OWCs accessible. To do so means they have to move beyond the simplistic approach offered by checklists because in many ways checklists are simply another way of enforcing the "ideology of normalcy" (Moeller and Jung).

Moeller and Jung discuss the ways that existing beliefs about OWI are helping to reinscribe the ongoing problem of both students and online education as being "less-than substitutes for the 'real' versions," and then they offer an important theoretical perspective when they "[attend] to the ways in which the dynamics of online education . . . reinscribe an ideology of normalcy." As WPAs and institutions are struggling to provide sufficient professional development for faculty to create OWCs, more often than not they turn to checklists to provide guidance to faculty caught in unfamiliar territory often with few institutional resources to help guide them. The checklists are one way that program administrators and faculty are being encouraged to normalize their classrooms. Online writing courses, then, become sites that potentially restrict access to those students who are outside of the realms of normal, particularly when most checklist-based OWCs

would not meet most accessibility standards; that is, OWCs that only follow a checklist will most often not meet the needs of the majority of students with disabilities. Thus, the ideology of normalcy is continued.

Our critical attention has to turn to OWI because instructors have a responsibility to conceptualize an accessible course design, to create its content that reflects the differences of its users, and to select or make allowances for its technology choices that embrace these users' abilities and skill-levels. This approach to OWC design must also apply to the learning management system and extend to third-party content, such as audio and video elements, library materials (e.g., e-books and .pdf articles) and external web pages, which must offer the same level of access to disabled students as it provides for others. Thus, course design, content, and technology should enable all students instead of erecting barriers for students with disabilities. Beyond the accessibility of content in an OWC, instructor-student and student-to-student interaction requires special attention because not all disabled students want to fit into the mold of ableist, or normal, interactions and many might benefit from alternative means of sharing, exchanging, and transferring ideas, information, texts.

To create truly accessible courses means that it becomes necessary to move beyond thinking in terms of checklists. To situate our discussion further, in the next section, we look at the three most common checklists: Quality Matters, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, and Universal Design for Learning. All of these are used to plan, implement, and assess online course construction and delivery.

Quality Matters (QM)

QM is a national benchmark for online course design that is centered on peer review (by instructors who have been QM certified) using rubrics.

Currently in its fifth edition, the QM rubric workbook includes a section on accessibility and usability, but due to copyright restrictions that limit reproduction to subscribed institutions only, all the components cannot be listed here. However, the overarching problem with the QM rubric is that the advice is still painfully general and limited, and if integrated, would not necessarily meet even basic standards of accessibility. The first criteria (that one can find with an Internet search) is that "course navigation facilitates ease of use." This is a general guideline that can be found in any number of checklists and in a multitude of resources about moving courses online. What Writing Studies can learn from user experience design and usability is that while this seems to be a straightforward and useful criterion, this is much easier said than done. For example, Mahli Mechenbier

brought attention to the fact that many institutions have mandated the use of templates in their content/learning management systems, and those templates often do not receive the type of usability tests necessary to determine whether the mandated course navigation actually facilitates ease of use for students, much less students with disabilities. Likewise, Patrick Lowenthal and Charles Hodges applied the QM checklist in their evaluation of six MOOCs, but their results acquired through this rubric failed to bring up any information about the accessibility of these online courses for disabled students. Furthermore, it is extremely telling that QM has added a specific disclaimer to their website about the accessibility criteria of their own guidelines: "Meeting QM's accessibility Standards does not guarantee or imply that specific country/federal/state/local accessibility regulations are met. Please consult with an accessibility specialist to ensure that accessibility regulations are met" (www.qualitymatters.org/rubric). This disclaimer helps to situate the limitations of the QM accessibility component while placing disability in an exclusionary category, particularly when many faculty who may be reviewing courses to certify them may not be fully versed in the wide variety of disabilities students may face. Questions that need to be critically considered include: How might a QM reviewer address all the accessibility barriers for all the students in the design phase? How does an instructor navigate through decision-making process for the choice of delivery tools without a context-specific understanding of technology, particularly when our courses are social media-rich and the learning environments are highly interactive?

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0

The World Wide Web Consortium established WCAG guidelines in their second edition, and they offer an acronym-based checklist, POUR, for creating accessible web content (www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCAG20/intro.html). Since OWCs are delivered online, WCAG guidelines have applicability both for content creation and delivery of content. POUR equates to perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust, and WCAG provides a series of examples and guidance instructions for implementation. However, the failure of widespread adoption of WCAG guidelines within OWI may be because they seem too technical. They have been primarily designed to support software developers and may seem targeted to an industry perspectives that reflect the user needs based on detailed, long-term empirical studies and participatory design research. While these guidelines are relevant for developing web-based LMS to ensure technical access to screen reader and keyboard users, and even could be of use

to faculty developing their own course websites, these guidelines lack the context-specific knowledge-base that instructors of online courses can build through the experience of working with disabled students over time. For example, researchers like Christopher Power et al., who have studied the usability of these guidelines, report that WCAG 2.0 address only about half of the problems that blind users face in typical web pages.

Questions about these guidelines that need to be critically considered include: How well can guidelines designed for software industry concerns serve the needs of online learners and educators? How does the technical focus of these guidelines detract us from the pedagogical needs of our disabled students? And most crucially, should the living experience architecture of our teaching and learning environments be guided by the machine-centric ethos of WCAG?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Likewise, the principles of Universal Design (UD) have been adopted without critical attention to its usefulness for OWI work. These principles were originally conceptualized for architectural design (Mace) and later adopted by CAST as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for K–12 curriculum in face-to-face settings. The curriculum designers behind the development of UDL Guidelines, Anne Meyer and David Rose, originally described UDL as a framework but now call them a tool in their CAST promotional materials. The UDL principles stress that instructors provide learners with Multiple Means of Representation, Action and Expression, and engagement. Beginning with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and under incrementally improved Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1977 (more commonly known as IDEA), schools were legally obligated to include disabled students in all the educational programs. The Special Education teachers, who had quite a range of disabled students with differing needs and abilities at their hand, had an urgent need for a formulaic accessibility structure that would lend to adapting their existing curricula for this diverse cohort. At the same time, these Special Education and other subject matter teachers did not want to engage in the actual pedagogy of access and did not have any other reliable resources to learn access from bottom up. UDL became a straightforward rubric to work with for the school curriculum specialists and to provide Special Education teachers with a ready-made curriculum that could pass as accessible for all at the state and national level.

UDL was never intended as a stand-in for critical engagement with accessibility issues for curricula planning, particularly in online environments. As far back as in 2002, composition scholars Patricia Dunn and

Kathleen Dunn de Murs presented simple remedies to improve accessibility in OWCs based on UDL. While their work raised awareness about the need for accessible academic spaces, the current conception of UDL is a far cry from re-imagining whole pedagogies as Dunn and Dunn de Murs expected. Outside the United States, particularly in Europe, the UD terminology also has been criticized for its universalist claims. The seven UD principles themselves also have been critiqued for moving design activity away from producing objects and environments to the authoring of abstract codes and standards, and despite its user-centered claims, it has been blamed for turning people into abstractions (Sandhu). We also want to highlight that even though UDL's stated goal is to build inclusive course design from bottom up, its design process focuses on checklists—the policy aspect—rather than on the individuals and learners. It can easily verge into another formulaic approach like QM when the implementers of the UDL guidelines lack a meaningful understanding of disability and are not already well-versed in accessible pedagogy. The questions that need to be critically considered include: How can instructors without sufficient knowledge about disabilities and disabled learners can come up with appropriate means of representation, action and expression, and engagement? How can WPAs simply insert an existing curricular framework of the kind of UDL into our online writing instruction training without engaging our faculty in some serious preparation for learning about disability, accessibility, and accessible technologies?

The most basic critique to checklists as a means to create OWCs is that they propose a one size fits all model—a re-inscription of normalcy—because they present course design as something that simply needs to be checked off. This is a model WPAs and faculty need to critically question. We might also stress the obvious that every human being is different and so are the disabilities, some due to the varied psycho-physical differences among bodies and others arising out of the restrictive socio-physical environments surrounding these selves. Consequently, the one size fits all QM, WCAG's POUR method, and UDL is hard to adapt for human processes that involve information processing, imagination, critical thinking, and a whole array of mental and physical processes embedded in the acts of conceptualizing, composing, and designing on and off-line writing. While recent scholarship provides more specific suggestions on making courses accessible (e.g., Oswal and Meloncon; Oswal "Accessibility" and "Physical"), WPAs and faculty need to start pushing back against the checklist mentality because the fact is that many institutions and instructors assume that following these heuristics makes their course(s) accessible, which is not necessarily true.

Thus, there is certain irony found in Tara Wood et al.'s response to the question "whether there is a checklist of things that writing teachers can do to make their classrooms more accessible"; however, they respond with a mixed "yes and no." Wood et al. assert that that checklists are useful as far as they "offer a place to start", but they also emphasize that the checklist can make the process reductive (147). Using any checklist without critical engagement and awareness of strategies to address multiple types of disabilities from our perspective only means that courses will have the patina of accessibility without true engagement and implementation. Our brief analysis of these checklist-based guidelines is aimed at providing administrators and faculty insights into how they should use these tools with a pinch of salt and rather take the next constructive step toward participatory design to become critically engaged in the serious work of building organic accessibility in their programs while making a good-faith effort at accepting disability at par with all other constituencies.

Emphasizing the dynamic nature of all learning interactions, as well as recognizing the diverse needs and capabilities of students with disabilities like other learners, we propose the adoption of participatory design approaches as ongoing processes that program administrators and instructors should regard as central to constructing, implementing, and modeling access in OWI programs and OWCs. What we are arguing for is a move from an ideology of normalcy to an ideology of inclusion. An ideology of inclusion recognizes the experiences and understandings of disabled participants—both as students and instructors—so that a crucial reconfiguring can occur within pedagogies and programmatic structures to move curricular design beyond ableist notions represented by checklists and rubrics. Inclusion in such an ideological formation is a way of seeing, doing, and being, and it must be integrated into curricular design and pedagogical practices, which will be the only way exclusionary legacies of ableism are replaced by participatory values of equity, agency, and inclusion.

Participatory Design Approaches for Moving beyond Checklists

Amy Vidali asks, "how we can revise our WPA narratives to better include disability and diverse embodiment?" (34). To this we would add "how can we revise these narratives in a way that moves us past the ideology of normalcy?" One way to do this is to consider other methods for designing inclusive classrooms that pay attention to disability and diverse embodiments. One such approach is participatory design, which most simply defined is an approach to design where all stakeholders play an active role

in the development of a product, service, or information to ensure that all users' needs are met.

Bonnie Nardi reminds us that "today's complicated, interactive systems should not be researched, designed, or tested in laboratories in isolation from the actual users; they demand a participatory process at all stages of design, development, and deployment." Participatory design has long been a successful approach in workplace practice and has been studied and discussed in technical and professional communication (e.g., Balzhiser et al; Oswal; Salvo; Read, et al). Moreover, some scholarship that looks at or incorporates UD and/or UDL is also focusing on participatory design, which could be a potential way to critically move beyond checklists and make OWI truly inclusive and accessible. Allen Brizee, Morgan Sousa, and Dana Driscoll provide a link between universal design and participatory design. Brizee et al. build on their previous work and discuss the usability research that went into the re-design of Purdue University's Online Writing Lab, particularly how they collaborated with other programs on campus to assist students with disabilities. Their work is a specific example in how collaboration across units and attention to participatory design can work toward creating learning services that are inclusive for all students.

Patricia McAlexander and Danielle Nielsen both advocate for using versions of universal design in ways that move beyond the checklist or heuristic approach, and their pedagogical practices are more in line with the principles and practices of participatory design. For example, McAlexander calls for shifting pedagogies to incorporate the whole class into decision-making about learning methods and common topics. Nielsen, too, incorporates participatory design into her curricular practices, such as her decision to provide multiple assignment choices for students to achieve specific learning outcomes. While neither McAlexander nor Nielsen frame their pedagogical choices in the language of participatory design and neither move beyond a cursory examination of UDL, both provide important examples that could be implemented in OWC design.

For OWI, participatory design can accomplish a number of important goals:

- Give students a voice in curriculum design.
- Ensure students with disabilities can access course material.
- Provide a forum for all students—not just those with disabilities—to voice suggestions or concerns about course content.
- Enable increased buy-in in the course curriculum and/or program.
- Balance student voice with learning outcomes.
- Encourage student-centered and experiential pedagogies.

Some examples of specific activities where instructors can easily implement participatory design include

- Create multiple assignments where students can choose.
- Use mid-term evaluations to evaluate not only course content but accessibility features.
- Implement end-of-term focus groups with students as part of professional development activities for faculty.
- Create a community of practice for your program to share accessibility features that have been successful for OWCs (see Meloncon and Arduser for details).
- Work with the instructional designers or those in charge of templates for the LMS to test those templates with students, including students with disabilities (see Brizee et al.).
- Take up self-study projects with potential research value for acquiring first-hand knowledge of accessibility barriers our students face by learning adaptive technology, such as, a screen reader or a voice recognition program, and using it for testing your campus learning management system tools (see Oswal, "Accessible")

In OWI work so far, instructional designers, scholars, and instructors have not engaged disabled participants systematically even though participatory approaches encourage collaboration with disabled students to arrive at well-tested course design and delivery models. It might be important to point out that each disabled user participates in online technologies and pedagogies from an entirely different vantage point shaped by their social, physical, and educational experiences. Similarly, each user interacts with multimodality differently depending upon the body they got, the adaptive technology they employ on their end, and the uses they have for multimodality in their repertoire of learning tools.

Consequently, only ongoing participatory studies can build a reliable knowledge base for designing OWI. By this time, readers would have realized that accessibility problems do not exist simply because of lingering issues from the pre-ADA era, random technological gaps, or missing pieces of furniture in the classroom—although these also contribute significant accessibility barriers. These problems are far more deeply rooted in the exclusionary institutional structures—structures without visible bodies that have a stranglehold over the machinery of systemic change in the form of university, departmental, or academic policies we have developed over time. What we're arguing for is that participatory design has to become a central component of OWI production technologically, pedagogically, and

culturally in order to exert pressure for change in institutional policies and structures.

Our purpose of employing participatory design methods is to launch longitudinal studies conceptualized for building continuous feedback loops. Participants could not only be partners in original course design stages but also have the capacity of constantly analyzing their interactions with an online course platform, while simultaneously assessing the usability and accessibility of various tools, content, and pedagogical techniques. Examples of immediate areas where participatory design could be engaged is in content storage (downloading and uploading documents); machine delivery (access to the asynchronous content being staged such as traditional and streaming videos, information present on web pages, etc.); and interaction tools (discussion boards, chat spaces, collaboration wikis, quiz building and hosting platforms, etc.). This sort of collaborative course construction would provide ongoing feedback specific to how an OWC actually performs when it is operationalized as a living course.

Implications of Participatory Design for Writing Program Administration

Participatory accessible design is entrepreneurial, has the potential of becoming an ultimate arbiter for usability, and can advance innovative pedagogical methods. While proponents of user-centered design (e.g., Albers and Mazur; Redish and Barnum; Norman 1988) have advocated for practical, useful, and customer-focused designs, their definition of customer/user has remained selective, designer-centered, and focused on a typical able-bodied user (Meloncon "Technological"). We would like to emphasize that those in human-centered design, such as designers and developers, continue to view users from an ableistic lens, and their involvement in participatory design remains mostly restricted to the able-bodied, and after-the-fact fixes or retrofits to accommodate disabled users' needs are the norm than an accidental exception. Even when the needs of this group receive attention, rather than integrating the affordances of accessibility theory into our baseline design theory and practice, those in human-centered design relegate such work to a separate corner, thus pushing accessibility and disability even farther in the margins. We emphasize that this process of implementing the participatory design of programs, courses, and assignments should not be limited to certain categories of disabilities. Even when in our teaching approaches we try to integrate disabled students as constituents and stakeholders, our specific pedagogical strategies stop short of being inclusive of the gamut of disabilities represented among our students.

From the perspective of student-centered learning approaches, the affordances of participatory design offer an altogether unexplored field of educational opportunities both for scholarly research and teaching innovation where program administrators, instructional designers, and faculty in charge of putting together the curriculum and delivering it as online writing courses, have the chance of coming face-to-face with online disabled students as active agents and learn from them about their ways of interacting with our pedagogy.

From the perspective of faculty engagement, participatory responses to faculty training for accessible design and delivery of online curriculum supplies a unique opportunity to place faculty with disabilities in key positions as participants, leaders, co-trainers, and shapers of academic programs while assisting the institution integrate disabled students and disability in every aspect of the university life. Participatory design approaches offer an incentive for deans and chairs to become proactive rather than reactive to the growing threat of legal suits for noncompliance with disability laws.

From an administration perspective, these approaches can provide valuable data that can be used to advance curricular changes as well as to argue for resources for faculty development opportunities. Ongoing participatory feedback about accessibility issues from disabled students in each of our courses and the resulting iterative design and pedagogical improvements by faculty and instructional designers not only can ensure that programs are legally and ethically compliant with existing laws and regulations but also elevate the overall quality of our programs. Our movement to participatory design invokes the scholarly voices of Moeller and Jung who called for more research with actual students. Their perspective, as well as ours, advocate for research studies in OWI that would provide important data for making administrative cases on improving OWCs.

Within this broader argument for participatory approaches is the more nuanced argument that students with disabilities are not monoliths who can be cordoned off into one campus corner with Disability Services and their accessibility concerns cannot be addressed with a checklist. What we want to underscore is that the solutions offered by easy-to-apply checklists can make instructors and programs deceptively feel good about having paid attention to accessibility even when these lists are most likely not making our courses or our programs accessible in any meaningful manner.

We are pointing to specific participatory design approaches to get beyond these checklists so that root-level attitudinal and institutional shifts could become possible through ongoing re-visioning and reimagining of institutional spaces and policies for removal of barriers through the direct involvement of the primary stakeholders. We intend these partici-

patory approaches as a collaborative teaching and learning project among disabled and non-disabled faculty, students, and staff. These participants can also assist institutions of higher education in speeding up the process of making third-party software and systems accessible through continuing reporting of design issues and functional glitches with learning tools and content management systems. We need not spell out that we are suggesting a whole new way of employing participatory design methods to build accessibility capacity in writing programs while engaging our faculty, disabled, and non-disabled students in undergraduate research. Scholars and teachers conducting participant design research can further employ methodological tools such as rapid ethnography, expert consultation, user diaries, observation 'in situ', and testing with prototypes, tools popularized by design industry to give voice to student ideas who are at the forefront as learners but can also enable user-facilitated innovation.

Conclusion

We previously argued that the field had to begin to build capacities in writing programs by training graduate students and faculty in issues of accessibility: "for accessibility to be effectively implemented across programs requires a fundamental shift in ideology; it requires starting with accessibility as a parallel to learning outcomes" (294). Moving away from checklists, which promote an ideology of normalcy, and toward participatory curriculum design affords programs a way to think of OWC design in terms of an ideology of inclusion.

Our effort in this article has been to share the ways of thinking about access as a participatory, scholarly project for our programs than prescribing another set of course characteristics as a checklist for building access. We have chosen this path to advancing access in OWI not only because students with disabilities are diverse and require differing pedagogies but also because the institutions of higher education and instructors are also equally diverse. While this diversity does not give us an excuse to ignore or marginalize our disabled students, it endows us with differing opportunities and abilities to think about how we have so far approached the questions of access without input from almost every fifth of our students and how we could redesign our programs and curricula with this type of participatory studies—ones that are fulfilling for all our students in achieving their learner goals and equally satisfying for us as researchers and teachers.

Even though external standards of access—whether they relate to the content of our web pages (WCAG 2.0) or to the concept and structure of our pedagogy (UDL 2.0)—might give us an implementable and universally

useable framework for designing access for our students, an ultimate move towards a more inclusive access depends on how we perceive ourselves and our students. Tobin Siebers once asked,

> What difference to human rights would it make if we were to treat fragility, vulnerability, and disability as central to the human condition, if we were to see disability as a positive, critical concept useful to define the shared need among all people for the protection of human rights?

Looking at the frailties of our own bodies more closely when defining ability and disability, and more importantly access, allows Writing Studies an opportunity to enter into truly collaborative partnerships between administrators, instructors, and students to make our programs and pedagogies more inclusive. We would argue that it is only appropriate that all bodies—labeled as disabled or non-disabled—take an active role in this institutional work by participating as co-designers in university structures, policies, programs, and curricula. We need to start our WPA work from disability and accessibility. When we do so, we encourage direct participation from our disabled students and faculty in our theory, in our research, in our curricular planning, and in our pedagogical conceptualizations. Starting with access helps to create an ideology of inclusion.

Works Cited

Albers, Michael J., and Mary Beth Mazur. *Content and Complexity: Information Design in Technical Communication*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003.

Allen, I. Elaine and Jeff Seaman. "Grade Change: Tracking Online Education in the United States." 2014. Babson Survey Research Group and Quahog Research Group.

Balzhiser, Deborah, Paul Sawyer, J. Smith, and Shen Womack. "Participatory Design Research for Curriculum Development of Graduate Programs for Workplace Professionals." *Programmatic Perspectives*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2015, pp. 153–172.

Brizee, Allen, Morgan Sousa, and Dana Driscoll. "Writing Centers and Students with Disabilities: The User-Centered Approach, Participatory Design, and Empirical Research as Collaborative Methodologies." *Computers and Composition*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2012, pp. 341–66.

CAST. *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines* 2.0 edition, CAST, 2011.

CCCC Committee for Best Practices in Online Writing Instruction. "A Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction (OWI)." NCTE, 2013. www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/owiprincipleshttp://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/owiprinciples.

Dolmage, Jay. "Disability, Usability, Universal Design." *Rhetorically Rethinking Usability*, edited by Susan Miller-Cochran and Rochelle Rodrigo, Hampton Press, 2009, pp. 167–90.

—. *Disability Rhetoric.* Syracuse UP, 2014.

Dunn, Patricia A., and Kathleen Dunn De Mers. "Reversing Notions of Disability and Accommodation: Embracing Universal Design in Writing Pedagogy and Web Space." *Kairos*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2002,

Hewett, Beth L., and Kevin DePew. *Foundational Principles of Online Writing Instruction*. The WAC Clearinghouse and Parlor Press, 2015.

Kerschbaum, Stephanie. *Toward a New Rhetoric of Difference.* NCTE, 2015.

Lewiecki-Wilson, Cynthia, and Brenda Jo Brueggemann. *Disability and the Teaching of Writing: A Critical Sourcebook.* Bedford-St. Martin's, 2008.

Lowenthal, Patrick R., and Charles Hodges. "In Search of Quality: Using Quality Matters to Analyze the Quality of Massive, Open, Online Courses (MOOCs)." *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, vol. 16, no. 5, 2015, n.p.

Mace, Ron. "The Principles of Universal Design, Version 2.0." North Carolina State www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/ about_ud/udprinciples.html.

McAlexander, Patricia. "Using Principles of Universal Design in College Composition Courses." *Curriculum Transformation and Disability: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education*, edited by Jeanne L. Hugbee, Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy, General College, University of Minnesota, 2003, pp. 105–14.

Mechenbier, Mahli. "Putting the 'Temp' in Template: Molding Contingent Faculty into Uniform Online Course Shells." *Conference on College Composition and Communication* NCTE, 2015.

Meloncon, Lisa. *Rhetorical AccessAbility: At the Intersection of Technical Communication and Disability Studies*. Baywood, 2013.

—. "Technological Embodiments." *Rhetorical AccessAbility: At the Intersection of Technical Communication and Disability Studies*, edited by L. Meloncon, Baywood, 2013, pp. 67–81.

Meloncon, Lisa, and Lora Arduser. "Communities of Practice Approach: A New Model for Online Course Development and Sustainability." *Online Education 2.0: Evolving, Adapting, and Reinventing Online Technical Communication*, edited by Kelli Cargile Cook and Keith Grant-Davie, Baywood, 2013, pp. 73–90.

Moeller, Marie and Julie Jung. "Sites of Normalcy: Understanding Online Education as Aprosthetic Technology." *Disability Studies Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 4, 2014, n.p.

Nardi, Bonnie A. "The Use of Ethnographic Methods in Design and Evaluation." *Handbook of Human-Computer Interaction*, edited by M.G. Helander and P. V. Landauer, vol. 1, Elsevier Science, 1997, pp. 361–66.

Nielsen, Danielle. "Universal Design in First-Year Composition: Why Do We Need It? How Can We Do It?" *The CEA Forum*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2013, pp. 3–29.

Norman, Donald A. *The Design of Everyday Things*. Doubleday, 1988/2002.

Oswal, Sushil. "Accessible Eportfolios for Visually-Impaired Users: Interfaces, Designs, and Infrastructures." *Eportfolio Performance Support Systems: Constructing, Presenting, and Assessing Portfolios.* edited by Katherine Willis and Rich Rice, Parlor Press, 2013.

—. "Commentary: Participatory Design: Barriers and Possibilities." *Communication Design Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2014, pp. 14–19.

—. "Physical and Learning Disabilities in OWI." *Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction*, edited by Beth L. Hewett and Kevin DePew, The WAC Clearinghouse and Parlor Press, 2015, pp. 253–90.

Oswal, Sushil, and Beth L. Hewett. "Accessibility Challenges for Visually Impaired Students and Their Online Writing Instructors." *Rhetorical AccessAbility: At the Intersection of Technical Communication and Disability Studies*, edited by Lisa Meloncon, Baywood, 2013, pp. 135–56.

Oswal, Sushil, and Lisa Meloncon. "Paying Attention to Accessibility When Designing Online Courses in Technical and Professional Communication." *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2014, pp. 271–300.

Power, Christopher, André Freire, Helen Petrie, and David Swallow. "Guidelines Are Only Half of the Story: Accessibility Problems Encountered by Blind Users on the Web." *SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems CHI '12. ACM*, ACM, 2012, pp. 433–42.

Read, Sarah, Anna DelaMerced, and Mark Zachry. "Participatory Design in the Development of a Web-Based Technology for Visualizing Writing Activity as Knowledge Work." *SIGDOC '12 Proceedings of the 30th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication*, ACM, 2012, pp. 333–40.

Redish, Janice (Ginny), and Carol Barnum. "Overlap, Influence, Intertwining: The Interplay of UX and Technical Communication" *Journal of Usability Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2011, pp. 90–101.

Roberts, Jodi B, Laura A. Crittenden, and Jason C. Crittenden. "Students with Disabilities and Online Learning: A Cross-Institutional Study of Perceived Satisfaction with Accessibility Compliances and Services." *Internet and Higher Education*, vol. 14, no. 4, 2011, pp. 242–50.

Salvo, Michael. "Accessible Information Architecture: Participatory Curricular Design." *Annual Conference of the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication*, Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication, 2003.

Sandhu, Jim. "The Rhinoceros Syndrome: A Contrarian View of Universal Design." *Universal Design Handbook*, edited by Wolfgang Preiser and Korydon Smith, vol. Second, McGraw-Hill, 2011, pp. 44.43–44.11.

Schelly, Catherine L., Patricia L. Davies, and Craig L. Spooner. "Student Perceptions of Faculty Implementation of Universal Design for Learning." *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2011, pp. 17–30.

Siebers, Tobin. "Disability and the Right to Have Rights." *Disability Studies Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 1/2, 2007, http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/13/13.

Slatin, John M. and S. Rush. *Maximum Accessibility.* Addison-Wesley, 2003.

US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. "The 2012 Statistical Abstract, Table 285. Students Reported Disability Status by Selected Characteristics 2007 to 2008." 2012. US Department of Education.

Vidali, Amy. "Disabling Writing Program Administration." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2015, pp. 32–55.

Wagner, Mary, Lynn Newman, Renee Cameto, Nicolle Garza, and Phyllis Levine. *After High School: A First Look at the Postschool Experience of Youth with Disabilities.* SRI International, 2005.

Walters, Shannon. *Rhetorical Touch: Disability, Identification, Haptics.* U of South Carolina P, 2014.

Wood, Tara, Jay Dolmage, Margaret Price, and Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson. "Moving Beyond Disability 2.0 in Composition Studies." *Composition Studies*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2014, pp. 147–50.

World Wide Web Consortium. "Understanding WCAG 2.0." World Wide Web Consortium.

Zdenek, Sean. *Reading Sounds: Closed-Captioned Media and Popular Culture.* U of Chicago P, 2015.

Sushil K. Oswal is an associate professor of Accessible Design and technical communication at the University of Washington, a four-year public research university. He specializes in human-centered design and disability studies. His award-winning research has appeared in Kairos*, the* Journal of Business and Technical Communication*,* Communication Design Quarterly*, and several edited collections.*

Lisa Meloncon is an associate professor of technical and professional communication in the Department of English at University of South Florida, a four-year public research university. She specializes in rhetoric of health and medicine, disability studies, and programmatic issues in technical and professional communication. Her award-winning research has appeared in journals such as Technical Communication Quarterly*,* Technical Communication*, and the* Journal of Business and Technical Communication*. She is also the editor of* Rhetorical Accessibility: At the Intersection of Technical Communication and Disability Studies.